Biographical Studies of Suicide, 1995, Volume 6

KURT TUCHOLSKY

David Lester

On the night of May 10, 1933, books of thirty four authors were burned in front of Berlin University -- books by such writers as Sigmund Freud and Bertolt Brecht. Among them were the books of Kurt Tucholsky -- satirist, song writer and cultural critic.

> Because of insolence and arrogance! With honor and respect for the immortal German folk spirit! Consume also, flames, the writings of Tucholsky...(Poor, 1935, p. 3).

Tucholsky was the oldest of three children born to Alex Tucholsky, a Jewish businessman and banker. He was born in Berlin on January 9, 1890. A brother (Fritz) was born in 1895 and a sister (Ellen) in 1897. Tucholsky was loved by his father and grew up feeling very close to him. His mother, Doris, was a cold and rigid woman, and Tucholsky had little contact with her after he reached the age of fifteen.

When Tucholsky was three, the family moved to Stettin, near the Baltic coast, and he started school in 1896. His father was made director of a bank in 1899, and so the family moved back to Berlin. Tucholsky was sent to the prestigious French Gymnasium founded in 1689 by French Huguenots expelled from France -- it was the preferred school for children of prominent Jews. However, Tucholsky left the Jewish faith early (he says in 1911) and formally became a Protestant in 1917.

Tucholsky's father died suddenly in 1905, and Tucholsky's performance at school deteriorated, and he quit. However, he decided to take the school leaving certificate (Abitur) in 1909 and after passing the exam, entered Berlin University to study law. He studied at Geneva, and submitted his dissertation in 1914 to the University of Jena. The dissertation was rejected but, after revision, it was accepted, and Tucholsky was awarded his Doctor of Jurisprudence in February, 1915.

Meanwhile, his interest in writing had already developed. He published his first work in Ulk, a humor supplement, when he was seventeen, a satire on William III and his Empire. He wrote his first novel (*Rheinsberg*) in 1912 which was a critical success and sold 50,000 copies in a brief time. He opened a book bar with a friend where alcohol was served while customers browsed through the books for sale. His reputation grew quickly, and he was invited by Siegfried Jacobsohn to write for the magazine Schaubühne. Tucholsky and Jacobsohn grew very close, so that Jacobsohn, nine years older than Tucholsky, became his mentor. His editing helped Tucholsky improve his writing, and Tucholsky wrote Jacobsohn hundreds of letters. He numbered them, and the one received by Jacobsohn on the day before his death on December 3 1926 was number 244.

While he was a student, Tucholsky fell in love and became engaged to Kitty Frankfurter, but he also dated Else Weil, a medical student. The First World War interrupted both of these romances, but Tucholsky's pattern was clear. He liked women but was unable to settle down with any one. His devotion to writing, his poor relationship with his mother, and his general restlessness made such relationships difficult for him. In addition, he was a difficult person to live with. His work often drove him to nervous exhaustion, he found it difficult to live in one place, and he was impulsive. He had odd aversions, particularly to dogs. This last eccentricity led him to change residences frequently in order to avoid them. He loved good food, fine surroundings and beautiful women, yet at the same time wanted simplicity and despised the obsessive search for possessions in the society. He was an idealist who wanted social justice, but he was also self-indulgent.

Tucholsky was twenty-four when the First World War began, and he did not share the enthusiasm with which people all over Europe welcomed the outbreak of hostilities. He saw war as a stupidity and a horror. After getting his law degree, he was inducted into the army in April 1915 and luckily sent to the less-deadly Eastern front. He was placed in an equipment supply unit backing up the troops fighting the Russians, but the senseless slaughter drove him to despair and dimmed his hopes for the future. He contemplated emigrating.

In late 1917, as part of his duties, he was sent to Courland (to direct the military library) where he met and wooed Mary Gerold. He was transferred to the German occupation of Rumania in early 1918, and he and Mary did not meet again until she went to Berlin in 1920, although Tucholsky wrote to her several times each week. After the armistice in November, 1918, Tucholsky returned to Berlin where he resumed his writing.

Mary arrived in Berlin in January 1920, fleeing the political struggles in Latvia, and the relationship soured immediately. Tucholsky was quite poor at the time (though a few months later, he was secure), and Mary was aloof and reluctant to force herself upon him[1]. After a few months, he broke off with her and married Else Weil in May, 1920, now a physician.

As soon as he had done this, he realized that he had made a mistake. He re-established contact with Mary in October, 1920, and in the next year confessed that he loved her and had been a fool. He proposed to her in March, 1923, and she accepted. He was, however, still married to Else.

Compounding their problems, there was a sudden inflationary crisis.[2] Tucholsky had to work for bank in late 1923 for a brief period in order to survive, and his writing output declined. He made no mention of the occupation of the Ruhr (by the French) or Hitler's putsch. He also became more restless, and his desire to leave Germany grew. At

[1] She never told him that she loved him!
[2] By August 1923, the US dollar was worth four trillion German marks.

the end of 1923, he went to Paris as the foreign corespondent for *Weltbühne* (formerly *Schaubühne*), and he fell in love with the city and the country. France had the kind of society which he had wanted for Germany.

He returned to Germany briefly in July 1924 to help found a new magazine *Uhu*, and he and Mary married in August 1924 after he had divorced his first wife. They then returned to Paris.

Tucholsky The Writer

Tucholsky began with *Weltbühne* as a drama critic but soon was writing satiric poems and critical essays. Between January 1913 and June 1914 he wrote 113 pieces. After the war, he wrote between 100 and 150 pieces a year for the magazine between 1919 and 1932. To give himself freedom to write all this, Tucholsky used four pseudonyms, each for a different style of article, a device which shielded him from the public and allowed him a private life. At times, he even used one pseudonym to criticize what he had written under another.

His political satire made him enemies (on the right) and friends (on the left). He became a pacifist and, after witnessing the struggles between the political parties after the war, a socialist although his dislike of the tactics and personalities involved in the left-wing parties led him to never join any political party.[3] Rather than becoming a political activist and seeking office, he remained a commentator on the sidelines. He exposed the horrors of war and tried to discredit Prussian authoritarianism and bring about a true revolution -- but as a writer. He wanted a democratic government, equality, and a pluralistic society.

Cabarets played an important part in German cultural life, attracting the best talents and savagely commenting on social issues. Tucholsky wrote for the Nelson Theater, and his chansons achieved notoriety and were interpreted by the most famous singers of the era.

Weltbühne was not a magazine with a large readership (its circulation never exceeded 15,000), but it was one of the most influential. It was available abroad and read by left and right-wing intellectuals. The right-wingers, though, hated that many of the writers were Jewish, and academics despised it because the writers were not academics -- indeed they called the writing *Asphaltliteratur*.

Tucholsky was in Paris when Germany elected Hindenburg as President in 1925, and Tucholsky believed that, for Germany, all was lost. He foresaw the prospect of a war in ten to twenty years, although he did not yet see the role that Hitler would play in it, and he foresaw the foreign policy which would precipitate the war.

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[3] He never forgave the Social Democratic Party for allying themselves with the military to crush the Communists.

Decline And Fall

From 1926 to 1932, Tucholsky achieved the greatest public success, while his personal life disintegrated. In December, 1926, his mentor, Jacobsohn died. Tucholsky returned to Berlin to keep *Weltbühne* going, but he found Berlin depressing and hired Carl von Ossietsky as editor so that he could return to Paris. Although Tucholsky continued to write for *Weltbühne*, he had lost the mentor he had valued so much.

Mary noticed his restless and suspected that he was also having affairs. She returned to Berlin in 1928 and, once she was lost, Tucholsky realized how much he loved her. He never married again, though he had many affairs, and it was to Mary that he wrote the day before he killed himself. He divorced Mary in 1933, when it was no longer safe for her to remain in Germany with his name, and made her his heir. Mary, as the guardian of his works, had his works republished after the Second World War and, by the time that Poor (1968) wrote a biography of Tucholsky, Tucholsky's books had sold four million copies and there were more than forty records of Tucholsky's songs.

In 1930, government by decree was instituted in Germany, and by 1932, the clashes between the Nazis and Communists were bringing chaos to Germany. In 1929, Tucholsky published *Deutschland, Deutschland über Alles*, a bitter attack on everything he disliked about Germany. The book's success made him one of the most controversial writers of the time and a celebrity. On a lecture tour of Germany that year, his talk in Wiesbaden caused a riot when the Nazis protested his presence.

Weltbühne and Ossietsky were sued many times in the courts, Ossietsky imprisoned on one occasion (for revealing military secrets), and he and Tucholsky fined on others. Tucholsky declined to go to Germany to give Ossietsky moral support for he feared being stripped of his passport and even assassination by the Nazis.

Thereafter he avoided the larger issues and wrote only on peripheral matters. His idealism had gone, and he saw no hope of change. He supported Sacco and Vanzetti in America, he campaigned for better treatment of prisoners, he defended homosexuals and Erich Maria Remarque. But after Ossietsky's trial and guilty verdict in November, 1931, Tucholsky resolved never to write again. At the end of his scrapbook he wrote: Sprechen, Schreiben, Schweigen [Speaking, Writing, Silence].

Tucholsky traveled widely beginning in 1927 -- to Denmark, England, Sweden and Switzerland. He disliked the idea of going to America, although that is to where his brother and sister emigrated. Finally, he emigrated to Sweden, moving to Hindas, near Göteborg in 1929.

After Hitler came to power in January, 1933, Tucholsky's books were burned (in May 1933), and he was stripped of his citizenship in November, 1933. Although the Swedish government permitted him to stay, he had to renew his visa every month. For three years he lived with the possibility of deportation. To hide his residence, he had his

mail sent to him via Switzerland. He lived a quiet life and saw few people, although he wrote hundreds of letters to his friends and colleagues.

Tucholsky guessed that Hitler would invade Poland, although he still had hopes that a world war would be avoided. His anger was directed not only toward Hitler, however, but also to the Jews who submitted to him with little resistance. He attacked anti-semitism, but in his writings he also attacked the Germanization of the Jews. He thought that, at least, there should have been a mass exodus of Jews from Germany in March 1933 instead of a trickle. Thus, he was, and still is, viewed as anti-semitic. Indeed, the Nazis used some of his writings to support their own anti-semitism.

His health begin to fail him, and he took several rest cures. He had a painful nasal infection which required five operations in 1935 alone. His depression grew. His talents were useless, his hope gone. German was his language and, although he tried writing in French, he could not develop a good style in that language. He urged his siblings to learn English, but the effort was too great for him, although he tried to learn some Swedish. He avoided the émigrés -- they were too optimistic -- and no longer concerned himself with Germany.

His letters show him in decline, feeling ill and tired, with no sense of purpose, seeing his career as meaningless, and foreseeing a world with or without the Nazis in which he could not live.

He wrote Mary a final letter on December 19, 1935, a final letter of love, swallowed some poison which he had carried with him for many years, and left a note in French asking to die in peace. He was discovered and taken to a hospital in Göteborg where he died on December 21, 1935.

Reference

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STEPHEN WARD

David Lester

Stephen Ward was tried and found guilty of living on the immoral earnings of Christine Keeler and Mandy Rice-Davies in 1963 in London England. Keeler had recently had a sexual affair with John Profumo, a minister in Macmillan's government, and possibly with Yevgeny Ivanov, a Russian spy. In the midst of the judge's summing up which spanned two days, Ward committed suicide. Knightley and Kennedy (1987) make it quite clear that Ward was deserted by his friends, framed by the British police and tried by a corrupt court. It is small recompense that most of the trash involved in this persecution did not live happily ever after.

Early Years

Stephen was the second son of the Reverend Arthur Ward and his wife Eileen. He was born in Lemsford, Hertfordshire, on October 19, 1912. Arthur Ward was crippled by a spinal disorder which made him a hunchback, and he was a bookish introvert. His wife was a charming extravert from Ireland who had five children -- John, Stephen, twins Patty and Bridget, and Raymond.

The family moved to Torquay in 1920. Although Stephen seemed to have a brilliant mind, he was a poor student and indecisive about a career. He thought of becoming a doctor, but two medical schools rejected him. At the age of 17, he moved to London where he sold carpets, then to Germany where he worked as a translator, and then to France where he had odd-jobs and took courses at the Sorbonne. In 1932, he moved back to Torquay with his parents, but his father threw him out when he discovered that Stephen had hidden a French girl in the basement of the vicarage. Stephen moved back to London where he sold tea and newspaper subscriptions. Eileen's brother persuaded Stephen to go to America to study osteopathy at Kirksville College of Osteopathy and Surgery in Missouri. Stephen agreed.

He arrived in 1934 and settled in to his studies. He found surgery distressing and so focused on osteopathy, working at odd jobs to pay his expenses. He also traveled extensively around America and Mexico with friends. He was arrested twice in Mexico after for drunk and disorderly behavior and developed a liking for brothels and prostitutes. He was reported by one Mexican prostitute to have a remarkably large penis. He graduated and passed the Missouri licensing examination.

He went back to Torquay to practice medicine just before the war began. He volunteered for the Royal Army Medical Corps but was rejected because the Corps did not recognize his American degree. He was called up as a private. After he had helped his commanding officer's knee heal, that officer set him up as a quasi-doctor. When this was discovered, an inquiry was held and Stephen was reprimanded, but he was made a officer-stretcher-bearer in the Corps. He tried to get his member of parliament to change

the status of osteopaths, for which he was court-martialled and posted to India. There he was able to practice medicine unofficially, and among the patients he treated was Mahatma Gandhi. He soon was widely known among the upper social classes, playing bridge, for example, most evenings with the Maharajah of Baroda. After the war, Stephen tried to work in Torquay but found life boring. So he moved to London.

Stephen In London

Stephen started work at the Osteopathic Association Clinic for eight pounds a week, sleeping over the clinic. A lucky break enabled him to take over for a Park Lane osteopath who was going to America for a month. Soon after that he took on the American ambassador, Averill Harriman, as a client. His skill as an osteopath and these initial contacts led to further referrals until he was the osteopath of choice for most of the powerful and influential people in London. The list included Winston Churchill, Sir Anthony Eden, King Peter of Yugoslavia, Elizabeth Taylor, Mel Ferrier, Sir Malcolm Sargent, and more.

Those who came for treatment stayed to talk. Stephen's professional life and social life began to overlap as his patients became his friends. He befriended many of those he met, offering his flat in Cavendish Square to those who needed a place to stay. Young women he ran into, new to the city, often stayed a while. He left his door unlocked, and people dropped by most evenings to talk and listen to music. One visitor commented that he never saw anyone go off to the bedrooms to have sex. Another visitor one evening met Prince Philip, a junior typist and a high-class prostitute. Stephen deliberately met a wide variety of people and mixed them in his social life. He was fascinated by women, but he rarely had sex with them. There were no signs of any homosexual tendencies, but his sex drive did not appear to be strong.

Stephen had been attracted to a woman, Mary Glover, in Torquay, but his stay in America had ended that relationship. Then he met a young girl, Eunice Bailey, whom he helped become a leading model, but he hesitated too long before proposing and she married someone else. In the Spring of 1949, he met Patricia Baines, also a model, and they married in July 1949. The marriage was a disaster from the start. She soon found out that Stephen was irresponsible with money and not very wealthy (he did not take sufficient funds for their honeymoon in France), and he was inhibited sexually. Six weeks after she moved into his flat, Patricia left. She divorced him two years later for mental cruelty.

Cliveden

Newly divorced at the age of 40, Stephen acquired William Astor, later Lord Astor, as a patient, a member of a wealth Anglo-American family. They soon became good friends, and Astor lent Stephen money to pay some back taxes and gave him consulting rooms and a flat rent-free.

About this time, Stephen ran into a waif from the suburbs, Valerie Mewes, and invited her to come and stay with him. He groomed her, improved her speech, and helped her start a career as a model. She eventually became the girl-friend of the Maharajah of Cooch Behar but died soon thereafter in car crash. Stephen enjoyed creating his "Fair Lady," and he was tempted to try similar transformations with other women.

Astor's estate was at Cliveden, and he had a small cottage on the grounds which he rented to Stephen in 1956 for a token amount. Stephen renovated it and began to have gatherings there every weekend. Astor liked the company and often visited the cottage, sometimes inviting everyone over to his house for the following day.

Stephen was a reasonably good artist, and his sketches of people were quite good. One of his patients was an art dealer and gallery owner and encouraged Stephen to sketch more. Soon Stephen was sketching celebrities, including members of the Royal Family. He had an exhibition at the gallery in July 1960 to great success, earning Stephen a contract from the *Illustrated London News* to draw portraits for the magazine.

Stephen planned to go to Russia for one assignment for the magazine, but he had problems getting a visa. Through a friend, he met an attaché from the Russian Embassy, Captain Yevgeny Ivanov, who was an intelligence officer. They got on well and became good friends. Stephen liked Yevgeny's company, and Yevgeny, through Stephen, moved in circles normally closed to him as a Russian diplomat.

As a result, British members of MI5 decided to try to recruit Yevgeny as a spy for the British by means of entrapment by using Stephen. (This arrangement was hidden all through the subsequent events and came to light only years after Stephen's suicide.[4]) Knightley and Kennedy, in their account, suggest that Yevgeny guessed the truth about Stephen's involvement with MI5 and used Stephen to pass on information that the Russians wanted the British to have. Stephen may also have realized this and seen that he was not betraying Yevgeny (a friend), but acting as a conduit.

Christine Keeler

Stephen was visiting a night club in London one evening in 1959 with a rich Arab friend, and they asked to meet one of the dancers, a woman called Christine Keeler. Stephen was attracted to her and obtained her telephone number. He then pursued her until she left her boarding house and moved in with him. Christine was his next project; perhaps he was a father figure for Christine. However, their relationship was rather unstable. Christine soon moved out to live with Peter Rachman, a slum landlord, but after they broke up six months later she moved back in with Stephen. This pattern continued for a couple of years.

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[4] Nigel West, *A matter of trust*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1982. During the Berlin crisis in 1961, for example, Stephen was used as a conduit for messages from the Russian Embassy to the British government, a fact admitted by British authorities only much later after Stephen's suicide. Similarly, during the Cuban missile crisis, Yevgeny tried to get a message to the British government via Stephen.

Christine continued to work at Murray's where she became friends with another show-girl, Mandy Rice-Davies. They got a flat together, and Christine invited Stephen (whose flat she left had once more) over for dinner. They were soon all friends, and Stephen and Mandy subsequently had sex in the cottage at Cliveden one weekend, a performance that was never repeated. Mandy moved in with Rachman, Christine's old lover, leaving Christine alone. Christine had an affair with an Iranian who threw her out, leaving Christine no alternative but to go and stay with Stephen again.[5]

One weekend at Cliveden, Astor had John Profumo and his wife down, and there Profumo met Stephen and Christine. Profumo, the Secretary of State for War, was attracted to Christine and soon had her as his mistress, most of the time meeting and having sex with her at Stephen's London flat. Meanwhile, at the same party at which Profumo met Christine, Stephen tried to get Christine and Yevgeny together. It is unclear whether they ever became lovers, although this was eventually reported in the press, because almost everyone involved in the affair lied on occasions and because Yevgeny was sent back to Russia when the scandal broke. Profumo wanted to establish Christine in her own flat, but she refused to move out from Stephen's. Her affair with Profumo broke up after three or four months.

Meanwhile, various people were trying to stir up trouble. George Wigg, a Labour Member of Parliament, wanted to destroy Profumo. John Lewis, a former Labour MP, was angry at Stephen for taking Mrs. Lewis's side in a divorce action.[6] Rumors were beginning to spread about Profumo's affair with Christine, and only the strict libel laws in Britain prevented the press from reporting these rumors. Christine decided to break with Stephen (perhaps tiring of his domination and jealous of his preference for Mandy), and she too, with an eye on selling her story, began to talk to journalists about her affairs, embellishing them beyond the truth.

Lewis and Wigg both spread the rumors and tried to alert important people in the opposition and the government. Wigg and other opposition members asked questions in Parliament, and eventually Profumo was forced to make a statement. On March 22, 1963, Profumo denied the rumors of an affair with Christine, a downright lie. He held on but was forced to confess his lie on June 5th in a letter to the Prime Minister, Harold Macmillan, which was released to the press. Profumo then resigned.

Christine had also talked to the police. She had been involved in problems with her West Indian lover, Johnny Edgecombe, who had fired shots at Stephen's flat where Christine was staying, and she was going to be a witness at his trial. Christine was mad at Stephen because he had tried (successfully) to stop the newspapers from publishing her story (and therefore, paying her for it). Christine, and later Mandy, began to weave a tale

[5] Stephen and Christine were never lovers.

[6] Mrs. Lewis had gone to stay at Stephen's flat when she left her husband, and she had an affair with a friend of Stephen's.

for the police about Stephen's activities, primarily that he was a procurer of women. Initially, the police decided not to investigate further.

Next, the Home Secretary, Henry Brooke, got involved since he had been informed of the growing rumors. He decided to try to convict Stephen to get him out of the way and to cover up the truth and so he ordered the police to find a criminal offense with which to prosecute Stephen, a clear corruption of the law enforcement process. The police officers in charge, Chief Inspector Samuel Herbert and Detective Sergeant John Burrows then cooked up a case against Stephen by bullying and threatening witnesses with future prosecutions and by arresting Mandy and other potential witnesses for minor offenses and offering deals if they would testify.

The police also interviewed all of Stephen's friends and acquaintances. They harassed him. If anyone visited him, the police stopped them and interviewed them, even his patients. If Stephen visited anyone, those whom he visited were interviewed. By mid-April, Stephen was a social pariah and a prisoner in his own flat. Astor asked Stephen to give up the cottage at Cliveden.

Stephen tried to contact people in the government to tell them that Profumo had lied in his Parliamentary statement, but this only made the government more eager than ever to shut Stephen up. A journalist friend offered to pay for Stephen's story, but Stephen still had faith in British justice.

When Profumo's letter of resignation was released to the press on June 5th, Stephen was interviewed on television that night. He reported that he had warned MI5 about Profumo's affair early on and that he had not encouraged the affair. He denied he was running a call girl racket. Stephen was arrested two days later.

Trial And Suicide

Some of Stephen's friends would have liked to help, but to do so would risk their names and careers. Astor refused to be a witness, and many others followed his lead. Only a few friends stood by Stephen. One who did, Vasco Lazzolo, was told by the police that they might have to find pornography in his studio. He called their bluff, and nothing happened.

Stephen was sent to Brixton Prison for three weeks before being allowed out on bail[7]. He was then dependent on friends for accommodation. The trial opened on July 22, 1963, in the Old Bailey, with a prosecutor (Mervyn Griffith-Jones) determined to get a conviction and a judge (Archie Marshall) determined to help him. There were five counts against Stephen: three concerned with living on the earnings of prostitutes and two concerning procuring. The procuring cases were clearly shown to be nonsense and,

[7] Dominick Elwes stood bail for Stephen.

regarding living on the earnings of prostitutes, it seemed that women like Christine and Mandy owed Stephen much more money than they ever paid him.

The defense tried to present a case despite the petty ways in which the judge kept putting the counsel down. Meanwhile, another of Christine's West Indian boyfriends had been tried and convicted on June 7th of assaulting Christine on the basis of her false testimony. On July 30th, as Griffith-Jones summed up his case against Stephen at the Old Bailey, the Court of Criminal Appeal threw out Gordon's conviction. Lord Parker, one of the three judges, however, refused to state that Christine had lied. In December, 1963, she was tried, convicted and sentenced to nine months in prison for perjury in that case. Yet, in July, Lord Parker went out of his way to say that the court was not holding that she had lied. Had he admitted the truth, her evidence at Stephen's trial would have immediately have been called into question. It must be concluded that Lord Parker perverted the course of justice on purpose to ensure that Stephen was convicted, a view shared by many eminent lawyers in Britain.

In his summing up, the words that the judge used were fair, but the way in which he spoke them clearly indicated to the jury his opinion that Stephen was guilty. Although Stephen had remained optimistic of acquittal, he now lost all hope. He suspected that he would be found guilty and sent to prison. The police had also told him that, if he was acquitted, they would charge him with procuring an abortion for friends.

He went home to the flat of his friend with whom he was staying, Noel Howard-Jones, and wrote some letters. He cooked a meal for himself and a girl-friend, Julie Gulliver, and drove her home. He went back to the flat, and swallowed a lethal dose of Nembutal. Howard-Jones found him at 8.30 a.m. the next morning and rushed him to the hospital. The jury gave a verdict that day: not guilty of procuring, guilty on two of the charges of living on the earnings of prostitutes, namely Christine Keeler and Mandy Rice-Davies.

Stephen died on Saturday, August 3rd, 1963.

At his funeral six days later, attended by only six mourners, all men, there was a wreath of one hundred white carnations from, among others, Kenneth Tynan, John Osborne, Joe Orton and Penelope Gilliat. It said:

To Stephen Ward
Victim of Hypocrisy

Reference

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ERNST TOLLER

David Lester

Toller was born at Samotschin in Prussia, near the Polish border, on December 1, 1893. His father was a town councillor, and his mother looked after a shopkeeping-agricultural establishment. Both supported the Imperial regime. His great-grandparents had come from Spain and Poland to Prussia and retained their Orthodox lifestyle. His grandfather studied the Talmud day and night.

The Prussian Jews of the region were nationalistic and enthusiastic about German culture. From an early age Toller began to dislike both Poles and Catholics and wanted to become a fully-accepted German. He despised Slavs and rejected Judaism. He was pleased when he was able to attend a boy's Latin school run by a Christian pastor rather than the separate school for Jewish children.

He went on to the Bromberg Realgymnasium which aimed to produce obedient servants of the state, and Toller became an ardent nationalist. He thought of becoming a writer, an actor or a farmer, but he also wanted wealth, comfort and fame. He enrolled at the University of Grenoble in 1913, joining many other German students there, and attended lectures on law, literature and philosophy. When Austria declared war on Serbia in 1914, he hurried home and joined the military. He was sent to the barracks in Munich, and in March 1915 he volunteered for the front-lines. He was sent to the artillery at Pont-à-Mousson and then to a machine-gun section at Bois-le-Prêtre. His service ended in May 1916 partly because of a nervous breakdown and partly because of heart and stomach trouble and, as happened to many others, the horror of the First World War changed his views from militarism to pacificism.

He enrolled at the University of Munich and studied art, law and literature, picked up his writing again, and led a comfortable life -- visiting galleries, attending concerts and vacationing with an unnamed sweetheart. But he soon fell under the influence of the young Expressionist generation. As an intellectual leader at the university, he was invited to a congress of culture at the Thuringian Castle of Lauenstein in 1916, but the remoteness of the discourse from the reality of the trenches angered Toller.

Toller moved to Heidelberg for the winter semester and joined a group agitating for international conciliation and the abolition of poverty. The group was attacked by right-wing newspapers and professors and called traitors and pacifists. The government deported the foreign members and put the German men into the military. Toller escaped to Berlin but then returned to Munich with Kurt Eisner, the Independent Socialist leader. Eisner aroused the workers and organized a strike, whereupon he was arrested. Right-wing socialists took over the organization, and the strike collapsed.

During this time, Toller made his first political speech and wrote an appeal to the people of Munich which brought 50,000 workers to a public protest. As a punishment,

Toller was put back into uniform and sent to a military prison. In prison, Toller had time to write and he finished his first play (*Die Wandlung*), and he now became a socialist. Conflicts with the authorities and illness led to a transfer to a reserve battalion. His mother took legal steps to have him declared insane, and he was sent to a psychiatric clinic. He was released back into service after four days, and he served until the summer of 1918.

He now decided to become active in politics. He went back to Munich to join Eisner who was now the Prime Minister of the Free State of Bavaria, appointed by the Workmen's and Soldiers' Council, and Toller became president of the Central Council of Workmen's, Peasants', and Soldiers' Soviets, representing Bavaria in the National Congress of Soviets held in Berlin in December, 1918, after the Armistice.

After attending the Congress of the Second International in Berne in February 1919, Eisner was assassinated in Munich on February 21. The deputies fled, and Bavaria was left without a government. The Communists refused to participate in a new government, and soon rival governments were established. On April 6, the Socialists and other groups, led by Toller and others, set up a Bavarian Soviet Republic without Communist support, whereupon the Communists tried to overthrow it. Eventually White troops entered Munich on May 1 and defeated both the Socialists and the Communists.

Toller went into hiding but was caught and sent to prison. The court acknowledged that Toller's motives in the political conflicts were honorable and sentenced him to only five years of imprisonment. He began his sentence in the summer of 1919. He had time for political discussions with the other prisoners and for writing, and he fought the authorities for the rights of the prisoners. Between 1919 and 1924, he wrote his best works, plays, poems and essays. As his sentence drew to a close, Toller began to fear freedom -- could he take care of himself and could he meet others' expectations for him? He longed for death instead. He was released out of state (in Saxony) on July 15, 1924.

At the age of 31, he resolved to fight for a better world, but free from involvement in the political parties. First, he worked to get left-wing political prisoners released. He visited Russia in 1926 and again in 1934 and the United States in 1929. He continued to write, but Willibrand (1940) considered his creativity to be in decline during these years. However, his works were translated widely and continued to appear in print during the 1930s.

He visited France and England and went to the United States in 1936 with his young wife, the nineteen-year-old actress, Lili Christiane Grautoff. He went to Hollywood where he wrote scripts and his wife acted. In 1937, he wrote *No More Peace!*, a pro-pacifist anti-Nazi satire, translated by W. H. Auden. During the Spanish Civil War, he worked to feed the starving on both sides of the conflict, eventually turning over the proceeds of his efforts to the Quakers.

He was working on *Pastor Hall* in 1939 along with other projects, but he was plagued by melancholia, insomnia and doubts over the quality of his current writing. He gave a talk on May 21 to the International P.E.N. Club convention in New York City and that night spoke out against suicide. The next afternoon he hung himself in his hotel bathroom.

His suicide created a sensation in literary circles throughout the Western world. Commentators wondered what role was played in his decision by his disillusionment with war and revolution and his opposition to violence, the burden of his fame, his financial difficulties, and his declining creativity. Others focused on his disappointments in love, frictions with colleagues[8] and residual psychological problems from his imprisonment. His suicide seems to have motivated by many possible desires, yet it remains a puzzle.

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[8] He was facing litigation over material he had purchased for his last play Pastor Hall.

SIMONE WEIL

David Lester

Simone's father, Bernard Weil, was born in 1872 in Strasbourg, and became a physician. Although his family adhered strictly to Judaism, Dr. Weil was an atheist. Simone's mother was born in Rostov-on-Don in Russia in 1879 but moved to Anvers in Belgium. Her parents were liberal Jews and not very religious. The marriage, which took place in 1905, was a happy one.

Almost three years after the birth of a boy, André, Simone was born February 3 1909 in Paris in her parents' apartment, a month premature, but in fine health. Six months later, Mrs. Weil had appendicitis (and an operation in 1910) and after that Simone did not fare well. The family belief was that her mother's milk had affected her -- Simone would say that she had been "poisoned" in infancy. She was weaned after a year of breast-feeding but then became seriously ill. She refused solid food and would eat only from a bottle. At two, Simone had adenoidal problems and coughed a lot at night. At three-and-a-half, Simone developed appendicitis and had an operation as had her brother a year earlier. Simone's recovery was slow, and she developed a fear of doctors. Measles followed in 1914.

The family had a fear of infection and followed strict washing habits especially before eating. This atmosphere led Simone to have feelings of repugnance from being kissed and eating or touching certain things.

During The First World War, Dr. Weil was assigned to Neufchâteau where, despite rules against it, he took his family. Dr. Weil developed angina and bronchitis and was sent to Menton to recover. His family followed and, upon his recovery, accompanied him to his next assignments.

André was bright and quickly developed an interest in mathematics. Simone became enthusiastic over patriotic poems when she was six, and they both loved literature, learning scenes from Corneille and Racine from memory. At school, Simone seemed slow, but this was because of her small hands and weak wrists which made her write quite slowly -- a problem that afflicted her for the rest of her life. Unlike André, she also doubted her competence and had a fear of failing. However, early in their schooling, they were both the best in their classes.

The house had few toys, and Simone never played with dolls. By the age of ten, she was interested in politics, and her classmates called her a Communist, to which she replied that she was a Bolshevik. At the age of eleven, she went to a public meeting of the unemployed. Visitors described her as sweet, gay and strong willed, but with a sense of humor.

André passed his first university examination at the age of 14 and went to the Ecole Normale at the age of 16, leaving Simone feeling stupid compared to him. In her year at school, from age 13 to 14, a disagreeable teacher who disparaged Simone caused her to fall into a deep despair at her lack of ability. However, she passed her *bachot* in 1924 and enrolled in a school known for its fine philosophy teaching, and she attended the lectures of Alain (Emile Chartier). Eventually, she was admitted in 1928 to the Ecole Normale (where she was the only female in her group), having already passed some of the examinations required for teaching philosophy, sociology and psychology in the schools.

Her interest in politics, and especially the fate of the poor, made her wish she had been born a male, and she attempted to minimize her femininity. She did not dress to be attractive (she dressed more like a poor person or a monk), and she avoided any romantic or sexual involvement with others.

An intellectual from the first, Simone hung out with classmates in cafés, drinking black coffee and smoking, discussing ideas at length. However, although her ideas were left-wing, she never joined any political party. She thought too independently to ever follow an organized body of thought. Following Alain, she became a pacifist and helped organize lectures for the workers on Sundays on political and economic issues which continued through 1931. Some of the workers were able to pass competitive exams and improve their positions. In the summer of 1929, Simone went to stay with an aunt and worked in the fields as a farm laborer in order to better understand the position of the workers.

Simone had few friends at the Ecole Normale. Many were in awe of her, and they feared her confrontational style. They made jokes about her behind her back and, except for a few close friends, avoided her. She graduated in 1931 with her *agrégation* diploma and accepted a job teaching at Le Puy.

At this time, Simone developed the severe headaches that plagued her for the rest of her life. Later, she thought it was from a larval sinusitis, but her father suffered from migraines too, suggesting a genetic basis. Simone's headaches could last up a week and, while she had them, she could not eat and she would sometimes vomit. She often taught her classes in this state, but she took short medical leaves throughout her teaching career.

Life As A Teacher

Before she began teaching at Le Puy in the Fall of 1931, Simone attended a union congress and met others involved in helping the workers. Simone preferred to work with the unions rather than with political parties, believing that only the unions could bring about a revolution.

To help her settle in at Le Puy, Simone's mother went with her, helped her find an apartment with a roommate from the school, obtained the services of a maid, purchased

coal for the heating and tried to ensure that Simone ate well enough to survive. This was a pattern in Simone's life as a teacher -- either being taken care at home with her parents or having her mother arrange living matters for her near the schools. Simone did not care about domestic matters and certainly was not interested in eating a healthy life-sustaining diet.[9] But she comes across as a pampered child who was not capable of surviving by herself in the world. Luckily, she was always able to find others (family and friends) to take care of her.

Simone quickly got involved with the unions in the Haute-Loire and Loire regions and joined the National Teacher's Union herself. She wrote many articles for workers newspapers and magazines, and she taught courses for the workers. She participated in job actions by the workers and the unemployed, even in the town of Le Puy, none of which was welcomed by her employers who tried to dismiss her.[10] Locally, Simone was viewed as a communist. All of this, in addition to her school position, created great stress in Simone's life.

After her first year of teaching, in the summer of 1932, Simone traveled to Germany to gain some understanding of Nazism. She stayed as much as she could with working families so as to better experience conditions.

She was transferred to a new school, at Auxerre, for the new year, and she settled in there with the help of her mother who this time paid a local restaurant to try to feed Simone better than Simone would have chosen. Simone got on even less well with the administration and her colleagues at Auxerre than at Le Puy. But she taught her classes and continued to write, at first about conditions in Germany, and she remained involved in the debates going on in her union, now the United Federation of Teachers. As the Nazis rose to power in Germany, and many leftists and Jews fled Germany, Simone also now worked to help them, even persuading her parents to house occasional refugees. At Auxerre, she tried to be friendly with the workers and participated in the grape harvest. She tried to work occasionally in the factories and participate in other jobs with them.

The school inspectors did not approve of her teaching. Her classes did not seem prepared, her lectures disjointed, and her political views "too advanced." Furthermore, not many of her students passed their *bachot*. The headmistress abolished the philosophy courses, thereby requiring Simone to request a new post for the next year.

That summer, she went on holiday to Spain with her parents, and while there Simone contacted the militants among the workers' movement. She then moved to teach at Roanne in the Fall of 1933. Life continued as usual, this time with better relationships at the school -- writing, attending meetings with groups dedicated to improving the conditions of the workers, lecturing and offering courses to groups of workers. In late

[9] Simone insisted on living on what a new teacher would earn, even though she was paid the salary of a full professor. She also refused to heat her part of the apartment.

[10] The unemployed did win concessions in Le Puy. Some of them gained employment, better work conditions, better wages and a soup kitchen.

December 1933, Trotsky stayed with the Weils in Paris, and Simone debated (and quarreled) with him during his stay. Although willing to join in specific actions, she rejected participating in the democratic and anti-fascist forces that were developing, primarily because of her distrust of the political parties. She felt that modern society was moving toward totalitarianism rather than greater freedom, and she was not deluded into thinking that communism was the answer.

In order to better understand the life of the workers, Simone decided to take a sabbatical the next year and work full-time in a factory.

The Transition

Simone got a job only with the aid a friend who found her work in factory as a power-press operator. She moved to a small apartment near the factory so as to be independent of her parents. Her fellow workers noticed how inept she was (though a few workers were worse) and, when they observed that she rarely brought food to work, brought her snacks. She never reached the speed required for her job, and she was incredibly tired each evening. When she ate with her parents, she paid them for the meal to better see how she could live on her wages. Many days, she cried, at work and in her apartment. In January she developed otitis in her ear and went home for a month to recover and then on a trip to Switzerland with her mother. She went back to work, was injured and quit. She had worked from December 4 1934 to April 5 1935, with a sick leave from January 10 to February 25. She was also laid off for two weeks in March. She then worked at another factory for a month, until she was fired, and then almost three months in the summer of 1935 at a Renault plant.

She wrote about these experiences, and she realized that oppressive working conditions does not lead to rebellion but rather submission, and this led to her to view the future rather pessimistically.

For 1935 to 1936, she went back to teaching, this time at Bourges, after a holiday in Portugal with her parents. During this year, she tried farm work, but the farmer and his wife could not tolerate her. They thought that she lacked common sense (for example, not washing her hands before milking the cows), and she never stopped talking about poverty and the prospect of war.

In July 1936, the Spanish generals revolted against the government, thus initiating what came to be called the Spanish Civil War. Simone decided to go and visit "as a journalist," and her parents decided to go there also. Simone met up with a communist fighting group and accompanied them on some missions. Unfortunately, she burned herself badly in some boiling oil and had to return to Barcelona where her parents found her and persuaded her to return to France for better treatment for the burn. While Simone had been with the group there had been no battles, but soon after her return to France the group was cut to pieces at Perdiguera and few escaped.

After reflection, as the war became a war between nations, Simone saw the danger in it, since the combatants ignored justice, liberty and humanity. The wound (and her headaches) necessitated that Simone request a leave of absence from teaching, and this leave was extended for the whole school year. This left Simone free to agitate on behalf of the workers, writing articles and attending meetings. She traveled to Italy, and she began to enjoy listening to Gregorian chants.

In 1937 she went back to teaching (at Saint-Quentin), but her headaches led to her to request a leave in January, a leave which was extended for two years. In fact, she never resumed her career as a teacher. She turned her attention to the plight of immigrant workers in France (such as the Algerians), and she participated in efforts to start negotiations between Hitler and other nations in order to prevent war. Yet she also pondered how best to defend France and decided that decentralization and armed resistance was the solution.

The events of 1938 and 1939 led Simone to finally renounce pacifism. In the choice between enslavement and war, Simone chose war. After a trip to Italy, spending part of the time with her parents, she sought treatment for her headaches, fearing a tumor, but nothing was found to relieve them. She also was ill for a time with pleurisy. She began to become interested in Catholicism after an experience in which she thought that Christ was present while she recited a poem in order to try to alleviate a headache. From this time on, she discussed Catholicism with priests and others, seriously considering becoming admitted into that faith. But in the end, her refusal to accept dogmatic assertions from authorities prevented her from ever doing so.[11]

War was declared in September 1939, and the Weils returned to Paris from Italy and the south of France. Simone supported the British. She planned a mission that involved parachuting troops into seized territories and worked hard to get authorities to accept her idea for several years, being rejected, of course, at every point.[12] She never understood that military authorities would give no serious thought to a plan from a civilian, let alone an eccentric civilian. She also worked on a plan to form units of front-line nurses.

Simone's brother, André, was tried for avoiding military service (he had been in Finland at the outbreak of war and shipped back to France via Sweden and England) and sentenced to five years in prison. He volunteered to serve in a combat unit, and so the sentence was suspended.

As the Germans invaded France and neared Paris, her parents persuaded Simone to leave with them, and they traveled to Vichy, eventually settling in Marseilles in September 1940. Her plan was then to go to England to join the French who were continuing the fight. She applied for a teaching post abroad (in the French colonies) but never heard from the authorities. She wrote poems and articles on literature, and she

[11] Several of the priests to whom she talked considered her a heretic.
[12] She wanted to join the force herself and even threatened suicide if she was not allowed to participate.

helped a little with some the anti-Fascists now interned in camps in Vichy. She was interrogated several times by the police, but never arrested. She continued to eat very little, but now her rationale was that she should follow the official allotments. (She also gave some of her allotment to the prisoners in the camps.)

André and his wife had managed to get to America, and Simone realized that her parents would not leave without her. To get them to safety, she would have to leave too. While waiting for the opportunity, Simone worked a little on a farm and helped with the grape harvest. She continued to write poems and on literature, and she went to Mass regularly.

The Weils managed to get a passage to New York, via Morocco, leaving in May 1942 and arriving in July. Simone contacted military and political people to tell them her plans for the war and to volunteer for sabotage missions. Eventually, however, some thought that she might be able to help the Free French in England, and she was allowed to sail for England in November. Her parents tried to get permission to join Simone in England, but they were always turned down.

London And Death

Simone lived at first in the barracks housing the volunteers, but she eventually moved to rooms in Notting Hill in January 1943. She wrote papers for the Free French, primarily concerned with the reorganization of France after the war, but her colleagues saw them as too abstract with no concrete suggestions or practical application.

She lived in her rooms without heat, of course, and ate little. The rejection of her plans (for front-line nurses and for special missions) depressed her. She felt that death was her vocation, but she could not obtain the death she desired.[13] Her headaches had returned, and they combined with her depression to depress her appetite even further. She did not want to be one of the privileged, but her body was becoming more and more fatigued. On April 15, she was found unconscious in her room. She was found to have tuberculosis and sent to a hospital. For a few days she improved but then, because she would not eat enough, her condition worsened. She resigned from the Free French organization in July and refused further treatment at the hospital. It seems that she had decided to die.

She was transferred to a sanitarium in Ashford on August 17 where she continued to refuse almost all food. she said that "she couldn't eat when she thought of the French people starving in France" (Pétrement, 1976, p. 536). She died on August 22. The death certificate gave the cause of death as "cardiac failure due to myocardial degeneration of the heart muscles due to starvation and pulmonary tuberculosis....The deceased did kill and slay herself by refusing to eat whilst the balance of her mind was disturbed." (p. 537).

[13] Colleagues saw that Simone would be a handicap on any mission and endanger others.

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PRIMO LEVI

David Lester

On April 11, 1987, Primo Levi, a survivor of Auschwitz, jumped to his death in the stairwell of the building where he lived and where he had been born. Of the rarity of suicide in the concentration camps, he said that suicide as a punishment for guilt (real or imagined) was not necessary in the camps since one was being punished daily. Was his suicide later then at the age of 67 a punishment for his presumed sins?

Early Life

Primo was born at home in Turin on July 31, 1919, into a Jewish community that was quite integrated and assimilated into the Italian culture.[14] Primo's father, Cesare, was 40 years old at the time, trained as an electrical engineer.[15] Cesare had married Ester Luzzati, seventeen years his junior, in 1917. The family did not observe most of the Jewish customs; indeed Cesare even ate ham! Cesare died of stomach cancer in 1942.

As a child, Primo read popular science books, and his favorite subjects were chemistry and astronomy. Primo's childhood and adolescence were uneventful. He was rather shy with girls[16], and he had a fear of spiders. The family vacationed in the country every summer, and Primo had a large number of cousins and a few friends for company. He attended a local primary school from the ages of six to eleven, had his bar mitzvah at the age of thirteen and entered the Liceo Massimo d'Azeglio which had recently been purged of teachers who refused to sign the oath of loyalty to Fascism in 1931. Primo did not suffer taunts because he was Jewish, although the circumcised boys were teased for having been "castrated." Primo was shy and studious, and he decided at the age of fourteen to take up chemistry. He graduated in 1937 and entered the Chemical Institute.

After the first five months of study, Primo was one of the twenty students out of eighty first-year students permitted to continue. Although a law was passed in 1938 prohibiting Jewish students from studying in the universities, those already enrolled were permitted to continue. Many thousands of Jews emigrated, a similar number converted to Christianity, while a few committed suicide.[17]

Primo was shunned by many of his fellow students, but he continued his studies. Primo and his friends would often travel to the mountains to climb, braving the hunger and cold, and they had contact with anti-fascist elements. However, despite rumors of

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[14] A younger sister, Anna Maria, was born in 1921.

[15] Primo's grandfather had also trained as an engineer, and he committed suicide because his wife was unfaithful to him.

[16] His shyness was caused in part by his feelings of inferiority for being Jewish. His shyness caused him so much torment that he did think of suicide.

[17] During this period of racial laws, one Jewish officer, Colonel Segri shot himself in front of his assembled troops when was forced to retire because he was Jewish.

Jews being exterminated in Germany, Primo and his circle did not experience much hostility from fellow Italians and did not have the motivation to emigrate.

Primo passed his exams easily, but he had trouble finding a professor to sponsor his thesis. Finally, a young professor at the Institute of Experimental Physics agreed to sponsor him, and Primo graduated with his doctorate summa cum laude in July 1941. His diploma noted that the holder was a Jew.

Not many people would hire a Jew, but a lieutenant in the army wanted to extract nickel from some discarded mining deposits and hired Primo to work on the project. Primo went to work at the mine, some thirty kilometers from Turin. After a year, they realized that extracting the nickel would not be feasible, and so Primo looked for another job. His father died that year, and Primo got a job with a Swiss manager of a pharmaceutical company in Milan who did not feel bound by the anti-Jewish laws.

In 1942, as the allies landed in Africa and the Soviets launched a counter-offensive, Primo and his friends became more involved with the anti-fascist groups. After the allies landed in Italy in July, 1943, and Mussolini was deposed, Primo and his friends went on holiday in the mountains. They returned in time for the German occupation of Italy. By September 8, the Germans were in Turin and Milan, and Primo and his friends took to the mountains to join the resistance.

They were quickly betrayed and captured, without having fought, on December 13. They were moved to a prison in the Aosta barracks and then moved on January 20, 1944, to a transit camp at Fossoli di Carpi, near Modena, where it was thought at first they would stay until the war ended. After a few weeks, some 650 Italian Jews were in the camp with yellow triangles on their shirts. They were deported to Auschwitz on February 22, a journey taking four days. Of the 650 Jews transported that day, only 23 came home.

Auschwitz And The Journey Home

The journey to Auschwitz was exactly as has been described before -- with the starving and thirsty inmates crowded in unsanitary conditions. At Auschwitz, Primo was one of the 96 men and 29 women chosen for the labor camp, while the remaining Jews were gassed. Primo was sent to Auschwitz III Monowitz, a chemical complex where the plan was to build a factory to produce synthetic rubber, run by I. G. Farben. The life expectancy in this camp had been three to four months, but a recent increase in food rations had raised it to six months.

After acclimatization. Primo was assigned to a group for unskilled laborers. Primo decided that he had to observe the events in the camp with a scientist's eye for detail in case he should survive and could bear witness to the brutality. This goal helped him survive. In addition, an Italian non-Jewish employee of I. G. Farben, Lorenzo Perrone, brought Primo two liters of soup and extra bread every day, a supplement Primo

shared with a fellow countryman who worked alongside him. Primo survived a "selection" in October 1944, when many in the labor force were sent to be gassed.

In late 1944, Primo was one of the Jews assigned to a chemical laboratory, so that he was working under a roof in a heated building. On January 11, 1945, Primo caught scarlet fever and was sent to the infirmary. As the Soviet troops advanced, the Germans moved 58,000 prisoners out of Auschwitz for a forced march toward Germany. They probably meant to kill the sick prisoners, but they left without doing so on January 17, 1945, leaving 950 patients and Muselmänner behind.

The prisoners left behind survived for the ten days until the Russians liberated the camp. Primo took a lead in this for his fellow infectious patients, foraging for food and for wood to burn to keep warm. About 500 of the 850 prisoners died in this period, and 200 or so shortly thereafter. Only one of the eleven patients in Primo's group died.

Once the Russians arrived, on January 27, 1945, they set about organizing the camp. The Russians drafted Poles to clean up the camp, and they brought in doctors and nurses. Primo had a high fever that did not break for five days. By the end of February Primo moved to the main camp from where he and a few other prisoners were sent to Cracow. The train broke down before arriving, and so Primo and a Greek prisoner walked into Cracow and stayed together. They decided to move on to Katowice, 70 kilometers away where they found a transit camp. Quartered among the Italians, Primo rested, but he developed "dry pleurisy." On July 1, the Italian prisoners were loaded onto a train for repatriation. Eight hundred Italians crowded on to the train and the train took six days to reach Odessa. After a delay, the Russians loaded the Italians and Romanians and sent them north to Slutsk, 100 kilometers south of Minsk, where some ten thousand foreigners were quartered. On July 20 they moved to Starye Dorogi, 70 kilometers east, where Primo stayed until September 15. Finally, the Russians found a way to get them home. The Italians boarded yet another train, which went through Romania, Hungary, Slovakia and Austria whereupon the Russians handed the Italians over to the Americans. Their new train headed first for Germany and at one stop, as Primo walked around Munich, the idea of testifying as to what the Germans had done in the camps took shape as a duty that he had to perform. The train crossed back into Austria and thence into Italy, stopping near Verona. The journey had taken 34 days.

The next day, Primo got a local train to Turin and arrived on October 19, 1945. He walked to his old home to find that all of his family had survived.

Testifying

At first, Primo was depressed but, as he told his story to relatives and friends, his desire to write it down returned.

He began working for a subsidiary of Dupont in January 1946. He worked diligently and began to set down his story during free moments. While there he met Lucia

Morpurgo and fell in love with her. They were engaged that year and married in September 1947. Primo and Lucia had a daughter Lisa (in 1948) and a son Renzo (in 1957), and they moved in with Primo's mother who was still living in the old family apartment. Lucia's mother lived nearby.

Primo tried to find a better job but decided to try to set up an independent company with a good friend. They converted tin into stannous chloride and looked for consulting work, but they could not generate enough income. In December 1947, he met the owner of a small paint business. Primo joined him and went to work developing special varnishes. Primo concentrated on developing wire enamels and rose to be the general manager of the company for the next thirty years.

His first publication on the concentration camps was a ten-page co-authored report in *Minerva Medica*, but Primo had trouble finding a published for his book-length account (*If This Is A Man*). A small publisher eventually printed 2,500 copies in the Fall of 1947, but the book was met with indifference. Primo was so disappointed that, apart from a few short stories, he wrote nothing more until 1961.

Primo enjoyed working, but Italy went through a period of worker unrest, with a strong Marxist influence, and eventually Primo's attitude led to hostile reactions from the trade unionists in Turin and Italy. In 1957, Primo joined a lawsuit against I. G. Farben for compensation for their Jewish slave laborers. Primo received 2,500 Deutchmarks in October 1960.

In 1955, the publishing house of Einauldi agreed to bring out a new edition of *If This Is A Man*, but it did not appear until June 1958, with a print run of 2,000 copies. It sold about one thousand copies a year. An English translation appeared in 1960, but it too sold poorly despite receiving good reviews. A German edition appeared in 1962.

In 1961, after conversations with friends, Primo decided to write about his experiences in Russia. Writing after work and on weekends, he finished *The Truce* in November 1962. The book appeared in April 1963 to great success, and this increased the sales of his earlier book. *The Truce* received a minor literary prize, the first Campiello Prize. Einauldi also published textbooks editions of both books which became part of the school curriculum in 1973.

Thus, encouraged, Primo began to experiment with writing. He wrote science fiction stories (under a pen name) which won a prize. His books and stories were made into radio plays and theatrical productions, and Primo began at this time to visit schools and colleges to talk about his experiences in Auschwitz. He was shocked to find the degree of ignorance about the concentration camps and that the students were surprised to find that Primo's experiences were recent and not ancient history.

Primo began to contribute to La Stampa, the Turinese daily newspaper. He also wrote poems and stories, but his next book of stories was received with indifference.

Primo felt that his creative period was past, and his depressions became more frequent and sustained. However, he continued to write. *The Periodic Table*, an autobiographical work, appeared in June 1975, to great success, and Primo felt able to retire from business to devote himself more to writing. Hitherto, he had not been accepted by the literary community, which viewed him as a chemist who happened to write. Primo wanted greater recognition for his writing abilities.

Retirement And Death

Primo's mother, now 80 years old, fell ill in 1974 and began to be a tiresome patient who insisted that Primo and his wife attend to her needs, despite help from nurses. She had a stroke and was paralyzed down one side. His mother-in-law, 83 years old, was now blind. Primo and his wife had hardly any time to leave Turin. Primo felt that he was under house-arrest with a bed-ridden, demanding mother.

Despite this, Primo continued to write. A book of poems came out in 1975 and a longer collection of poems in 1984, and these showed much greater rage and hatred toward the Nazis than did his prose. His next fictional book (*The Wrench*) was published in 1978 and attacked by left-wing radicals. Literary critics also attack Primo's writing for its clarity. Despite these problems, Primo's books continued to win literary prizes.

By now, he was tiring of giving talks to students about the concentration camps, but in the later 1970s and early 1980s, several writers and speakers began to deny the existence of the Holocaust and to claim that it was a lie invented by the Jews. Primo was outraged by these articles and attacked them in print and in interviews.

These incidents seemed to increase Primo's feelings of guilt for having survived when so many died. He sometimes felt that the "best" had died, for those who survived had not always behaved in the way that one did in a civilized society.

A book of short stories appeared in 1981 and a novel in 1982 (*If Not Now, When?*) about Jewish partisans in Belarus during the war. This book was an immediate success and won two prizes. But the literary world still did not view Primo as a first-class writer.

The Israeli invasion of Palestine in 1982 disturbed Primo, and he spoke out against it, upsetting many Jews. However, when critics compared Israel to the Nazis, he was again outraged -- the two situations were very different. After an attack on the synagogue in Rome in October 1982, killing one person and wounding 34 others, Primo refused all further comment on the situation. He tried to resume his talks to students in 1983 but was so discouraged by their response that he stopped, this time for good.

Primo's fame grew as his works were translated into foreign languages, and many invitations were extended to him. Taking care of the two old ladies day and night forced

him to decline almost all of them. He managed a few trips to the mountains with his friends and he did manage a brief but hectic visit to the United States in 1985.[18]

In 1985, his publisher, Einauldi, was ruined financially by ill-conceived projects. This caused him anxiety over his finances. In addition, the situation with his mother depressed him, and he felt less able to write than before. Friends tried to convince him to put his mother in a home, but he could not make such a decision.

He managed to find the energy for another book about the camps (*The Drowned And The Saved*) which came out in 1986, and Primo and his wife managed a trip to England that year. But in that year, Primo's depression worsened, and his cousin prescribed antidepressants for him. He managed visits to England and Sweden later that year and was awarded more prizes.

But his depression continued. He permitted a biography to be undertaken (by Giovanni Tesio), and he told Tesio that he felt his entire writing had been useless and that he was deeply affected by the press coverage given to the Holocaust-deniers. He wrote to an American translator of his work two months before his suicide about his sleepless nights and the anguish over his bed-ridden mother. He told her that his current life was worse than Auschwitz because he was no longer young or had the ability to withstand stress.

His memory began to fail him, and he sometimes read his own books to refresh his memory. He thought that he had been awarded his doctorate, not because his work had merit, but because his anti-fascist professors wanted to demonstrate their political views. He thought that he had been a useless partisan.

In March 1987, Primo had to undergo prostate surgery, and there was some post-operation bleeding. At home, he experienced pain and difficultly re-adapting. Friends tried to encourage him to visit them and take a break from his home, but he declined. Despite visits from friends, projects in progress (one friend was considering making a film of The Truce), and rumors that he had been nominated for Nobel Prize, he remained depressed.

On the morning of April 10, 1987, Primo called the chief Rabbi of Rome and said that he did not know how to go on and that he could no longer stand life. His mother's illness reminded him of the men lying dead in Auschwitz. A few minutes after 10 am, he fell down the stairwell and died on the floor of the apartment building. He left no suicide note, and several friends could not accept that it was suicide.

Reference

Anissimov, M. (1999). *Primo Levi*. New York: Overlook Press.

[18] His sister came to Turin to care for the old ladies.

THE LUXTONS

David Lester

In 1567 Bernard Luxton purchased Holcombe Manor in Devon from Sir Amyas Pawlet, the jailer of Mary Queen of Scots. By the mid-1800s, the head of the Luxton clan was Robert George Luxton who owned 2000 acres and six farms and had ten servants, a pack of fox hounds, thoroughbred race hoses and three thousand pounds in the bank. But Robert George decided to finance improvements in his farming (as well as his other extravagant pastimes such as gambling) with bank loans. His farming methods were the most advanced but when, in the late 1800s, cheap food flooded in from the United States, Argentina, Russia, Australia and New Zealand, English farmers could not compete. This competition, combined with a series of bad winters and summers, wiped out thousands of farmers, many of whom sold up and emigrated to the colonies, some 700,000 between 1870 and 1900. Robert George had to sell out, slowly, and he died in 1902 at the age of 84, breaking his neck while hunting. He left an empty and mortgaged house and 30 pounds to pay for his funeral.

His cousin, Lawrence Luxton, farmed 230 acres in West Chapple, and he watched his cousin's choices and behavior with disapproval. Lawrence decided that, if you made your farm self-sufficient, kept your stock until the price was right, and did not borrow any money to make improvements, then you could survive hard times. He raised his son, Robert John, with this philosophy. He raised sheep and cows and produced cider. He paid his workers fairly, but did not socialize with neighbors or relatives. Spare money was saved or used to purchase bonds. When Lawrence died in 1902, Robert John became the master of the farm.

He married a local woman, Wilmot Short, in 1906, and they had a daughter Frances in 1908, much to Robert's disappointment. Robbie came in 1911 and Alan in 1921. They grew up with the harsh discipline of the farm and Robert's brooding disappointment. The children heard tales of lost fortunes and family dissolution, irreligion, crop failures, incest (the other branch of the Luxton had preferred to marry first cousins), and debt. Robert refused to install electricity or mains water, and he refused to communicate with the outside world.

The children had to work alongside Robert and the laborers and, in addition, Frances had to take care of her younger brothers. Frances learned how to make cheese, butter and cream, alongside her mother. Frances had no toys, but her mother taught her to read and write. She went off to the village school, two miles away, and she was a good student, helping teach the younger pupils. Since she had so far to walk to school, she took her lunch and ate it with two cousins (a brother and sister who never married), and later the brother shot his sister and tried to kill himself (but survived).

After the birth of Alan when Frances was thirteen and her mother forty, the mother began to suffer from various ailments -- she eventually stayed in bed in the parlor.

Frances raised Alan and became a surrogate wife to Robert, while Robbie became increasingly attached and devoted to Frances. Robbie went off to a boarding school, but Robert took him out after two years. Robbie never was interested in women or friends outside of the family, and his devotion to Frances was perceived by outsiders as having incestuous overtones.

Frances, however, longer to meet new people, to travel and to marry. Cousins visited occasionally, and one (William) grew friendly with Frances. Frances joined the Devon County Dairy School and even dated one boy. But her father found out and followed them on horseback on their walks. The romance did not survive. Frances saved (it took her three years) for a holiday with a girl-friend in 1938 to Scotland.

Robert then suffered a stroke, and Frances assumed control of the household, and Robbie, now 27, took over running the farm which he did in exactly the same way as his father had. Robert died of pneumonia in 1939 (and Wilmot at the end of the war). The farm was left to both sons, but Alan could not sell any of the property without Robbie's permission. Robbie paid Alan ten shillings a week for six 12-hour days.

During the war, an American Air Base was built nearby, and later the Canadians took it over. Frances met a Canadian airman who may have become her lover. They wrote back and forth after the war until 1965, but then the relationship ended. Alan socialized with the airmen at the local pubs. He joined the Young Farmer's Club and began to think of ways of improving the farm. He wanted to renovate a house on the property for himself, but Robbie resolutely refused him permission.

Frances went off to visit cousin William and met a widowed Dutch sea captain who was looking for a wife. But she did not leave her brothers to explore a relationship with him, although they corresponded for six years. Robbie seemed to realize that he might drive Frances away, and so he started being much more gentle and affectionate toward her. Alan bought a car (a 1920s Austin) and got engaged to a local girl. However, Robbie refused to buy Alan out so that Alan could marry. Robbie would have had to borrow money to do so, and he would not, but he did suggest, finally, renovating the old house on the property for Alan. Alan saw that they could not farm the same land -- he was for modern improvements, Robbie still would not install public utilities or use modern machinery. After a physical fight, Alan gave in. He returned the engagement ring and kept to his bedroom. He dropped to 110 pounds and was filthy. He was diagnosed as severely mentally ill and admitted as a private patient to a mental asylum where he had electroshock therapy. When he returned home, he was still disturbed. Periods of sanity alternated with periods of withdrawal and abusive tirades at Robbie.

In the 1960s, Frances began to travel each year. She went to Israel in 1967, and later to Africa and America. Frances's mood improved greatly during this period -- she put on weight, bought new clothes, cleaned the house and improved the garden. She also began to search the family tree to find cousins who could take over the farm.

But by the early 1970s, the three siblings were reclusives. They still farmed using Victorian methods, without water or electricity or any modern equipment. Their energy came from a water-wheel; they used scythes to cut the hay; they even made their own paint. The villagers saw them as snobbish and cheap, but they supported church causes and occasionally gave money to old friends for their children. Their anxiety made them economize. Fred Lyne, one of their workers, saw them eating lettuce sandwiches and rock cakes not fit for the farm animals. They were getting old, afflicted with ailments, and depressed. Using Victorian methods, the work was extremely hard for them. Robbie got a skin disease that was painful so that he could not even get boots on. Cousin William thought that Robbie might have had a mental breakdown, perhaps a depression, but had no treatment.

They had decided that they simply could not manage any more[19], and they had decided to sell their farm. They received an offer and got rid of the animals, and they were interested in a little house is a nearby village. Alan did not want them to sell. Robbie and Frances kept changing their minds but, although no papers had been signed, they felt that they could not go back on their promise to sell. The sale was due to go through on Michaelmas. A visitor (cousin William again) found them thin and depressed, hardly eating anything. Robbie and Frances seemed guilty at selling the family farm. At the beginning of September, Frances told Fred Lyne that, "We should have died here. We were born on the farm and we should die here" (Cornwall, 1982, p. 136).

The End

In September 1975, a grocer's roundsman found Alan (aged 53) outside the farmhouse with his head shot off. There was no gun nearby. He went for the police. The death was consistent with a self-inflicted shotgun wound in which the trigger had been operated with a stick which lay nearby. Later, the police found the imprint of the butt of the shotgun in the blood around the body. Some distance away, in a garden, Robbie and Frances lay, both with shotguns wounds to the head. A double-barrelled shotgun and a stick lay beside Robbie. There was no evidence of a struggle. The police concluded that Alan had committed suicide. Later, Robbie had taken the gun, killed Frances, perhaps with her consent, and then committed suicide himself.

They left 350,000 pounds which went to the Church, enough to have kept them in comfort in their old age.

Reference

Cornwall, J (1982). *Earth to earth*. New York: Ecco Press.

[19] They had two workers, a local chap and a Ukrainian refugee, but even this labor was not sufficient.

LUDVIK HOCH

David Lester

On November 5, 1991, in the early morning, Ludvik Hoch slipped into the waters of the Atlantic from his private boat and drowned. His death was rumored to be a murder or the result of a heart attack and accidental drowning, but it was probably suicide. His huge financial empire was on the verge of collapse, and his suicide spared him the humiliation of being exposed as a villain and charged with plundering pension funds.

Hoch, himself, told many versions of his life, and it is far from clear what the true facts were. The following account is not from an "authorized" biography, but from a book by a journalist who worked for him and who wrote the book after Hoch's death (Davies, 1992).

Early Events

Hoch was born in a small town, Solotvino, in Ruthenia, Czechoslovakia, near the border with Russia, on June 10, 1923. He was the eldest son of a poor Jewish laborer, Mehel Hoch and his wife Chanca. Gisl (a sister) was born in 1919 and died two years later. Brana (another sister) was born in 1920, one of the three children to survive World War Two, despite being placed in the concentration camps of Mauthausen and Buchenwald. Ludvik was next, followed by Chamhersch (a brother) in 1925 who died two years later of diphtheria. Ludvik also caught diphtheria but survived. Shenya was born in 1926, Sylvia in 1929, Zissel in 1931, Tzipporah in 1933 and a third son Itzak in 1940. Of these later children, only Sylvia survived the war; the rest were killed by the Nazis, as were his grandparents, parents, aunts and uncles. Some were shot, while others died in the extermination camps.

The family was poor. The children shared a bed, had few clothes and went barefoot for half the year. Ludvik remembered being hungry all the time and scavenging for food. He said, "We were like pigs" (p. 16). Ludvik attended a religious elementary school and then a local Czech government school. When he was ten, he was sent to a Yeshiva to study to become a rabbi, first in nearby Sgiget and then to Bratislava. However, at the age of sixteen, Ludvik quit school, cut off his sidelocks and stopped wearing his skull cap.

He began buying and selling cheap jewelry and trinkets. He picked up many languages, including Yiddish which was spoken at home, Russian, Hungarian and Czech. He later added English, German, Romanian, French and Hebrew. When the war broke out, Ludvik was still sixteen, and it is not clear what he did during the war. His official press releases said that he fought the Russians and Germans in the Czech army, escaped to France via Bulgaria and Greece, was wounded and captured by the Germans at Orléans and escaped. He was evacuated from Marseille in 1940 with other Czech soldiers and

arrived in Liverpool, England. He was described as a "scarcely literate teenager.....quite unruly, like a young bull" (p. 19).

He joined an Auxiliary Pioneer Corps, doing manual labor for only two shillings a day for three years. He came to the attention of a Brigadier who enabled Ludvik to join the 6th North Staffords. Ludvik changed his name to Ivan du Maurier, after the cigarettes he smoked. By the time of the Normandy landings he was a sergeant. He changed his name again to Leslie Jones and fought well. In liberated Paris, he met a sophisticated, educated daughter of a wealthy Huguenot owner of silk factories, Elizabeth Meynard. In January 1945, he proposed, was promoted to Second-Lieutenant, changed his name to Ian Robert Maxwell and was married nine weeks later. In the final months of the war, he showed exceptional bravery and was personally presented with the Military Cross by Field Marshall Montgomery. In November 1945, he found his two surviving sisters and Betty was pregnant with own first child.

The Early Career Of Robert Maxwell

The British promoted him to Captain and, because of his knowledge of languages, assigned him to Intelligence to interview captured Germans. He next headed the press section of the Public Relations and Information Services Control where he censored Der Telegraph, the German-language newspaper for the British sector of Germany. Maxwell was able to find ink, paper and printing machinery to keep it going, and its circulation rose to 250,000. The editor, Arno Scholz, inspired Maxwell to become a socialist and to own a newspaper. Maxwell socialized a good deal with Russians, and some claim that the KGB managed to recruit him. During the two years in Berlin, Maxwell also met Ferdinand Springer who had run a large scientific publishing house before the war. Maxwell helped the family restart the business, and this provided the basis for Maxwell's later fortune. He also continued his bartering and eventually became a director of a small import-export business run by fellow Czechs from a London office.

Maxwell was demobbed in October 1947 and immediately turned to business. His first company sold German newspapers to German prisoners of war in Britain. He then distributed Springer's books outside of Germany by persuading the Allies that it was important to provide access to German scientific research findings. In Britain, Butterworth-Springer was established to publish scientific research from Britain, and Maxwell purchased the company in May 1951 with a loan from Hambros, a private bank. The company was renamed as Pergamon. In the next fifty years, Pergamon rose to become one of the major publishers of scientific books and journals in the world.[20] By 1990, Pergamon published over four hundred journals and had a booklist of 3,500 titles. It provided the basis for Maxwell's fortune and, uncharacteristically for Maxwell, it succeeded because he let the managers and editors run the company without interference. Maxwell was a brilliant wheeler-dealer but a very bad manager. In most of his other

[20] Maxwell lost control of Pergamon for a brief period in the 1970s, but he was able to buy it back in 1974.

business ventures, he actively managed them, and they typically failed. But with Pergamon in hand, Maxwell was soon a millionaire and living a stylish life.

Maxwell began to buy into all kinds of ventures, publishers and associated businesses at first, but later more diverse companies. Some made money; others he simply stripped their assets. In 1972, the Department of Trade and Industry investigated how Maxwell had run Pergamon and concluded that Maxwell was ".....not in our opinion a person who can be relied on to exercise proper stewardship of a publicly quoted company" (p. 31).

Maxwell's next diversion was to run for Parliament. He won as a Labor candidate in 1964 in his second try, but lost the seat at the next election. His constituents liked him, but most of the work back home was done by his wife, Betty.

In the 1980s, Maxwell decided to try to buy a newspaper, long his dream. He failed in attempts to buy the *Daily Herald*, the *News of the World* and a major printing company. A newspaper he helped to start, the *Scottish Daily News*, failed. But he also had successes. He bought Odhams Press and, finally, was able to buy the Mirror group which published the *Daily Mirror, Sunday Mirror, People, Scottish Daily Record, Scottish Sunday Mail* and *Sporting Life.*

Maxwell became thoroughly involved in running the Mirror Group, hiring and firing staff, deciding the stories to be covered, and even writing the editorials. As mentioned above, Maxwell was a poor manager, and his interference resulted in a poorer product. Despite this, Maxwell had one victory. He confronted the unions and beat them. He was able to establish a modern printing plant, outside of London, and have it function efficiently, a first for the Fleet Street newspapers.

Maxwell The Man

Maxwell was a most objectionable person. He was rude and insulting to his staff. He swore at them, humiliated them in a multitude of ways, and fired them on a whim. He was equally unpleasant to his wife and children.[21] Davies, his biographer, said that Maxwell treated his family as if they were his employees and behaved as if he did not care for their feelings at all. Davies found his treatment of his wife in particular "painful." He spent little time with his wife and children, and yet two of his sons worked for his companies[22], and Betty remained loyal to Maxwell to the end. He was strict with his children, demanded politeness and good manners, and pushed them to excel academically. Four graduated from Oxford University, as did Betty who attended as a "mature student." Maxwell warned his children that he planned to leave them no money -- they would have to make their own way in life. Kevin, the youngest son, born in 1959,

[21] For example, Maxwell had locks placed on his kitchen in his suite at work to prevent his youngest daughter, Ghislaine, from snacking on the food there.

[22] He and Betty had nine children. Maxwell was devastated by the death of a daughter at the age of three from leukemia and the death of a son in a car crash.

stood up to his father more than most, even quitting Pergamon in 1982 when Maxwell insisted that Kevin break his engagement. Maxwell hired him back, after the marriage, because he needed some staff whom he could trust. Although Betty was a Christian, she supported all kinds of Jewish causes on Maxwell's behalf, usually attending functions in his place. And, although Maxwell mistreated her consistently, as his empire crumbled at the end, he called for her to come to his London offices to help him.

Although there were many rumors of Maxwell's infidelities, his personal assistants denied this. Davies was able to document only one sexual escapade, with a secretary in 1987, and Davies thought that such escapades were the exception.

Maxwell was paranoid. He appeared to have the telephones in the offices of his staff tapped. On one occasion he found out that Davies was having an affair with Maxwell's personal assistant and hounded the two of them over the affair for months.[23] He shredded documents and was always concerned with his conversations being overheard. He looked for signs of "industrial espionage" and hired a guard for the editorial floor of the *Mirror*.

Maxwell honored few of the agreements that he made. He would make a verbal or written agreement for something and then simply ignore it or try to renegotiate it, usually successfully. In like manner, he accepted scores of invitations to functions and dinners with no intention of attending. Sometimes he sent family members or staff in his place, but usually he would cancel shortly before the event.

Davies noted that Maxwell was often angry. Indeed, he seemed to like "fuck-ups," as he called them, because they allowed him to vent his rage. Toward the end of his life, Davies noted that Maxwell seemed to find little enjoyment in life. He was restless, agitated and irrationally angry. He longed to be a world-respected statesman and international power-broker, but he never succeeded in this. He seemed happy only when he was on his boat.

Maxwell was vain -- he had his hair colored every two weeks and carried a powder puff for his shiny facial skin. He gambled a little, sometimes winning or losing $100,000, but this was not a lot of money to Maxwell, a man who drank wine which cost $250 a bottle. Although he traveled extensively all over the world, he typically stayed in his hotel. He never went sight-seeing or visited operas, plays and museums.

Maxwell indulged himself in material luxuries. He bought himself a helicopter, a jet airplane (with call sign GO-VIP) and a luxury boat. He arranged for his own chef and gourmet foods to accompany him on every foreign trip (of which there were many). Above all, he gorged himself. He required some food or drink almost half-hourly throughout the day. For most of the day, coffee or orange juice would do. But lunch and dinner were gigantic meals, especially toward the last years of his life when his weight

[23] The personal assistant eventually quit, but not before Maxwell had tried to rape her and, later, proposed to her.

grew to over 300 pounds.[24] His food had to be fresh, and his staff discarded vast amounts of food more than a day old. He would consume $200-worth of Chinese food for dinner and a whole chicken late at night. When he ate fruit, he might spit the seeds out on the carpet or consume the seeds and stalks. Davies observed him stuffing food into his mouth once so that he could barely chew it, and he said that it "was like watching a starving man, driven mad by hunger, unable to control himself....." (p. 183). This behavior is understandable in the light of his starvation and hunger as a child.

The excess weight exacerbated his back ache, for which he took strong pain-killers and used an osteopath. He rarely had headaches. He had trouble sleeping at night and started taking Halcion in the 1980s, in higher doses and for longer periods than recommended, despite the known risks associated with it.[25]

He drank to excess in his last few years -- two bottles of wine with a meal, and port afterwards. Toward the end, he was drinking two bottles of port at a time or a bottle of Chivas Regal.

In his last few years, Maxwell tried very hard to achieve status. He endeavored to meet with every national leader and important statesman, and succeeded with most.[26] He set up foundations in several countries, offered to buy into businesses and to start companies, and even offered to take over the management of the foreign debt of some nations, such as Bulgaria. Sometimes the deals went through, sometimes Maxwell welshed on them, and sometimes the nations did not deliver on their promises.

Martha Smilgis, a reporter for *Time*, interviewed Maxwell in 1989 and accompanied him for a week. She was appalled by his obsessive-compulsive eating, suggesting that food was his "turn-on, his sexual kick" (p. 287). She was struck by his "bullshit," such as exaggerating his worth and the extent to which he was "in" with world leaders. She was struck by the way he bullied his senior staff and the way in which employees cringed subserviently before him, "like whipped dogs' (p. 288). She decided that Maxwell was "very lonely, despite being married for so long and having such a large family. And he was extraordinarily vain and he never seemed happy, never happy in himself. I thought he was a genuinely evil man and very mean; mean towards his wife and children and the staff. He seemed to be genuinely wicked, his moods changing for no reason but to crush and humiliate people in public" (p. 288).

Dangerous Involvements

[24] He smoked forty cigarettes a day until 1955 when he developed secondary cancer of the lungs and had to have the upper lobe of one lung removed. He switched to cigars, but in moderation. He used an inhaler regularly and carried antibiotics for his colds.

[25] The drug was eventually banned in 1991 by the British Department of Health. Its side effects included depression, memory loss, hallucinations and aggressive behavior.

[26] He took his own photographer along to capture these meetings.

Maxwell was particularly involved in three nations, involvements which might have played some role in his death, if he was murdered as was rumored. Davies believes that Maxwell was not a spy for the USSR, but rather helped the Russian leaders, including the KGB, transfer money out of Russia for political and personal use. The KGB labeled Maxwell as an "agent of influence." Maxwell's status in Russia was highest in the 1970s when Andropov was in charge of the KGB and later the Communist Party. Maxwell was given freedom to publish Russian scientific works abroad, and he ensured that the Russians got the latest scientific journals. In 1983, Maxwell was awarded an honorary doctorate from Moscow State University, and he was a frequent visitor to the Kremlin.

Maxwell "came out" about being Jewish in 1986, and his wife arranged a conference on the Holocaust in Oxford which brought together some 600 survivors. Maxwell broke down and cried at the conference. After that, Maxwell became interested in Israel and tried to push the Soviet Union to help Russian Jews. He assisted the Israelis in establishing a consulate in Moscow, in helping the Israeli consul contact Russian officials[27], and in permitting Jewish refugees to fly directly to Israel from Moscow.

Maxwell also began to invest heavily in Israel, investing in newspaper, pharmaceutical companies, and printing companies. In 1991, an Israeli, Ari Ben Menashe, claimed that Maxwell and Davies worked for Mossad and had been involved in selling Israeli arms to Iran, and Seymour Hersh included these in his book *The Samson Option*. Questions were raised in the House of Commons on October 21, 1991, which allowed British newspapers to publish the allegations without fear of libel suits. However, Maxwell filed suits against Hersh and his publishers, Faber & Faber.

In the United States, his ownership of Pergamon gave him a presence, and his purchase of the *New York Daily News* brought him status. Maxwell also invested in many companies in America, eventually buying the Official Airline Guides from Dun & Bradstreet and Macmillan.

Maxwell was able to take over the *New York Daily News* in 1989. The newspaper never made a profit for Maxwell, partly because of the control over the distribution exerted by the Mafia. Whereas Maxwell had never been accepted by the British establishment -- as a Czech Jew coming from the lower classes and uneducated, he stood no chance of being accepted[28] -- his rescue of the *New York Daily News* brought him respect and adulation in America but drained his resources.

Financial Ruin

In the last few years of his life, Maxwell made some poor business decisions. He started a 24-hour newspaper, the *London Daily News*, and a European newspaper, the

[27] For example, he gave a dinner in which he sat the Israeli Consul next to the secretary-general of Comecon.

[28] The satirical magazine, *Private Eye*, called him the "bouncing Czech."

European, both of which failed. Many of the investments Maxwell made in other countries failed to bring profits, leaving him with huge debts.

Maxwell had set up a complicated financial arrangement for his companies, registering almost all of them in Liechtenstein which provided secrecy and low taxes. Setting up his companies in Liechtenstein cost Maxwell some credibility in Britain and prevented him taking over many companies. Davies speculated that Maxwell used the secrecy to hide his connection with the KGB. It also permitted him to move moneys without scrutiny.

In the last few months of his life, Maxwell encountered a grave financial situation. Interest payments were huge, and banks were calling in loans. Maxwell plundered over one billion dollars from his companies,[29] including the pension funds of his workers, trying to save the situation. He used this money to buy up shares in his publicly-traded companies to support their share price, to pay off the banks, and in losses of some of his ventures such as the *European* and *New York Daily News*. Maxwell sold Pergamon to Elsevier in 1991, floated 49 percent of Mirror Group Communications, and sold off some of his profitable investments.

The empire was about to collapse.

Maxwell's Death

Perhaps Maxwell was murdered by the KGB or the New York Mafia? One possibility is that Soviet officials, anticipating the worst if the Communist Government fell, transferred money abroad through Maxwell to enable to live well. Perhaps hardline KGB men had Maxwell killed to prevent those officials obtaining these funds?

Maxwell had tried to end the Mafia's hold on the New York Daily News by getting the Manhattan District Attorney to investigate their racketeering. Perhaps the Mafia arranged his murder?

In the last few days before his death, Maxwell was still trying to borrow money to tide him over the crisis. Shearson-Lehman told Maxwell on October 29, 1991, that they were going to seize his collateral because of his failure to repay loans. The following day, Goldman Sachs made a similar threat. These actions would have prevented Maxwell selling off companies, such as Berlitz, to give him a breathing-space. Three days later, the half-yearly figures were due to be released for Maxwell Communications Corporation which would reveal lower profits. This would lower the share price and, thence, the value of his collateral. The *Financial Times* had been examining Maxwell's companies and was about to publish an exposé. The Swiss Bank Corporation informed Maxwell that on November 4, they would go to their lawyers if their loan was not repaid.

[29] He seemed to have had about 400 companies by 1991, held by three umbrella companies.

Maxwell flew back to London, and then, on November 1, to his boat. For the first time, he took no secretary, valet or butler. The captain of his boat said that Maxwell seemed healthy. He ate and drank well, and he did not work at all. They sailed to Madeira. On Saturday November 2, he went gambling in Funchal with $3000. On November 4, Maxwell arrived at the Canary Islands. He called his sons several times (who probably told him that Goldman Sachs had started selling some of the shares in Maxwell Communications Corporation) and his French lawyer with whom he discussed plans including his nomination for the Légion d'honneur and his upcoming award as Man of the Year from the American Jewish Scientific and Cultural Institute.

On November 4, Maxwell dined alone at the Hotel Mencey ashore. He went back to the ship and asked the captain to cruise slowly throughout the night, ending up at Teneriffe where his jet was waiting.

The Spanish authorities traced all boats in the area that night and claimed that all had been accounted for. The captain of the boat said that no one could have sent people aboard Maxwell's boat to assassinate him. The crew were questioned and released with no suspicion. On the morning of November 5, Maxwell was seen walking on deck at 4.25 a.m. He called the bridge at 4.55 a.m. to have the air conditioning turned down. Conditions were good and the sea calm.

Probably, some time after 5 a.m., Maxwell left his suite, locked the door and threw the key overboard. Naked, he slipped into the water and then kept swimming until he suffered a heart attack. His body was recovered -- he did not die from drowning.

His funeral was held on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem, attended by the President of Israel.

Reference

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