

14 West Germany--A Modern Phoenix

Kirchberg to Salzburg, Austria, to
Munich, West Germany
Thursday, May 13

The morning was overcast as we started out around 9:00 on a northeasterly course for Salzburg. After an hour or so of more alpine driving, we stopped briefly at the West German border and were then on our way across a finger of West Germany. Within minutes, Neil told us we were skirting the base of a mountain on top of which nestled the famous Eagle's Nest, Hitler's onetime retreat near Berchtesgaden. Here, England's Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain, had once met Hitler in a peace seeking effort to save Europe from another war. Fifteen minutes later, we easily reentered Austria barely stopping at the border. (Long and difficult border crossings seemed behind us once we entered continental Europe.)

Under cloudy skies, we soon reached the cultural baroque city of Salzburg, one of Europe's most beautiful cities according to Neil. Graeme drove us on a cursory tour of the city while Neil

pointed out the 11th century Hohensalzburg Fortress overlooking the town and the green domes of a 17th century cathedral. He explained that Romans had settled Salzburg and that it was the birthplace and childhood home of Mozart. In a residential area, we paused for photos of the Van Trapp mansion and the glass house shown in the film, The Sound of Music. The mansion was now an American hostel.

Back in town, we stopped near Mozart's statue and Neil gave us ninety minutes to eat, bank and tour. Our Mozart buffs hurried to inspect his birthplace, now a museum, called Mozart Geburtshaus. Nino, Tanya and I set off down a charming street to buy food and postcards. We then changed our shillings and travelers checks into deutsche marks and found a side street decked with flowers and furnished with benches where we ate our lunch as we watched the townspeople pass by.

We crossed back into West Germany soon after leaving Salzburg. Traveling northwest toward Bavaria's Isar River valley, we were now descending the Alps for the last time and arrived in sunny Munich in the afternoon.

In a shady campsite, we set up camp. Being on cleanup detail, Ross, two other girls and I set up the cooktent. Then I headed for the clean camp restroom to handwash some clothes, and paid a deutsche mark for a warm shower.

Dinner was another hearty meal of bachelors enjoyed by all, and was followed by a quiet evening.

Munich
Friday, May 14

By 9 A.M., we were on the bus for a short drive on the autobahn to see the Olympic Village of 1972. This brought back sober memories of the eleven members of the Israeli squad who were killed by eight Arab members of the Black September terrorist group. In a happier vein though, it was at this Olympiad that the then Crown Prince Carl XVI Gustaf of Sweden met his future bride, Silvia Sommerlath of West Germany.

Leaving the autobahn for a frontage road, Graeme parked near an overpass which gave an excellent view of the Village with its large tent-like stadium as well as the international headquarters of Bavarian Motor Works (BMW) nearby. After picture taking, we boarded the bus and returned to Munich.

Although Munich had been heavily bombed during World War II, today it was a mixture of tall steel and glass buildings and old restored structures from medieval times. Graeme dropped us off at Marienplatz, Virgin Mary Square, which was the center of the old city but today the site of a modern shopping mall.

We followed Neil a short distance into the square to the neo-Gothic townhall for the 11:00 chiming of the glockenspiel. Here, we joined the crowd of spectators and were soon entertained by enameled copper figures of knights, squires, coopers and a rooster dancing to the chimes.

Neil then led us through the mall and down several blocks to Hofbrauhaus, a beer hall which Hitler and his friends had once patronized. Outside the hall, Neil explained that it was here on

a November day in 1923 that a group of extreme nationalists led by Adolf Hitler and General Erich Ludendorff attempted a coup to set up a new national government. Although the coup failed, Munich became known as the birthplace of the Nazi Party. Our group split up here; some went inside the Hofbrauhaus, but I returned to the shopping mall enticed by its extensive shopping accommodations.

Our group was to return to the square's entrance by 4:30 P.M. which gave me ample time to explore at leisure the large shopping complex and look for a much needed pair of jeans. Department stores, boutiques, gift shops, delicatessens, bakeries, restaurants, fast food chains and sundry shops and businesses abounded here, all accessible by escalators.

Upon browsing through my third department store, to my surprise the decorative scheme in one of its departments was the American Bicentennial. Here I used one of several dressing rooms with walls of large cloth facsimiles of American flags. After purchasing the needed jeans, I took an escalator to a lower level of the mall where I bought a bratwurst served with a glob of mustard and a roll at a fast food shop which provided standup tables outside in the mall. For dessert, I found a bakery where I bought a very sweet cherry crumble and coffee. Then it was time to meet the others at the entrance to the square.

After an early dinner at camp, we dressed for an evening at the Mathaser Bierstadt. On our way there, Neil commented that the region of Bavaria has long been famous for producing beer and wine,

and Munich as its capital is the home of the annual Oktoberfest.

The Mathaser Bierstadt was a cavernous beer hall which could seat probably 3000 persons in its various rooms and hall. A buxom fräulein in colorful Bavarian costume seated us at two long tables within view of the hall where patrons, mostly men, relaxed over liter-size mugs of beer, and a Bavarian brass band played peppy folk tunes. The fräulein took our orders of beer (many of us shared a mug) and large soft pretzels. She and her equally plump co-workers amazed us by their skill in carrying seven full mugs of beer in each hand.

Near us the Australian bus group that we had encountered briefly in Katmandu was having a beer drinking contest of sorts, chugalugging beer in an effort to outdo one another. After each drinker had downed a liter, he or she stepped up on a bench to the applause and cheers of the group. Here, their courier, standing on the bench too, pinned a badge on the drinker--a reward for a job well done.

Our evening ended on a solemn note with Derik's departure, reminding all of us that our days as a group were numbered. Leaving us temporarily at the beer hall, Neil and Carol drove him to the train station where he would travel to West Berlin to meet another Australian bus group headed for the Soviet Union.

Munich to Heidelberg Saturday, May 15

Leaving Munich around 9 A.M., we continued northwest on the autobahn walled in by miles of rolling hills covered with dense

woods. I spent most of the morning paging through my crumpled Sundowners' travel brochure full of interesting international camping trips originating in London. Two especially appealed to me. One was the Morocco-Sunseekers covering fourteen countries, and the other was the Soviet Union-Cossack covering eighteen countries. Several of our group were contemplating the Russian trip. Though I was quite interested, I was too physically weary from this trip to pursue another trip so soon. Most likely, when I felt rested, I would reevaluate taking these trips.

Meanwhile, there was much discussion in the bus as to whether we should spend our last night as scheduled in Bruges, Belgium, or continue to the coast and catch the midnight ferry to Dover. We decided unanimously on the latter plan. We were all eager for the trip to end without further delay. For now, many of us were saturated with history, art, religion, scenery and camping, and were tired of inconvenient facilities. Our desire to rest and to hear English spoken pressed us on towards our goal--London.

We arrived in Heidelberg for a late lunch. Because it was Saturday and after 2 P.M., most of the shops were closed and downtown was deserted except for an occasional tram or car negotiating the cobblestone streets. However, we did find several restaurants and a couple of supermarkets open for quick lunches.

Graeme then drove us up the hill to the 13th century Heidelberg castle which overlooked the city spread out along the peaceful Neckar River bordered by a range of wooded hills. There were many tourists here taking pictures of the view. We too took photos

and briefly toured the castle grounds and its central courtyard which contained four granite columns brought from the Ingelheim Palace of the Frankish Emperor Charlemagne (742-814).

As we were looking out over this lovely city, Neil informed us that Heidelberg is the home of the oldest (1386) and one of the most famous of German universities with a reputation for fencing and singing.

Leaving the castle on our way to the campsite, Neil gave us detailed instructions concerning the preparation of the bus and our luggage for English customs. The bus now had to be completely emptied so it could be thoroughly cleaned. At customs, we would be required to carry all of our belongings off the bus; therefore we had to consolidate and pack as carefully as possible. Neil asked us to report any damaged camping equipment to Graeme who was in charge of the entire bus inventory.

A couple of miles out of town, we entered the campgrounds beside the Neckar River near wooded rolling hills. Another Australian group was camped here as well. After the bus was parked, we spread everything on the grass and began to organize for England. Then we set up camp for the last time.

Three hours later the cooks served beef soup, potato patties, coleslaw, tomatoes, bread and custard with peaches. We ate in front of our tents which faced the river in relative silence, watching an occasional barge make its way slowly to or from the Rhine River.

After eating and cleanup, we gathered around a lantern sit-

ting on blankets for our last time of devotions while Neil helped Graeme complete the inventory. Robert opened with prayer and then asked those who felt led to share their thoughts about the trip and what the Lord had taught them through it.

By the number of people sharing, it was evident that the trip with its daily marvels had made a big impact on all of us. The perils, rigors, sicknesses, weariness and anxieties of the road, especially in Asia, had certainly increased in many of the group our dependence upon God, enabling many of us to cling closer to His promises in the Bible. So for many of us, our faith in a loving protecting God had been greatly enhanced--Brenda and Janet could personally testify to that with their dangerous encounters in Afghanistan.

God had also used the trip to create new friendships and cement old ones; for the experiences we had shared were binding enough to be long lasting.

It was clear that everyone would be traveling more once they had rested in London. Robert was already booked for the entire summer as a devotional leader for several CYTA groups traveling throughout western and eastern Europe. Nino would pursue his bus driver's career for an Australian bus firm. Some of our group were booked on several European camping trips and then planned to travel to the States. It was obvious that Eileen and I would eventually play hostess to these Aussies when they made their way to our doorsteps.

After summer travel though, many of my new friends would re-

main in London for the winter while a few would return "down under" to their former careers. Several would look into short-term mission work and more schooling while in Britain.

Although my future seemed less defined than my companions, I was convinced as were many others of the faithfulness of the One who held our futures. As with the trip, our futures would unfold into a variety of experiences, each building upon the next, defining and redefining a lifestyle uniquely our own.

For me, that lifestyle began to evolve during this adventure, stressing that people as opposed to things were the all important components for quality living. Yes, common people, their backgrounds, their aims, heart meeting heart, pain meeting pain, understanding meeting understanding--the one to one encounter was the all important emphasis. And I had such people as the seamstress and her son in Athens, the friendly Turks, the Iranian officers, the Afghani bride and her family, the Indian houseboys, the Nepalese children at the orphanage, the Thai soldier and the American GIs, Singapore's Rosa and Sydney's Yvonne to thank for this realization.

The session ended with a round of prayers followed by Robert's reading:

The LORD shall preserve thee from all evil:
he shall preserve thy soul. The LORD shall preserve
thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth,
and even for evermore.

These final verses of Psalm 121 couldn't have been more appropriate as each of us contemplated leaving the security of "the group" for yet another world filled with many unknowns.