

Appendix : “Hitler's Duke” (1884-1954).

Prince (later Duke) Carl Eduard was born July 19, 1884, and died March 6, 1954. The father was Prince Leopold of Great Britain (1853-1884; 4th son of Queen Victoria & Duke of Albany). The mother was the German princess Helena of Waldeck and Pyrmont (1861-1922). From 1905 to 1954, Eduard was married to the German princess Victoria Adelheid of Schleswig-Holstein-Sonderburg-Glücksburg (1885-1970) and with her had five children. Eduard's ancestry is too long to describe here, but through his father, mother & wife, depending on how you count, he was related to 8 or 10 royal houses & through his daughter Sibylla also with the Swedish royal house.

1905-1918, Eduard was Duke of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha. It was situated in the centre of Germany just above Bavaria but no longer exists. As its name suggests, it was formed by merger. Gotha in the north was separated from Saxe-Coburg by a land corridor and there were several distant enclaves. It was a so-called statelet. The land area was smaller than present-day Luxembourg & the number of inhabitants about 250 thousand, but the family connections nevertheless made Eduard an important person. However, his reputation during the Hitler era was badly tarnished.

The official part of Eduard's life can be traced through the newspaper chronicle “Hitler's Herzog“ (Sandner 2010) but the rest is poorly documented. His war credentials 1914-1918 are in the regimental history (Buttman 1935). His article in the New Deutsche Biography (Facijs 1977) is based on three short narratives (von Ebart 1928: ss. 64-73; Behrens 1953; Heins 1954: ss. 172-178). In 1977 a longer apologetic was published (Priesner 1977). He later appeared as a supporting character in depictions of the Weimar Republic, the attempts to reintroduce the German Empire, and the Nazi takeover (Erdmann 1969; Riesenberger 2002; Hochstetter 2004; Petropoulos 2006; Heim m.fl. red. 2009; Davies 2011: ss. 539-573; Urbach 2015). In 2001, a sufficient number of facts had accumulated for a newspaper article (Oltmann 2001) and a short documentary (Cotter Craig 2007).

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As the story goes, Eduard was an extremely unwilling heir to his duchy. After a number of casualties and evasions among those who were next in line, he was threatened with a beating if he too tried to dodge his duties. After Eton, he moved to Germany in 1899. He received one year's education in the language etc. by a tutor, a Prussian cadet training, studied three terms of law and political science at university and finished his prince education with four months of military practice. On his 21st anniversary July 19, 1905, he succeeded to the duchy. In the autumn, he married Queen Augusta's niece Princess Victoria Adelheid of Schleswig-Holstein-Sonderburg-Glücksburg (1885-1970). The marriage was a success and they had five children. One of them was Princess Sibylla, who 1932 married Swedish heir Prince Gustaf Adolf.

Eduard was very interested in technology and until the outbreak of World War I involved in Gotha's automobile and aircraft industry. His predecessor had been reckless with the duchy's affairs, but Eduard - who, unlike his predecessor, had actually studied law & economics - restored order. Saxony-Coburg and Gotha each had a *Landtag*. There were major political conflicts. Eduard moved between his two warring states - Coburg in the summer, Gotha in the winter - and learned to present himself as a unifying force.

As a “royal“ officer, he automatically rose through the ranks with a number of training and honorary positions. Already at the outbreak of the war in August 1914, he sent William II a telegram where he assured him of his loyalty and asked for an assignment.¹ In December 1914 he became a general in the 38th Infantry Division which included his “home regiment“ the Royal Prussian 6th Thuringian Infantry Regiment No 95 with barracks in Coburg & Gotha. It is unclear what that meant in practice. One version is that until October 1915 he held a staff position while the division was stationed on the Eastern Front, but subsequently on sick leave because of his rheumatoid arthritis. Another version is that he requested active service but was not granted. More likely, he followed his regiment as an observer. He may have been involved in the medical issue. For example, he granted one of his castles for that purpose. According to statistics, he visited his regiment 18 times during the war and spent 38 percent of his time there. In October 1915, the division was transferred to the Western Front. November 9, 1916, he awarded Baron von Richthoffen a medal for shooting down a bomber that was threatening the regiment's ammunition depots.²

According to Davies, in 1916 a medal was minted in honour of Eduard's non-existent war efforts. It has been impossible to find it. Perhaps it has been confused with the *Carl-Eduard-Kriegskreuz* award instituted by Eduard that year. This was an award for military merit that was only awarded to those in the 95th Regiment who had also been awarded with the Iron Cross of the 1st class. A total of 99 copies were distributed: 97 of the silver denomination and two of the gold denomination with diamonds to the commander of the 95th Regiment and to Eduard as grand master of the Order.

During the war, Eduard's life was abruptly turned upside down. May 13, 1915, George V withdrew eight awards of England's highest honour the Order of the garter to the German and Austrian royalty, including William II, Franz Joseph, and Eduard. This was taken seriously and the SCG's *Landtag* March 12, 1917, adopted a law that foreigners and enemies of Germany should be removed from the succession to the Duchy. July 10, 1917, Eduard was forced to sign the document to prove his loyalty to Germany. July 17, 1917, the British Royal Family changed its name from SCG to Windsor and renounced all German titles. November 8, 1917, the English Parliament passed the Titles Deprivation Act of 1917, which March 28, 1919, deprived Eduard and three other “hostile“ princes of their British royal and noble titles. However, they were allowed to retain their right to inherit property. Eduard lost the titles of Duke of Albany, Count of Clarence, and Baron of Arklow. Born in England to English parents, he retained his English citizenship, but the children became German citizens.

After the November Revolution, the Duchy split into two: Gotha - an industrial region - was given a “Bolshevik“ government. Saxony-Coburg - the capital city - continued as before. In 1920, Gotha merged with Thuringia and Saxony-Coburg merged with Bavaria. In reality, the situation was much more confused. Both Coburg and Gotha were garrison towns. On the day of William's abdication November 9, 1918, a soldier's council took over power in Gotha while the soldiers in Coburg remained loyal. The evening of the 8th Eduard attended a meeting, but then returned to the family at castle Callenberg. The following days, he was informed by telephone about the unfolding events but had no active role. November 11, a small demonstration took place in which some 1,000 participants called for his resignation. November 14 he abdicated.³

¹ Behrens 1953: s. 55-57.

² Kilduff 1999.

³ Erdmann 1969: ss. 5-10; Urbach 2015: ss. 143-144.

Then they wrangled about the economics. Not so easy since there had never been a clear distinction between public and private in the dukes' economy. The new rulers, however, were in no way vindictive. Ownership of the castles & the inventories were transferred to foundations and Eduard got to stay in his castle. He was financially compensated for the forests and lands. The Sachsen-Coburg process ended on June 7, 1919. The process of Gotha dragged on until 1925. The terms were later summarized as:

In his case, however, the resignation of the throne was in accordance with the consensus, and the state of Coburg proved very generous to him at the time of the “divorce“. He was granted free access to Veste Coburg and the family established themselves there in a housing wing, “Fürstenbau“. In addition, he received the castle of Callenberg with domains and the Swiss Rosenau along with one million gold marks in cash. Gotha, which after the revolution joined Thuringia, dissolved the duke by allocating Schmalhalden's vast forests, valued at around fifteen million marks. He also owned the Cariburg castle in Austria and the Hinterriss castle in Tyrol. The Duke was thus a very wealthy man, and the family - except in formal terms - came to occupy almost the same position for many years to come as before the revolution. They lived court life with court marshals, master of ceremonies, chamber masters and ladies-in-waiting, and this was still the position at princess Sibylla's engagement in 1932.⁴

[The above exposition is not entirely correct. Eduard rejected the compensation from Gotha of 15 million Mark as too low. On July 31, 1919, Gotha then expropriated his domains without compensation. This was repealed June 18, 1925, after a decision of the Supreme Court. In the judgment, the Gotha domains were valued at 37.2 million Reichsmark, in today's monetary value approximately SEK 900 million. The expropriation of the princes' property without compensation became a matter of parliament. In 1926, a national referendum was held which the expropriation side won. However, the turnout was too low for the result to be approved. The only person to have been expropriated without compensation was Eduard.]

Eduard's sister described his later life as him retiring to private life, holding an honorary position in the German Red Cross but ignorant of the concentration camps.⁵ His daughter Caroline was somewhat more elaborate. “Hitler had good use for my father. He needed him. To make an impression abroad. That is why he appointed him president of the Red Cross. Then he sent him twice around the world. My father was Hitler's propaganda machine. It was very cunning. Father felt uncomfortable at home, but loved to travel.⁶ At the trial after the end of World War II, Eduard's wife dwelt at the Red Cross, foreign diplomacy, his ignorance of the concentration camps, and that he had no financial gain from his Nazi posts.⁷ Eduard would thus have been a patriot and misled idealist. Unfortunately for the family Eduard was a public figure, even after his abdication, and there are quite detailed accounts of his achievements in the service of the Third Reich:

Duke Carl Eduard of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha are among the few German ex-princes who have not remained inactive after the revolution or the revolutions one might say, because the March Revolution this year [the Nazi takeover in 1933] returned him to a

⁴ ”Så blev hon prinsessa av Sverige.” Himmets veckotidning 1956:4.

⁵ prinsessan Alice 1966: ss. 104-106.

⁶ [Om Sibyllas syster Calma.] Allers veckotidning, 1971:26.

⁷ Sjöberg m.fl. 2010: s. 95.

leading position in the German state administration. Those who are acquainted with Duke Carl Eduard claim that he possesses a great diplomatic talent, which he has used, especially in the years after the 1918 revolution, to mediate between the national parties and groups. He early on joined Stahlhelm, the League of Front Soldiers, and through his outgoing and friendly manner won general esteem and affection. He soon found himself at the head of the organization's motor corps.

As is well known the Stahlhelms, even though they as an organization love to describe themselves as non-political, were largely identical to the German National Party. When, this spring, the power of the German federal state passed into the hands of the national groups, Duke Carl Eduard was suddenly found in Berlin eagerly engaged in mediating and reconciling the conflicting interests of the German nationals and the Nazis. For this undoubtedly very delicate task, the Duke was a good fit. He was about as popular among the Nazis as in Stahlhelm, if not better. ... The mediation work in Berlin succeeded beyond expectations, and the German nationals had reason to pin great hopes on their English-born, South German Duke. He was, in their opinion, a most fitting candidate for the task of temporary regent during the interregnum, which, according to all calculations, must come between the restoration of the nation and the monarchy. What the Duke himself thought of these speculations, no one knows.

Since March this year, a lot has happened in the German Empire. Hitler has become sovereign dictator. [Alfred] Hugenberg [leader of the German nationals] has been neutralized. All other independent wills are destroyed. The German nationals have ceased to exist. Although Stahlhelm still existed as a tolerated guest within the Nazi party framework, it was no longer a force to reckon with. All the lofty dreams of a resurrected monarchy had been shattered. However, Duke Carl Eduard of Saxen-Coburg and Gotha remained. When everything was in flux, his old automobile hobby, came in handy. While others competed at being the worst in persecuting Jews and incarcerating communists in concentration camps, all in order to gain Hitler's favour, he quietly continued to devote his energy and interest to motoring. It was a practical task and an important task. The high car tax in Germany threatened to paralyse all motor activity. The tax system resulted, among other things, that in the winter, car traffic was significantly reduced resulting in high unemployment in the car industry. In a series of articles in the trade press, Duke Carl Eduard attacked the old system. He pointed out that the half billion Germany had invested in the car industry lay fallow and threatened to remain so if measures were not taken. So he was called on to take care of the new orientation.

In April this year, he officially professed himself Nazi and was soon appointed to the rank of Gruppenführer, which, according to strict Nazi grading, corresponds roughly to that of brigadier-general. Hitler soon thereafter appointed him "Kommissar für Kraftfahrwesen". In other words, his activities were transferred to the Reichsverkehrsministerium, where he has been Deputy Minister and Head of the German Motor Service since summer. There is no doubt that, according to German national and Nazi standards, he has fulfilled his new task with praise and approval, if one may use the terminology of the old school certificate. In any case, the German car industry relies on the radical new measures taken for the benefit of motoring, and due to Duke Carl Eduard. On his initiative and under his supervision, motorism in Germany has been completely reoriented.

Car tax has been set at a one-off rate for old motor vehicles and completely abolished for new ones. This means, according to the Duke's reasoning from last spring, that the already existing motorcar park to the greatest extent possible will be kept running all year round, which means a reduction in unemployment in the automobile sector, with the consequent reduction in unemployment benefit expenditure; it also means an increase in government revenue in the form of duties and excises on fuel oils, rubber and other car supplies; and, above all, it means a new boost for the domestic car industry. Generally speaking, the Ministry of Public Works expects employment for some 200,000 men all year round, who would otherwise have gone without work during the winter months, the state saves 100 million marks in reduced expenditure and gains the same amount in increased customs revenue. Then there is the other matter, that the Nazis in a purely agitatory manner have declared that eventually every German should have a car or a motor vehicle, appropriate for military purposes. In the Third Reich, the struggle for economic recovery, for the fight against unemployment and for the restoration of militarism are carried out concurrently. Everything for the Reich, every man a soldier. But that is another story.⁸

Carl Gustaf's comments on this in 2010 did not exactly clarify the matter:

Yes, one way or another [his grandfather had links to the Nazi Party]. Everyone was involved, the whole society was so integrated with it all and it was very difficult to, so to speak, avoid... it was very difficult to stand and say "No, I don't want to be involved". Then I think you would have disappeared [into oblivion]. I can imagine it was a matter of survival. I would not like to say that this was the family, but many of them lived in a vacuum and you have to believe in something. You were manipulated. The whole German people was manipulated, of course, and then you too got involved. It was very difficult to recognize the terrible things that happened all along.⁹

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Eduard's political career as first monarchist & later Nazi is alluded to above. It was more extensive than is commonly known. It began July 10, 1917, when he was forced to sign the law that excluded foreigners from the succession of the SCG. He was at the time a not very active member of the *Bund der Kaiserstreuen* (1913-1934) - also known as *Preussenbund* - which was close to the German People's Party (DNVP) (1918-1933). After the November Revolution, the *Prussenbund* and the newly formed DNVP had the goal of reintroducing the Empire. It is difficult to define Eduard's role in this. He supported a variety of organizations through donations, as a passive paying member, by legitimizing their activities by his name and contributing diplomatic & administrative experience and his network of contacts. The following has been assembled from a variety of sources:

After the outbreak of the Spartacist uprising in Berlin and the Bavarian Republic, Eduard supported Bavaria's *Einwohnerwehr* (≈the National Guard and the Free Corps). In December 1919, he met Hermann Erhardt, head of the *Marine-Brigade Erhardt* who participated in the Kapp putsch March 13, 1920. Erhardt's corps consisted of demobilized soldiers - about 1,500 of them - and Eduard was *Bezirksführer* (=area manager) for Coburg. After the failed coup, the corps was disbanded. Erhardt reorganized it into *Organization Consul* - a terrorist organization with the agenda of destabilizing the Weimar Republic through political

⁸ R.J. [Robert Josephsson] "Hertigen av Coburg." Tysklands bildiktator. Vecko-Journalen, 1933:37, ss. 14-15.

⁹ Gregor Nowinski. Familjen Bernadotte. Sex avsnitt som sändes i tv4. Första avsnittet sändes 2010-04-29.

assassinations. Eduard was *Bezirksführer* for Coburg and *Oberbezirksführer* for Thuringia. The organization was banned July 21, 1922. May 2, 1923, the successor *Bund Wiking* - more of a paramilitary training organization - was formed. It existed until April 1928, and Eduard had a representative role. Erhardt and the rest of his corps were 1923 housed in Eduard's castle, Veste Coburg, where they felt safe. Many in *Organization Consul* and *Bund Wiking* later joined the SA and NSDAP and Eduard had a good reputation in these circles.

As a “war veteran“, Eduard attended meetings of the veteran association *Stalhelm*. In 1926, he joined, which seems to have been the result of *Bund Wiking* joining *Stalhelm*. *Stalhelm* was a motorized organization. In 1928, Eduard became *Reichsstaffelführer der Reichkraftfahr-Staffel des Stahlhelm* (=head of *Stalhelm's* fleet of cars and motorcycles). In 1929, he founded a corresponding national organisation *Nationalen Deutschen Automobilclub (NDAC)*. It was probably this that in 1930 gave him a seat on *Stalhelm's* board. In 1932, Eduard succeeded in creating a united front of the paramilitary organizations of *Stalhelm's*, NSDAP's and SA's paramilitary motor organizations - *Ring der Nationalen Motorfahrt*.

In October 1929, the newly founded NDAC under Eduard's leadership undertook a tour of Italy, visiting the local and regional offices of the Italian Fascist Party. It must have been a striking sight. Eduard commanded a convoy of 100 cars filled with *Stalhelm* and DNVP members. The mix of automobile and foreign policy was widely reported. Several similar study visits were made.¹⁰

From 1930, Eduard was active in national politics. He served on the board of the *Berliner Nationalklub von 1919*. October 11, 1931, the opposition alliance the Harzburg-Front was formed with *Stalhelm*, NSDAP and others. Eduard took part in the NSDAP demonstration *SA-Aufmarsch in Braunschweig* the following week and acted - as mentioned above - as mediator between the conservative groups in the Harzburg Front and the NSDAP. The mediation prior to the merger took place within the framework of the lobbying organization *Kuratorium zur Förderung des Zusammenwirkens der Nationalen Front*. The mediation after the merger took place in the framework of the *Gesellschaft zum Studium des Faschismus*, almost a think tank that tried through lectures and study visits to adapt Mussolini's Italian experience to German conditions - right wing forces in collaboration. Göring was one of the members.

Eduard met Hitler 22 times. The first time was during the “German Days“ in Coburg October 14-15, 1922, when Hitler was invited. He arrived in Coburg at the head of 800 SA activists and there were regular street battles with the Social Democrats & Communists that the SA forces won. The event was later given a prominent place in Nazi mythology and the participants were awarded medals. At the time, a local Nazi division was founded under Franz Schwede (1888-1960), who was elected mayor in 1930.¹¹

Since Schwede in 1932 performed the civil marriage of Prince Gustaf Adolf and Princess Sibylla, his Nazi career and persecution of the Coburg Jews has attracted a great deal of Swedish interest. The agitation against the Coburg Jews - about 250 people - began in 1919. The first documented case of assault, however, was not until March 15, 1931. At the height of the political persecution in March/April 1933, 152 people (Social Democrats, Communists and 39 Jews) were placed in “protective custody“ where many were severely beaten. By the

¹⁰ Oelrich 2004: ss. 215-216.

¹¹ Erdmann 1969: s. 91, 102; Davies 2011: ss. 567-569.

summer of 1939, all but 71 Jews had fled or moved. With the outbreak of the war, the survivors had no place to go. At the turn of 1942/43, four Jewish women remained, those married to non-Jewish men.¹²

There is no information that Eduard played any part in these persecution, nor that he dissociated himself from it. The Coburg organizations that he supported at the time - the *Deutschvölkische Schutz und Trutzbund (DVSTB)*, the *Jungdeutsche Orden* and the veteran association *Stalhelm* - were all nationalist but also anti-Semitic. However, there is a report that after 1933 having defending one of his Jewish employees, he was not regarded as fully reliable.

February 26, 1932, Hitler was appointed honorary citizen of Coburg. March 23, 1932, Eduard signed a petition to vote for Hitler as president, not Hindenburg. The result of the election in Coburg was that Hitler received 48.5 percent of the votes. March 10, 1933, Eduard floated the swastika flag at his castle Veste Coburg. May 1, 1933, he entered the NSDAP. September 30, 1934, he was appointed honorary citizen of Coburg. He gave a speech of thanks:

Carl Eduard slowly entered the rostrum. He put his speech on the pulpit, said some opening phrases and then with firm emphasis:

- I am not a man of many words. Being your duke has been more than a title. It has been an honour, a duty and a calling. You'll never be duke one day and burgher the next. The title and its duties are until death. I remember with pride the struggles of Brigade Erhardt and the old Stalhelm. Although attacked and misunderstood by my environment - even slandered - I never hesitated.
- I'm wearing the NSDAP Coburg Medal from 1922. My old residence has become a famous name in Germany.
- I have witnessed today that for five centuries my family name has spread glory and honour over Coburg.
- As an honorary citizen of Coburg, Your Duke in good times and bad, and with the foundation of the Third Reich, it is a particular joy to wear this chain. It will remind me when Germany rose from humiliation. Heil Hitler!

The audience fell silent. They had expected a formal acceptance speech. This was something quite different. They raised their arms in a führer salute. Carl Eduard had not spoken as an honorary citizen or a party leader. He had spoken as a member of the royal house.¹³

With such high hopes attached to the NSDAP as the saviour of Germany, Eduard had difficulty recognizing its moral bankruptcy. After the war, he denied all the party's atrocities - from the attack on Poland to the mass murders of the Jews.

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Eduard's entry into the Nazi Party was rewarded with a number of honorary posts and commissions. Here grouped by orientation:

¹² Svensson 2006: ss. 128-154.

¹³ Priesner 1977: ss. 159-160. [Min översättning.]

- August 1, 1933, he was appointed *gruppenführer* in the SA Staff. In 1936, he became MP for the NSDAP. He did not run in any constituency, but entered on a special list. In 1938 he became *Obergruppenführer* in the SA Staff. All positions appear to have been honorary.
- His “Stalhelm career“ continued: In 1936 he became *Präsident der Vereinigung des Deutschen Frontkämpferbundes*. 1938 *Präsident des Permanent Internationalen Ausschusses ehemaliger Frontkämpfer*. Corresponding English organizations visited Coburg.
- He received honorary positions in the Nazi paramilitary automobile and aviation organizations: 1933 *Kommissar für das Kraftfahrwesen beim Reichsverkehrsministerium* (≈Deputy chief of Germany's motor organizations) & *Ehrenpräsident des Allgemeiner Deutsche Automobil-Club (ADAC)*, 1933 *Ehrenführer* & 1935 *Obergruppenführer des Nationalsozialistischen Kraftfahrkorps (NSKK)*, 1937 *Ehrenführer führer Fliegerführer der Deutschen Luftfahrt* & *Obergruppenführer des Nationalsozialistisches Fliegerkorps (NSFK)*.
- He was *Stalhelm's* & later NSDAP's “business representative“: 1928 *Wanderer Werke AG* & *Rhein-Metall-Borsig AG*, 1933 *Deutscher Ring Lebensversicherung AG*, 1934 *Deutschen Bank und Discontogesellschaft* & *Deutschen Centralboden-Kredit AG*, 1938 *Europäischen Güter- und Reisegepäckversicherung AG*. 1933 he became a member of the governing body (Senate) of the *Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gesellschaft zur Förderung der Wissenschaften* - an umbrella organization for independent research institutes - possibly this too was vehicle related.
- 1933 he became *Präsident des Deutschen Roten Kreuzes (DRK)*. 1934 *Kommissar der freiwilligen Krankenpflege* (≈volunteer field medics). Initially, the posts had some influence, but after a reorganization in 1937 they became representative. Both organizations were active in *Aktion T4*, the mass killings of disabled people, but Eduard did not have to take responsibility for that. During the war itself, the DRK's military health care worked - but only for those countries that were affiliated to the IRK, i.e. not for the Soviet Union. DRK's civil health care worked in the same way - only for those countries that were affiliated to the IRK and not for camp prisoners. There is no information that DRK was involved in the mass killings, nor any information that they were trying to help. At most they passed on food packages.¹⁴ Eduard inspected the business but did not see, hear or know anything about what was going on.
- 1934 he became diplomatic envoy. In that capacity, he made 39 shorter and two longer trips abroad. The longer trips took place in 1934 (England-Canada-USA-Japan-China-Singapore-India-Egypt-Italy) & 1940 (USA-USSR-Japan). 1935 he became patron (1938 chairman) of the German-English Friendship Society, a parallel organization to the English counterpart. As such, he attended George V's funeral, where he can be seen dragging his way through the funeral procession wearing a German uniform. His arthritis was by then quite bad.

Eduard's Nazi career can be summed up as gradually being phased out. His paramilitary organizations - *Stalhelm* and others - were subsumed under the corresponding Nazi

¹⁴ Forrer 1962; Lichtenstein 1988; Marrus red. 1989: ss. 1142-1144.

organizations. Eduard's honorary positions were there to mark continuity. Until the end of the war, he was regarded as an important figure and loyal Nazi. In fact, Hitler took the trouble of sending him a message on one of the last days of war not to allow himself to be taken alive. But Eduard was never that fanatic.

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Eduard's last trip abroad in the service of the Nazi Party was a private trip to Sweden in February 1942 with the directives to probe Gustaf V's position on Sweden's neutrality:

Günther told us that the Duke of Coburg had indeed, as had been assumed, been tasked with speaking foreign policy. He had been drinking tea for quite some time with the king, Sibylla and Gustav Adolf without coming up with anything. Eventually, the king had given a clear hint for the princely couple to disappear. The king then helped Coburg get going with a question. Coburg had then presented his question and received the king's emphatic assurance that we intended to defend our neutrality in all directions, including against England.¹⁵

May 19, 1943, Eduard's career in the Nazi Party came to an end. He and many others with an international background were dismissed by a special decree from their positions in the state, the party and the armed forces as being unreliable. He spent the rest of the war in Coburg. He kept several of the civilian missions until the end of the war, but there is no information on what he accomplished in them. At the end of March 1945, Foreign Minister Ribbentrop gave him a final assignment as chairman of the "Committee for the Protection of European Humanity" to convey peace feelers to the Western powers. In that capacity, Eduard approached the IRK, suggesting that, as the president of the DRK, he was in the position to negotiate the camp prisoners.¹⁶ June 4, 1945, Coburg was taken by American troops and he was detained for 18 months pending a trial. Numerous testimonies were offered about his upstanding, albeit easy-to-influence character and he was fined DM 5,000. His sister tells us:

When the Americans reached Coburg in 1945 Charlie and his family were living at the Veste Coburg. Although it had been shelled, only the Museum was wrecked, but as a consequence all the water was cut off. General Paton, whom Charlie had met in the U.S.A., said he could remain there on parole, but subsequently another general turned up who had a violent antipathy against anyone remotely connected with the Nazi régime. One day Charlie was ordered to go and meet this officer at a certain place. When he arrived the general was not there and he was taken from one place to another until he became convinced that he was not to see any general, but was to be imprisoned. As he had only anticipated an afternoon visit he had brought nothing with him. The U.S. chauffeur gave Charlie his own rations saying, "You'll need them".

Because Charlie had belonged to the "Partee" and was head of the Red Cross and Old Comrades Association (though he had not fought in the war), the Americans put him into a camp which had been a Serbian P.O.W. camp and was primitively equipped, and where there were a number of old generals and officials. As he was crippled with arthritis, he found conditions almost unendurable. Not having any utensils with him, he was sent to a rubbish dump to collect a tin which he cleaned as best he could with gravel. The soup was so thin they added grass to improve it. No doubt their jailers had

¹⁵ Westman 1981: s. 198.

¹⁶ Sandner 2010: s. 415; International Committee of the Red Cross. <en.wikipedia.org> (2016-01-01)..

seen some of the ghastly German concentration camps and were determined to treat these old officers with the utmost severity. Many of his fellow prisoners died there, but he was tough and somehow survived, though more crippled than ever, to tell the tale. Aunt Dick [Eduards hustru] had been told by U.S. officers that she would never see him again.

However, he was released in 1946 and went to live in miserable quarters in a small cottage belonging to the stables of the Schloss Callenberg near Coburg. Aunt Dick had to bicycle or walk even in winter with a rucksack every day to get food. This was the condition in which we found them when we arrived from Frankfurt. It was all so sad and sordid. Granpa and I put up at the hotel and used to walk three miles daily across the fields and up to the Callenberg to see them. The castle was full of refugees.

Granpa and I did all we could to persuade the American and, later, the German authorities, to provide them with better quarters. They were all odious, though I confess it was most difficult to find anywhere for people to live at that time.

In our efforts to do something for Uncle Charlie, Granpa and I humiliated ourselves by dining with the U.S. Governor of Coburg, a Syrian by birth. We also called on and lunched with his successor, a Jewish-French American whom we did not think a suitable representative of his great country nor the sort of person one would select to instruct the Germans in democracy ! However, in the long run, as Charlie was such an invalid with arthritis, he was allowed to transfer into part of a house which he owned and where Aunt Dick was close enough to the market for catering for their bit of food. We were all blissfully happy to be together again. Charlie died in 1954 and was the last Duke of Coburg.¹⁷

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Sister Alice's portrayal of her brother as a victim of the circumstances was long taken for granted. The reinterpretation of his role had to wait until the 1990s. The 1997 Hitler's Favorite Royal documentary caused some uproars and was even supposedly edited. It is, in any case, not a successful production in its breakneck mix of trivialities of everyday life and the Nazi extermination project. In the film, German specialist Karina Urbach expressed her suspicions: He is only a footnote in history, but I think he was a big Nazi who got away with it. In 2015, she published a book about Eduard and other upper-class English-educated Nazis, who played a role as “go-betweens“ between the Nazi party, the upper-class right, industrialists, the English royal house, etc. Urbach describes these “go-betweens“ as “members of the old elite, determined to become the new elite. In an age of rapid change, they had defended their spheres of influence – on a regional, national, but most importantly international level. They were all deeply opportunistic.“¹⁸ I would still like to break lance for Eduard. Royals are not like others. Noblesse oblige - if not to one thing, then to something else.

¹⁷ prinsessan Alice 1966: ss. 281-282.

¹⁸ Urbach 2015: s. 315.

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