

INSIDE EUROPE TODAY

JOHN GUNTHER

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INSIDE EUROPE TODAY

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JOHN
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1961
TO M. W. FODOR
and the memory of Martha

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INSIDE EUROPE TODAY

Revised Edition, 1962

BOOKS BY JOHN GUNTHER

INSIDE EUROPE TODAY

TAKEN AT THE FLOOD

INSIDE RUSSIA TODAY

INSIDE AFRICA

INSIDE U.S.A.

INSIDE LATIN AMERICA

INSIDE ASIA

INSIDE EUROPE

THE RIDDLE OF MACARTHUR

EISENHOWER

ROOSEVELT IN RETROSPECT

BEHIND THE CURTAIN

DEATH BE NOT PROUD

D DAY

THE TROUBLED MIDNIGHT

DAYS TO REMEMBER

(with Bernard Quint)

MEET NORTH AFRICA

MEET SOUTH AFRICA

MEET THE CONGO

ALEXANDER THE GREAT

JULIUS CAESAR

THE GOLDEN FLEECE

EUROPE TODAY



AUTHOR'S NOTE

Inside Europe Today was first published in July, 1961. Now, less than a year thereafter, it appears in this new edition—completely revised, reset from beginning to end, and republished. Among events which have occurred in the short span of time since the original edition appeared, and which I now touch on or describe, are the Soviet orbital flights, Mr. Khrushchev's resumption of nuclear testing, the revolt in Portuguese Angola, deterioration of the situation in the Congo, tightening of the deadlock between France and Algeria, various political developments in England, the German general election of September, 1961, negotiations between Great Britain and the Common Market, elections in such countries as Greece, Turkey, Norway, and Belgium, and, above all, the building of the wall between East and West Berlin on August 13, 1961, with the exacerbation of the cold war which—at least momentarily—this produced.

Perhaps I should add that *Inside Europe Today* is a totally different book from my old *Inside Europe*, which appeared a quarter of a century ago in 1936. I mention this only because *Inside Europe* was repeatedly revised, rewritten, and republished over a period of years, and the fact that *Inside Europe Today* now seems to be setting out to repeat this process may cause confusion. But they are altogether different books, and *Inside Europe Today* bears no textual resemblance whatever to its predecessor.

Inside Europe Today was widely reviewed when it appeared in 1961, and produced a good deal of lively correspondence from several countries. I have made use of suggestions provided by various critics and readers, and would like to thank them one and all. Altogether this new edition of *Inside Europe Today* contains 790

textual changes, additions, and subtractions, and has 12,400 words or more of new material.

This is the seventh Inside book. The others are *Inside Europe* (1936, repeatedly revised and republished), *Inside Asia* (1939, revised edition, 1942), *Inside Latin America* (1941), *Inside U.S.A.* (1947, revised edition, 1952), *Inside Africa* (1955), and *Inside Russia Today* (1958). All are still in print and sell actively both here and in Great Britain, and they have been translated into more than twenty languages.

J. G.

CONTENTS

<i>Author's Note</i>	ix
1. By Way of Introduction	1
2. The Old Man on the Rhine	12
3. Pressures in the Federal Republic	28
4. Berlin—Outpost and Pivot	43
5. Soviet Sector, Soviet Zone	62
6. The Person of de Gaulle	72
7. Changes and Perplexities in France	82
8. The Army, Algeria, and Africa	96
9. The Benelux Constellation	110
10. Iberian Peninsula	128
11. What's Going On in Italy	147
12. Along the Mediterranean	166
13. Austria Felix	184
14. England, the Most Important Country	197
15. Defense and Nuclear Disarmament	215
16. Macmillan	225
17. The Establishment and the Opposition	241
18. A Word on NATO	258
19. At Sixes and Sevens	268
20. Scandinavia—the Outer Bastions	282
21. Khrushchev at the Summit	296
22. More About Mr. K.	316
23. Satellites and Soviet Policy	338
24. A Few Paragraphs in Conclusion	365
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	369
<i>Index</i>	371

MAPS

Europe Today	vii
Europe in 1936	3
Divisions of Germany	29
Routes to Berlin	45
NATO in Europe	259
The Inner Six—The Outer Seven	269
Russian Satellites	339

1 BY WAY OF INTRODUCTION

Twenty-six years ago I wrote *Inside Europe*, which surveyed the tortured world of Europe in the late 1930's, on the eve of World War II, when the continent was dominated by three colossal tyrants—Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin. Now a bit over a quarter of a century has passed, the immediate upheavals and dislocations caused by the greatest war in history are behind us, and this is a good time to take a fresh look at Europe, its thicket of contemporary personalities, issues, forces, problems. How does the Europe of today compare to that of 1936? What has happened in a quarter of a century? What are the paramount, the fundamental changes?

Some in the realm of the obvious may be listed at once. The three big despots are no longer with us—nor are such smaller dictators as Pilsudski, Horthy, Metaxas, Kemal Atatürk, Dollfuss, and various Balkan kings and kinglets. The Third Reich, which was to have lasted a thousand years, has been swept away into the ugly gutter of history where it belonged. The Italian monarchy has disappeared, and so have both the Third and Fourth Republics in France. England is revived. There was only one Germany when war came in 1939 (and one was quite enough, thank you); today there are two. Nobody had ever heard the phrases “Iron Curtain,” “cold war,” or “peaceful coexistence” in 1936; today we know them well. Nobody—except a handful of scientists—had ever thought of harnessing atomic energy as an instrument of warfare, and not one person in a million had ever heard the name Hiroshima.

But to proceed to other elements—

The most striking of all differences between the Europe of 1936

and that of 1962 is that a general war in the near future—despite everything, even including intermittent savage crises over Berlin—is unlikely. Even such an inveterate adversary of the Soviet Union as Chancellor Adenauer will tell you that Mr. Khrushchev has no present intention of making a war. But in 1936 everybody who had a milligram of insight knew that Hitler was inevitably bound to make a war. He wanted it, and nothing, not even the pusillanimity of Mr. Chamberlain, was going to stop him. The fierce threat of impending conflict, conflict that would spread throughout the whole world, to be made by a criminal lunatic who could not be reached by any instrument of reason, lay like a black, sinister shadow across every face.

Today, no equivalent threat exists. Mr. Khrushchev is a man who can be extraordinarily rude, crude, and disagreeable, quite capable of losing his temper, but he is not a madman. Such personal factors aside, Hitler could get what he wanted only by direct territorial aggression and open warfare. Khrushchev, in strict contrast, can get what he wants only by taking advantage, for his own purposes, of a period of peace. Hitler was spoiling for a fight—even at Munich; Khrushchev is spoiling for a *détente*—on his own terms, of course.

Another point is striking too. Hitler was capable of making the bloodiest, most unpleasant, and most disrupting war in history, but he was not capable of burning up the whole world at the push of a button. *If* war should come today—through strategic miscalculation or plain, stupid blunder—civilization might not survive. Never before in history has the possibility of such an obliterating catastrophe confronted mankind. So we have two overriding factors to consider, which to an extent complement each other. First, nobody actively wants a war (except possibly the Chinese), and, although the world situation is tense and harassing, open hot war is unlikely; but, second, if a general war *should* come, it could be immeasurably more disastrous than any other ever fought, because of the overwhelming fact that we have entered into the missile age.

Why, then, in view of the somber shadow of megaton bombs, are today's Europeans not more frightened than they are? Why is western Europe booming, prosperous, and confident? One reason is optimism

EUROPE IN 1936



in a period of wealth—people don't want to face painful facts. Another is nuclear stalemate. We have today a world sharply divided between mutually exclusive groups, ourselves and the Communists, and the fact that each has the instantaneous capacity to destroy or reduce vitally the strength of the other is a force which makes for peace. Neither side can dare attack the other. But this also produces intense diplomatic rivalry, which extends to sectors today, like Vietnam, Laos, Cuba in the Western Hemisphere, and large areas in Africa, including the Congo in particular, which would have been thought utterly remote from the main struggle for power in 1936.

Another fundamental, pre-eminent difference between prewar and postwar Europe is, of course, the Atlantic Alliance, a corollary of which is the presence of substantial United States military, air, and naval forces in Europe. This, as should be known to us all, is a development not only of the utmost importance, but one which would have been thought literally inconceivable by most Americans during the isolationist period of our history, that is to say, the day before yesterday. The Marshall Plan and ECA lifted western Europe to its feet; then came NATO; military aid continues. If Europe today is immeasurably different from prewar Europe, a leading factor is—as is only too obvious—the extension eastward of the American frontier. In 1936 Europe had a spongy fence known as the Maginot Line; today it has American bases scattered over a large area (whether wisely or not is another matter), and an American army on the Rhine.

Finally in the realm of broad general considerations we have the fact that, to be blunt, France, West Germany, Italy, and even the United Kingdom are no longer great powers. This is a development of magnitude, if only because it passes so much responsibility for western leadership to the United States, which has not always proved itself to be fully seasoned and mature in accepting such responsibilities. Since 1949, when Russia built its first atomic bomb, this has been a two-power world. In time, Europe itself (western Europe that is) may become a new great power, if progressively seminal developments like the Common Market continue to make for growth

and coalescence, but this is to look a considerable way ahead.¹ Also China may soon—uncomfortably soon—become a great power of the rank of Russia and the United States. But at the moment the world is polarized between Washington and Moscow, and the most urgent and gravid of all problems is to stabilize relations between them. In 1936, to repeat, Europe consisted of a group of countries roughly equal in strength; in 1962, it is two parallel slabs of territory—one ours, one theirs—between two adversaries, the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, which are not in true essence European powers at all.

Some Points of Detail—The New Europe

Following are some details—political and otherwise—which illustrate further the differences between prewar Europe and the Europe of today. Seldom has any quarter-century produced such seismic changes. I list these points without regard to order of importance.

Item. Three countries have gone down the drain—disappeared just like that—worthy, honest, and decent little countries too. They are the three Baltic states, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, which were all absorbed by the Soviet Union in 1940. Also the Russians took substantial areas of Finland, Poland, and Rumania as well as part of East Prussia. One result of the penetration into Poland is that the Soviet Union has today a common frontier with Hungary, which was a matter of considerable convenience to the USSR when the Red Army brutally put down the Hungarian people's uprising in October, 1956. As to Poland itself, it has been moved bodily west.

Item. One new country has emerged—Cyprus.

Item. As everybody knows, East Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Rumania, and Bulgaria have become satellites of the Soviet Union—puppet states, although their degrees of subservience differ. Altogether a broad bloc of Russian-dominated territory stretches from the Baltic to the Black Sea and protrudes into western Europe as far as the Danube and Elbe. In 1936 there was one Communist country in Europe; today, eight. Something like 115,000,000

¹ For the Common Market and its profound implications see Chapter 19 below.

people have lost freedom, which constitutes as black a tragedy as any that has defaced modern times.

Item. Yugoslavia, under Marshal Tito, is a special case. It is Communist, but not a Soviet satellite. Tito is a "national" Communist. Another special case is Albania, which is Communist but which has attempted to secede from Kremlin control and which seeks to ally itself with the Chinese.

Item. Austria, forcibly incorporated into the Reich by Hitler in 1938, has become free and is now neutralized. The Russians withdrew from their zone of occupation in Austria in 1955; it was with this gesture that Khrushchev bought his way into the first Summit Conference in Geneva.

Item. Before the war dictators of varying color ruled Germany (which included Austria after 1938 and Czechoslovakia after 1938-39), Italy, Spain, Portugal, Hungary, Greece, Turkey, the Soviet Union, Poland, and most of the Balkan states. Of these Germany (west of the Elbe), Italy, and Greece have become democracies today. Turkey deposed a semidictator, Adnan Menderes, in 1960, and he was subsequently hanged.

Item. Only three countries have today the same rulers they had in the 1930's—Spain, Portugal, and Eire, which became a republic in 1937 and left the British Commonwealth in 1949. Franco has managed to hold on continuously in Spain since 1936, and Salazar in Portugal since 1932. De Valera in Eire had periods of being in and out of office. It is interesting that Spain, Portugal, and Eire are all Catholic and lie on the outermost fringes of western Europe.²

Item. Of the few institutions which have remained intact, or virtually intact, since the war one is the British royal family—also the Vatican. Another—at the extreme opposite pole—is the Communist party in the Soviet Union, although this has changed considerably since Stalin's day.

Item. As far as specific political events concerning individual European powers are concerned, the most important since the war

² In passing it might also be mentioned that leaders of three of the four chief western European countries are practicing Catholics—de Gaulle, Adenauer, and Gronchi.

is probably the reconciliation of France and Germany. The most important future *issue* is disarmament.

Item. Hitler murdered six *million* Jews, as revolting a crime as any in human history; as a result a new and odious word—"genocide"—entered the world's vocabulary. Some Jews were lucky enough to escape from Germany before Hitler's mass exterminations began; others have left Europe since, and are now staunch, enlightened citizens of a brave new country, Israel. The fact that there are many fewer Jews in Europe than before the war has substantially changed the face of several countries, like Poland, and of several great cities, like Vienna and Berlin. They are the worse for it; a glow, a creative spark, a friendly leavening of earthiness and humor have disappeared.

Item. The old League of Nations in Geneva is dead; the new United Nations in New York is very much alive, and day by day plays a more pungent role in the affairs of the world. It is infinitely more powerful than the old League, if only because the United States is a member; also it owes an infinite debt to the zeal, deftness, and indefatigability of Dag Hammarskjöld, whose untimely death in an airplane accident in Africa in 1961 was a major tragedy not only for the UN itself but for men of good will everywhere in the world. But the UN is certainly a very different organization from what was visualized by its founders in San Francisco in 1945. It has 104 members now as against fifty-one at its first assembly, and whereas it was once dominated by the western democratic powers these at the moment of writing have only a bare majority, if that. At least forty-five of its member nations belong to the Asian-African bloc, and represent peoples who are black, yellow, or brown.

Item. The European imperial powers—Britain, France, Belgium, the Netherlands—have lost most of their great colonial dependencies. More on this later. Britain has given up India, Pakistan, Burma, Ceylon, Malaya, the Sudan, Nigeria, and Ghana, among much else; France has lost Syria, the Lebanon, Indo-China, Morocco, and Tunisia; Belgium surrendered the Congo, with consequences still hot in the world's news; the Netherlands has lost Indonesia. Since the war no fewer than thirteen countries in Asia and twenty-four in