

Hermann Albert Schumacher 1868-1952

Excerpts from:

E.F.Schumacher, *His Life and Thought*,

by Barbara Wood

The name Hermann carried with it the burden of generations of eldest sons. Since the fourteenth century they have served their country loyally, performing civic duties in the Hanseatic town of Bremen, where the first recorded Hermann Schumacher was elected mayor. Subsequent generations of Schumachers bore the office and in 1604 Bremen publicly acknowledged their service by adding the Schumacher coat of arms to those of other notable families in the town hall.

The traditional ties with Bremen town hall were broken by Fritz's grandfather. He wanted to play a wider role in the world and went abroad with his wife, two small sons and a baby daughter, first to be German Ambassador in Bogota, Columbia, and then to be German Consul in New York, where two more daughters were born. Their life in the wilds of the Andes and



amongst the skyscrapers of New York was not always conventional. The two boys were more or less left to educate themselves. After a brief and unhappy period of formal schooling in a New York establishment their father was convinced that they would learn more left to their own devices; they were given a printing press and the young "Schumacher Brothers, Printers" set themselves up in business. They learned mathematics by keeping their accounts and literacy through typesetting, their father insisting only that they carried on their printing business with proper professionalism and dedication.

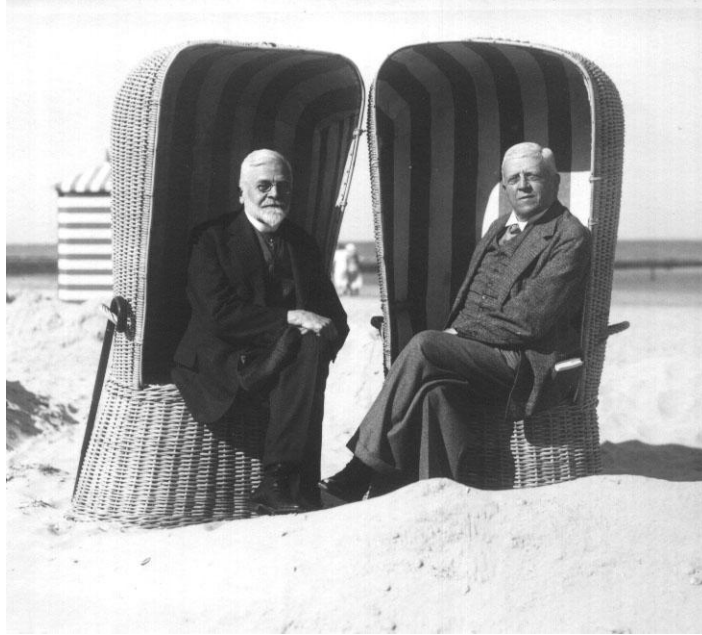
Hermann and Fritz, two sisters in front

In 1882 Ambassador Schumacher was posted to Lima and the two boys were sent home to Bremen for a more formal education. They felt like orphans away from their parents and sisters. Bremen seemed to be full of critical aunts of all shapes and sizes who peered at 'the two German shoots grown on American soil' through curtained windows as they walked down the street on their way to school. Hermann, the elder found it particularly difficult to settle down and recorded many years later in his memoirs that this episode in Bremen

strengthened the north German tendency in my personality, but also tied me to my brother in an unusually close bond. From then on we lived - almost as orphans - in the house of my mother's older sister ... However friendly our reception was, it could never take the place of our parental home. As Fontane says, home 'exerts its influence from minute to minute in those formative years of the soul', where example is more important than teaching. That feeling of natural belonging which one takes for granted could only develop slowly and with

more difficulty for the older (brother) than for the younger.

The absence of continuous family bonds, exacerbated by the early death of his father, all helped to make Hermann single-mindedly wrapped up in his own life: dogmatic, authoritarian and



dedicated to the pursuit of his career, breaking only for holiday with his brother whenever their busy lives allowed. His career progressed well. He studied first law and then economics. By the age of thirty-one, in 1899, he had already gained the distinction of being appointed to a chair of economics, at Kiel University, without having acquired the usual obligatory academic qualification of a doctorate. Once he was a professor, the world opened out, particularly after he had founded a school of economics in Cologne in 1900, the first to have university status in Germany. As Hermann's reputation spread to the upper echelons of society he was appointed tutor to the Crown

Prince and his brothers. He travelled widely to the Far East and China, collecting economic data, and twice to New York, where on his second visit in 1906 he was the first 'Kaiser Wilhelm Exchange Professor' at Columbia University, returning after a year to the chair of economics at Bonn University.



Portrait-Aufnahme *“Mein siebzigster Geburtstag hat mich durch viele Zeichen der Freundschaft, Anhänglichkeit und Liebe beglückt. Alte und junge Beziehungen, die mit meinem Leben und Tun verknüpft waren, sind lebendig geworden und haben mir den Tag verschönt. Ich sage allen, die meiner so freundlich gedacht haben, Von Herzen Dank und hoffe, dass mich das Leben noch mit Manchem zusammenführen wird, um diesen Dank persönlich ausdrücken zu können, Berlin im März.“*



Hermann (center) his siter Site (right)

Hermanns Family: Hermann (jr) and Irmgard in back, Elisabeth, Fritz, Muschi, Ernst, Edith and Hermann (sr) at the right.

