

# The life of German expat palaeontologist Curt Teichert in Copenhagen in the late 1930s

AF: FINN SURLYK, PETER ALSEN & STEFAN PIASECKI

*Surlyk, F. [finns@ign.ku.dk], Department of Geosciences and Natural Resource Management, University of Copenhagen, Øster Voldgade 10, DK-1350 Copenhagen K, Denmark. Peter Alsen, [pal@geus.dk], Geological Survey of Denmark and Greenland (GEUS), Øster Voldgade 10, DK-1350 Copenhagen K, Denmark. Stefan Piasecki, [piasecki@sund.ku.dk], GLOBE Institute, University of Copenhagen, Øster Voldgade 5, DK-1350 K, Copenhagen K, Denmark.*

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Denne artikel er skrevet på engelsk, idet det manuskript, den tysk-fødte palæontolog Curt Teichert efterlod sig om sine år i København midt i 1930erne, er forfattet på engelsk, og ikke mindst fordi hans historie er af almen, international interesse.

## Background

A manuscript entitled ‘DENMARK 1933–1937’ written by the eminent German palaeontologist Curt Teichert (Figs 1–4) has recently come to our attention. It was handed over to us by professor Tove Birkelund, but it was only one of several manuscripts covering Teichert’s memoirs as a palaeontologist from 1905–1967. A version of the manuscript was published by the Paleontological Research Institution, Ithaca, New York (Mikkelsen *et al.* 2014) as Chapter 7 in a comprehensive post-humous biography of Teichert from 1968–1996. However, it differs from the present version in deletion or additions of quite a number of paragraphs. We have kept Teichert’s original version here.

Teichert’s manuscript is of great interest, giving an inside view of life at the ‘Mineralogisk Museum’ of the University of Copenhagen in the 1930s. The museum at the time covered all geology at the university, including teaching. This was long before the separation of the museum and the departments which took care of teaching in addition to research.

The core of the old museum staff met every day for lunch at ‘Kaffeklubben’ – the Coffee Club. The club included the mineralogist professor Bøggild, the palaeontologists and later professors Christian Poulsen and Alfred Rosenkrantz and docent J.P.J. Ravn, the metamorphic rock specialist Karen Callisen, the mineralogist and later lecturer Hans Clausen, the

director of the Geological Survey of Denmark Victor Madsen, and survey geologist Helge Gry.

FS has had the pleasure of having been taught palaeontology, stratigraphy and the geology of Denmark by Poulsen and Rosenkrantz and mineralogy by Clausen. As a new employee in 1968 he had the fortune as a new employee at the university of being a very young colleague of Poulsen, Rosenkrantz and Clausen and teaching field courses with Gry.

The late 1930s was also a time of a major conflict in Danish geology between ‘the eleven’, comprising Bøggild, Callisen, Clausen, Poulsen and Rosenkrantz from the university, Madsen and ‘state geologist’ Knud Jessen both of the geological survey, the economic geologist Richard Bøgvad, the young M.Sc.’s Arne Noe-Nygaard and Helge Gry and German expats Curt Teichert and Hans Frebold on one side and the Greenland explorer Lauge Koch on the other. ‘The eleven’ accused Koch of unethical and scientifically incorrect aspects of his book ‘Geologie von Grönland’ published in 1935. Koch took the group to court, but the group was acquitted after a long trial. This resulted in Koch not engaging Danish geologists in his extensive later expedition work in Greenland.

FS, having heard the stories about Lauge Koch on a near daily basis over quite few years especially as told by Rosenkrantz found it of great interest to read the version told by a German expat sitting in the centre of it all and being exceedingly poorly treated by Koch. FS was later presented with a more balanced view of

the feud by professor Arne Noe-Nygaard, specialist in volcanic rocks, notably plateau basalts. He was not a member of the Kaffeklubben at the time – probably being considered too young.

The book was strongly criticized in a review by Bøggild *et al.* (1935): “Det skal straks siges, at LAUGE

KOCHS Bog ikke svarer til sit Formaal, og vi føler os forpligtet til skarpt at tage Afstand fra den paa Grund af dens i det store og hele urigtige og tendentiøse Fremstilling. Vi gør det ikke mindst, fordi Bogen indgaar som Led i en Serie stærkt benyttede Haandbøger” (Bøggild *et al.*, p. 483). [Translated into English by Jon

Ineson: “It should be stated upfront that Lauge Koch’s book does not live up to its purpose. We feel duty-bound to distance ourselves from this work which is incorrect in many respects and biased in its presentation. We take this position not least because the book forms part of a series of much-used textbooks”].

Teichert’s manuscript gives a heart-breaking picture of the life of German refugees in Denmark in the time after Hitler’s seizure of power in Germany in 1933. Teichert’s wife Trude (Gertrude) was Jewish, making life in Germany close to impossible. The Teichert’s travelled to Copenhagen almost without money but with the help of Kaffeklubben members, notably Poulsen they acquired a very limited income mainly from curatorial and translator work. The manuscript is of great general interest as it describes the positive attitudes of the colleagues at the University of Copenhagen compared to Koch’s attempts to keep Teichert away from palaeontological collections. The aftermath of the feud lingered on for many years and was still the subject of much conversation when one of us (FS) was a geology student in the 1960es.



**Fig. 1.** Curt Teichert photographed during field work at Dødemandsbugten on Clavering Ø in 1932 as a member of the Danish Three-Year Expedition to East Greenland (1931–34). Cropped photograph: Helge Larsen, Arktisk Institut.

Later readers of the review by Bøggild *et al.* (1935) have given more balanced views of Koch's book (e.g. Birkelund 1976; Dawes 1992). FS came to the same conclusions back in the 1970es having worked in many of the areas discussed in *Geologie von Grönland*. His dr. scient. thesis was thus based on field work in 1974 in Wollaston Forland in a syn-rift succession deposited off fault scarps in relatively deep waters (Surlyk 1978). Koch was ridiculed for claiming that the basement ridges in the region represented ancient coastlines, but he was right. He had an excellent vision and flair for understanding the large-scale geological pictures but was less interested in detailed palaeontological data. However, Teichert's descriptions of Koch's manoeuvres to prevent any access to a stable income and prohibition of taking his Greenland material to the museum are unbearable reading. Accusations of Teichert being a communist infiltrator and later also informing the Germans of Teichert's wife being Jewish adds to the picture of Koch as not only an extremely

energetic, charismatic, and powerful, but also self-centred and ruthless person who did not let anybody stand in his way. So, the basis for the critical review of Koch's book by 'the eleven' was clearly not based on scientific disagreements only, but to a large extent also on personal conflicts, notably reflecting Koch's use of other people's data as his own and lack of reference to their work in general.

We hope that the readers will find interesting reading in the biographical writings by Curt Teichert on his years in Denmark, and on the troubled life of German emigrants and refugees in the late 1930es. Teichert's manuscript is written in English and we have chosen to present the manuscript and our comments in English because of Teichert's high international reputation and to keep the spirit of his manuscript. We have included copies of two important papers on Palaeozoic cephalopods published in 1930 and 1933 with dedications to Lauge Koch and Christian Poulsen, respectively (Figs 3, 4).



**Fig. 2.** Overwintering team (Eskimonæs station) 1931–32 during the Danish Three-Year Expedition to East Greenland. From the left: Helge Larsen (archaeologist), Curt Teichert (geologist/palaeontologist), Johan Davidsen (station personel), Axel Nielsen (station personel), A. Schwarck (field assistant), Th. Johansen (botanist), Paul Gelting (botanist), Alwin Pedersen (zoologist). Photograph: Thyge Johansen, Arktisk Institut.

## DENMARK 1933–1937

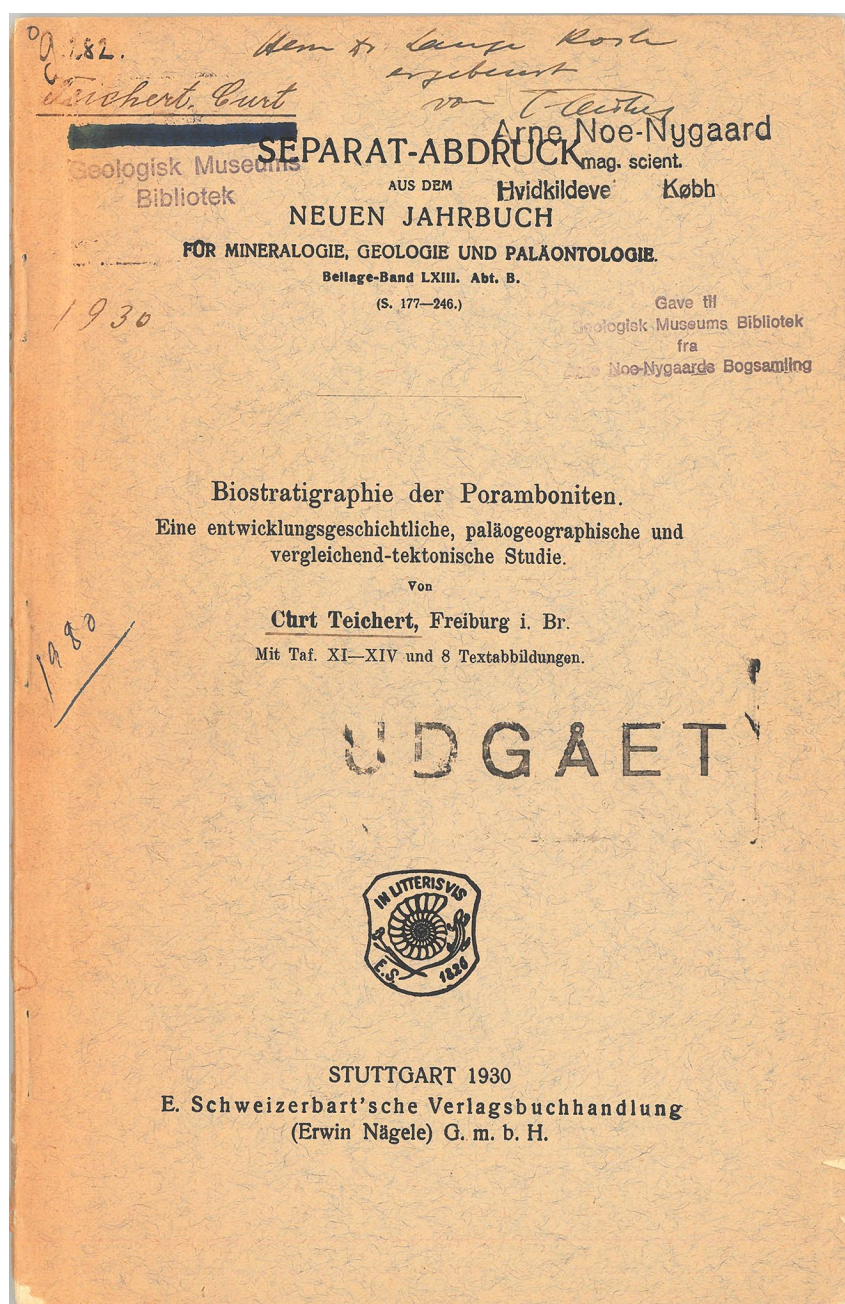
By Curt Teichert

On the ferry boat from Sasnitz [town on north coast of Germany] to Gedser [southernmost town in Denmark] we stood on the deck and watched the German coast recede in the distance. Would we ever be able to return? But we had no time for morose thoughts and a few hours later our friends Helge and Gerda Larsen welcomed us cheerfully at the railway station in Copenhagen. Most hospitably, they took us into their tiny two-room apartment where we spent two

nights sleeping on the sofa bed in the living room, until we had found a room in a downtown boarding house where we stayed for a couple of weeks. Here we had time to relax and recover from the highly strung emotional state in which we had lived during the last few weeks. No more storm troopers, no more rallies, no more swastika flags, no more government propaganda – it seemed like heaven on earth. We must have made up for lost sleep, for one morning we looked out the window at the tower of the church right across the street from our house and Trude said: “I can see right through the tower. Has it always been like that?” It turned out there had been a huge multiple alarm

fire, the church and the steeple had burned out – there must have been hours of intense noise and commotion right in front of our window, but we had slept through all of it.

My first business was of course a visit to Lauge Koch to whom I reported the outcome of my discussions with people at the Rockefeller Foundation in Paris in July. I explained to him that all he would have to do was to provide an official working place for me perhaps with a small nominal salary, and that the Rockefeller Foundation would look after the rest. He listened very seriously, seemed sympathetic, and explained that he expected to go to Paris within the next few weeks and would there take up my case with the Rockefeller Foundation people himself. When he heard



**Fig. 3.** Reprint of Teichert (1930) from Curt Teichert to Lauge Koch, with the wording “Herrn Dr. Lauge Koch, ergebenst von C. Teichert” [Eng: Mr. Dr. Lauge Koch, sincerely from C. Teichert]. The reprint was subsequently included in the reprint collection of Arne Noe-Nygaard and later in the library at the Mineralogisk Museum. When sailing with the ship Godthaab from Copenhagen to North-East Greenland in 1931, the first year of Lauge Koch’s Three-Year Expedition, Curt Teichert shared cabin with Arne Noe-Nygaard – at the time a young geology student and later professor at the University of Copenhagen.

that I was bringing my Greenland collections of rocks and fossils back to Copenhagen, he seemed somewhat disturbed and instructed me under no circumstances to have them brought to the Mineralogisk Museum but did not suggest any alternative place to which I could have taken them. My collections therefore rested at the railway depot for some time until, through the good services of the father of my friend Elmer Drastrop I found a haven in Copenhagen's foremost art museum, the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, where I was given a room in the attic with a desk and sufficient space to unpack and spread out my specimens. For some time, I dutifully spent a few hours every day in my new working place, but soon found that without easy access to a library, without laboratory facilities and, especially, without a photo lab, my options were very limited indeed.

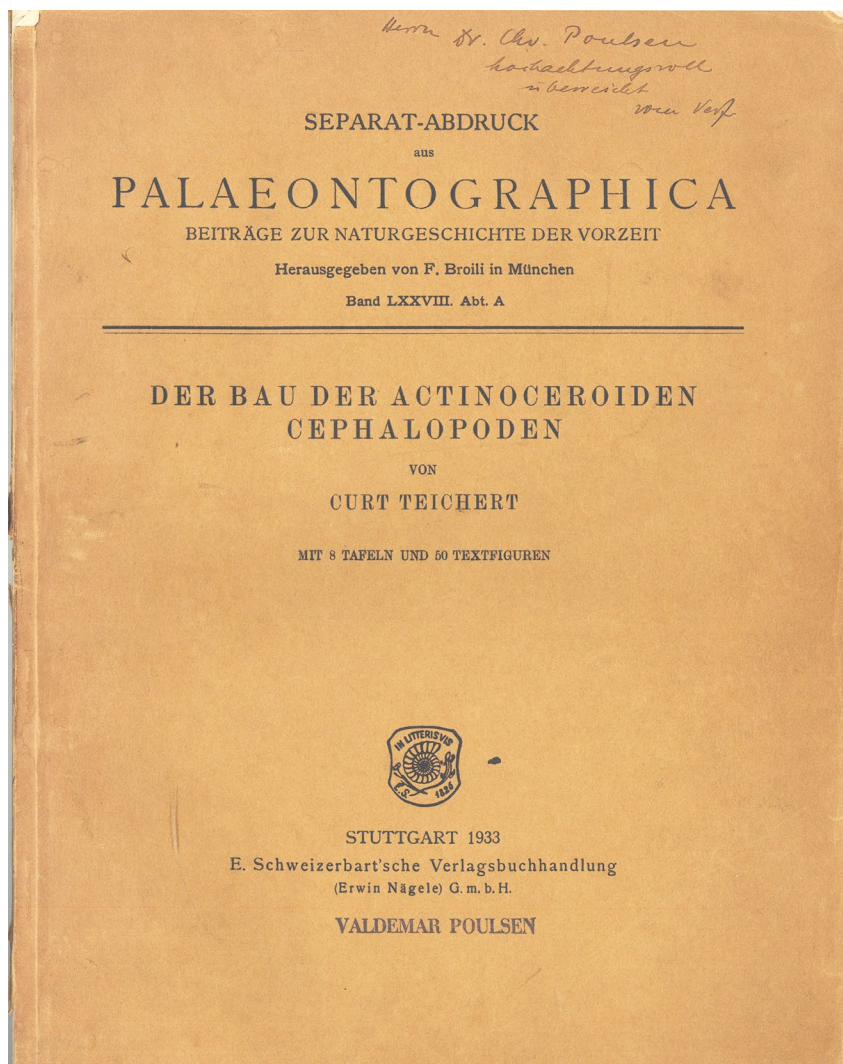
Meanwhile, Trude had been looking for work, but the only work she could find was retouching portraits in a photo shop at substandard wages. When we left

Germany, we were allowed to take out 200 marks each. Perhaps we took a few more marks out illegally, but when we arrived in Copenhagen, we certainly had less than 500 marks in our possession. At prevailing exchange rates at the time, this was something like \$100.00, not a great deal with which to start a new life even then. So, our reserves dwindled all the time, even though Trude's meager earnings slowed down this process somewhat.

We had entered Denmark on visitor's visas and within a few weeks the necessity arose to apply for permanent resident status, so we sent in our passports to the police with request for extended residence permit to allow me to work up my Greenland results. Week after week went by without a word from the police department, which seemed ominous to say the least. By this time, I had learned of the existence of a Danish committee for refugee scientists. I had in-fact been in touch with this committee on behalf of my brother-in-law Rudolf Kaufmann who had

completed his Ph.D. in Greifswald in February 1933, and who was now looking desperately for a job outside Germany. The two most active members of the committee for refugee scientists were Professors Niels Bohr and Aage Friis, the latter a prominent physiologist at the University of Copenhagen.

When I had not heard from the police and our passports were still being retained, I went to see Professor Friis and told him of our predicament. After he had heard my story, he immediately called the head of the Danish police. I was present during this talk and after



**Fig. 4.** Reprint of Curt Teichert's monograph from 1933, published in the prestigious German *Palaeontographica* series, handed over from Teichert to Dr. Christian Poulsen, one of the 'members' of the Kaffeklubben at the Mineralogisk Museum, University of Copenhagen.

a while I saw him pounding the table. When he was finished, he turned to me and said: "Somebody has denounced you to the police as a communist agitator, but I have made it clear to them who you really are, and I hope that your troubles will be over". Indeed, after a few days we received our passports and an extended residence permit with permission to do scientific work in Denmark. It was never made clear who had denounced me as a communist agitator, but there was only one suspect. I never heard again from Lauge Koch nor of any visit by him to Paris or any negotiations with the Rockefeller Foundation.

In spite of this fortunate turn of events December was a bleak month. Trude's brother Rudolf had visited us. We had in the meantime sublet two rooms of a larger apartment in downtown Copenhagen where Trude also had access to the kitchen. Here, Rudolf had moved in with us for two or three weeks in search of a job in Denmark, but this was entirely hopeless. He was a beginner who had nothing to show for at that time except his still unpublished Ph.D. thesis on speciation in Upper Cambrian trilobites, and although this was a piece of pioneer research which was going to be quoted in the literature on evolutionary processes for several decades, this was not realized at that time. So, after a few weeks he left in disappointment, went back to Germany as teacher in one of the newly founded Jewish schools which were then permitted by the Nazis, as Jewish children were then excluded from other German schools. This was his undoing, as we shall see later.

In January 1934, our fortunes continued to ebb. I had no income and Trude's earnings were insufficient to meet our expenses. In December and January, I had been under continued pressure from my father to join him in his business in Königsberg, where an ample salary was offered me. We had resisted as long as we could, but by the beginning of February we had reached the end of the line. Fortunately, in spite of much pressure from Lauge Koch not to establish personal connections with the people at the Mineralogisk Museum, I had visited them several times and particularly established good relationships with one of the paleontologists, Christian Poulsen. Another mentor was Alwin Pedersen, the zoologist with whom I had wintered in East Greenland 1931–32 [Fig. 2] and who was now busy writing a new book about East Greenland animals. In January it was abundantly clear that Lauge Koch had betrayed me and that he had taken no steps of any kind to secure even a temporary position for me. When we had just enough money left for the railway ticket to Königsberg, we had no choice but to give in, but Alwin Pedersen persuaded me before my departure to write a letter to a highly placed person in the scientific establishment in Copenhagen,

Mr. Daugaard-Jensen, the director of the Greenland administration, in which I described in considerable detail my dealings with Lauge Koch which had led to my decision to return to Germany, where I intended to give the deal I had received from him the widest possible circulation.

Some day in the beginning of February we had more or less completed our preparation for our departure and had invited a few friends for a farewell party. In the middle of this 'celebration' probably at about 8:00 PM, the doorbell rang and there stood Christian Poulsen with a message: "would I be prepared to accept a fellowship with a stipend of 300 kroner per month?" I would have given him a big bear hug, but that was not the style of those days; so I pressed his hand warmly, and twenty minutes later I called my father in Königsberg that the deal was off, and our farewell party turned into a celebration for a new lease of life. My father, of course, was deeply disappointed, but that could not be helped. Our lifestyle now changed dramatically. I was cordially received in the Mineralogisk Museum and was assigned a room in the basement. It was small and dark, but I had a small desk and a work bench under the window and there was room for fossil cabinets to house the collections with which I was to work. What happened to my Greenland collections, I do not know. Dr. Koch did not allow me to take them to the Mineralogisk Museum and I do not know where they finally ended up. The first project assigned to me was to study the Paleozoic fossils, especially cephalopods, from drift boulders in the Pleistocene moraines of Denmark. Trude quit her work in the photo sweatshop and concentrated on improving her Danish. On April 1st we moved into a tiny apartment in a brand-new apartment complex called Blidahlund where a number of two-story apartment buildings had been erected, set rather attractively between old beech trees. Ours was officially classified as a 1 1/2 room apartment. It consisted of one room which may have been 12x15 ft. and housed my fairly large desk, typewriter table, a couch on which I slept, two or three bookshelves for my compact little geological library and a small table under the window where we had our meals, so it was a combined study and living-dining-bed room. The so-called half-room, Trude's 'bedroom', was a tiny hole just large enough to contain a bed, a wardrobe and a chair. There also was a tiny kitchen which, however, had a very small, under-the-counter electric refrigerator, a new-fangled luxury gadget which kept at least the milk and my beer cold, and which at that time was found in very few households. We ourselves would not own one until about 15 years later. We had room for only a few most necessary pieces of the furniture we had brought with us from Germany. The rest was stored in the basement.

I made a couple of quick trips back to Berlin to meet my father who was not yet reconciled with our decision to remain in Denmark. On one of these occasions he splurged on a plane ticket for me so that I could spend another evening with him. Instead of taking the night train to Copenhagen, I flew to Copenhagen the next morning. The plane was called Hindenburg (at that time, planes were named like ships). It seemed huge to me because it could take about 20 passengers which were arranged in 2 single rows, one on each side of the cabin. It was my first flight, and I was understandably excited.

In the Mineralogisk Museum I soon tackled some of the cephalopods from the Pleistocene boulders and published a couple of papers on them. However, my attention was also attracted to the fairly large and interesting collections of Ordovician and Silurian fossils from various parts of North Greenland and from Arctic Canada. The former had been collected by Lauge Koch on his so-called Jubilee Expedition in 1922–23 across the north of Greenland. They had been monographed in 1926 by the Swedish paleontologist Gustav Troedsson in an excellent monograph which I had read intensely and used extensively during my work on cephalopods, especially actinoceroids, in the United States and Canada in 1930–31. Although Troedsson's descriptions were very carefully written and his specimens were excellently illustrated, yet with the experience I had gained in the United States, was able to discover many interesting features in some of the specimens, which Troedsson, quite understandably, had overlooked, because their importance had only become evident through my later studies in the United States. During the summer of 1934 I wrote a somewhat longer paper redescribing and revising some of Troedsson's material and sent a copy of the finished manuscript and illustrations to Troedsson with a request for comments. Two or three weeks later the manuscript came back without accompanying letter and without any comments. This puzzled me greatly, because I did not see how I could have offended him. We had no differences of opinion; all I had done was to squeeze a little extra information out of a number of specimens which he had already described in detail. There was an interesting aftermath to this episode. Two or three years later Troedsson applied for a vacant professorship at a Swedish University and one of our paleontologists, Dr. Ravn, was a member of the selection committee. He asked me for a written opinion about Troedsson whose candidature he favored. I wrote a very favorable opinion in which I praised Dr. Troedsson's many scientific achievements. In those days there was nothing confidential about these professorial competitions and all materials submitted by all members of the selection committee

were made available to all candidates. Thus, in due course my written opinion about Dr. Troedsson came to his knowledge and a little later, a parcel of reprints with a very nice letter from him arrived on my desk.

The year 1934 and the winter of 1934–35 were for us a period of steady consolidation and improvement. In June Trude obtained a position as personal laboratory technician of Professor Ole Chievitz who was director and chief surgeon of the Finsen Institute, the largest radiological hospital in Copenhagen at that time. She became also involved in the first animal experiments with radioactive tracers under the leadership of the physicist de Hevesy.

In the Mineralogisk Museum I was privileged to be received into the small, select, company of the Kaffeklub (the Coffee Club) which consisted of the full time members of the department and, in addition, some selected outsiders such as Victor Madsen, the director of the Geological Survey of Denmark (Fig. 3). It was a very congenial little group that met every day at 1:00 PM for lunch, six times a week, because Saturday was a full working day. At the head of the table was Professor Bøggild, the director of the Museum. He was a first-class mineralogist and petrographer who had just published a monograph on the mineralogical composition of molluscan shells, a classic that is being consulted to this day. He was an original character who enjoyed throwing out contrary opinions as, for example, when the discussion was on vitamins one day, then a rather new and little explored field, he threw back his head and said: "As far as I am concerned, I believe that vitamins are dangerous to health." Every year he led a geological excursion to the island of Bornholm in the Baltic Sea, during which he used to demonstrate the fact that it is not gravity which transports food and drink into the stomach, by emptying a bottle of beer while standing on his head. He received many reprints which, after reading, he threw on top of a large heap of reprints and monographs in the attic of the museum. Nevertheless, year after year he was able to compile a surprisingly reliable list of references to the geology of Denmark, Faroe Islands, Iceland, and Greenland.

At the other end of the table sat Dr. Karen Callisen, a dapper little woman with a deep voice who liked to engage in men's talk. She smoked cigars (which was nothing special, because many women in Denmark did so) and exuded an aura of authority. But her rough mannerisms concealed a golden heart. Some years later Trude's sister Lise who had emigrated to Palestine, needed some cash to start a gardening enterprise and had written to us. We ourselves had no money, so we turned to Frøken [Miss] Callisen, as she was generally called, and in no time she had rounded up a number of friends who chipped in enough to

produce the equivalent of a hundred English pounds, expressly as a gift, which we could send to Palestine. Years later, we were able to repay this debt of honor: After Denmark was occupied by the Nazi army and we were already living in Australia, we were able to send the same amount to the Danish Resistance in London where its receipt was acknowledged by a gracious letter from Niels Bohr. But that was still in the future. Just now Callisen was busy finishing a major monograph on the granites of Bornholm which gave us one of our first major translation jobs. Fortunately for us, many Danish scientists before the Second World War liked to publish their papers in German, which supplied us with just that little extra income that was needed to raise our living standard above the bare hand-to-mouth existence level.

The Kaffeklub included no fewer than five paleontologists. Senior among them was Dr. J.P.J. Ravn, well known through his monographic studies of Cretaceous and Tertiary faunas from Denmark and Greenland. He was one of the most decent and intellectually honest persons I have ever met. One day we had a particularly heavy downpour in Copenhagen and water seeped through the windows into Ravn's office where he had stacked books on the windowsill. After inspecting the damage, he was heard muttering to himself: "what a good thing it was my own books that got soaked and not of the Museum's!" Next in line was Christian Poulsen who was then in his mid-30's, but was already a corresponding member of the American Paleontological Society and had published fine monographs on Cambrian faunas from North and East Greenland as well as from the Danish Island of Bornholm. It was he who had engineered the fellowship for me, and he remained my steadfast friend throughout the years. Then there was Alfred Rosenkrantz, Docent at the Polytechnical Institute, a couple of blocks away from the Mineralogisk Museum. He was very knowledgeable about Jurassic and Cretaceous faunas, but he was a procrastinator and published very little. Numbers four and five were Frebold and myself. Shortly after we arrived in Copenhagen in October 1933, we heard rumors that our old friend, Hans Frebold and his family, had also come to Denmark and were living in Holte an 'exurban' community in the country some 20 km from the center of Copenhagen. Hans and I had had no contact of any kind since early 1933. From my personal knowledge of him, I was absolutely sure that Hans was not a Nazi, but it was dangerous to commit one's views to writing, so we did not write and there was no opportunity for a personal meeting. I later learned from Hans that his dentist had told him in the summer that he was required to take a course in the treatment of jaw injuries. Hans, who was old enough to have served

one year in the army in the First World War, put two and two together and concluded that dentists were beginning to be trained in the treatment of war related injuries. Since he still had sizable paleontological collections from Greenland to work up, he persuaded Lauge Koch to extend to him an invitation to come to Denmark for a couple of years to complete this job. On this basis Frebold obtained a paid leave from the University of Greifswald and took his entire family which then consisted of his wife and three children and mother-in-law to Copenhagen where he arrived almost simultaneously with, but unbeknown to, us. I do not remember what he did during the winter 1933-34 and I do not remember how his relationship with Lauge Koch developed, except that towards the spring of 1934 there had been a complete break between him and Koch, and he had joined the anti-Koch camp. I do not quite remember how we managed to get admitted to this small and very exclusive group which never even entertained foreign visitors. Whenever we had foreign visitors, they were entertained outside the Museum. Anyhow, Frebold and I must have been admitted to the Kaffeklub about the same time, in the spring of 1934. Frebold's reputation as an expert in Mesozoic of the Arctic region, particularly that of Greenland and Spitzbergen, was at that time well established but he had also done some work on the late Paleozoic. To round off the picture of the club, there was young Helge Gry, who had a position at the Geological Survey of Denmark. I do not remember how he had gotten into the Kaffeklub, because he had hardly published anything by that time. And finally, we had Hans Clausen, the mineralogist, a somewhat senior man in his late 30's, the librarian of the Museum, who had never published a line. I should say here that the library of the Mineralogisk Museum was one of the finest I have ever had at my disposal. It was very up-to-date with all contemporary books and periodicals, but it also was a storehouse of 19th century literature, particularly on northern and central Europe.

The atmosphere at our lunch meetings was relaxed and the conversation lively. Our normal meeting time was from 1:00-2:00 in the afternoon. Since almost everybody smoked, including myself (I didn't kick the habit until 1941) and the room was rather small, the air could literally be cut with a knife. It was an iron rule that on one's birthday one had to supply port wine and cigars, and on such festive occasions, the meetings often dragged on until 3:00PM. On the whole, life couldn't have been more relaxed for us both in our places of work and in our little apartment at home.

Nevertheless, we remained apprehensive about the future. In the summer of 1935, we paid a last visit to our hometown Königsberg where we stayed at my father's house. He had by then become fully reconciled



with the fact that we had left Germany. Gradually he had realized that Hitler and his Nazis were not going to go away very soon, and he paid me the compliment of admitting that we had done the right thing by going to Denmark and staying there. We paid a last visit to one of our favorite seaside resorts, Nidden on the Kurische Nehrung, which in the 1920's had become so popular that even Thomas Mann had built a vacation house there. We wandered across the huge dunes, swam in the sea, and had the traditional Krebs dinners, a Krebs being a small and exceedingly tasty freshwater crayfish. Before we returned to Copenhagen, we made a trip by car with my father through the southern part of East Prussia, known as Masuren, a beautiful, gently rolling country of large forests, corn fields and meadows, and many, many lakes, with old townships and small villages tucked away among the forests or strung out along lakeshores. But much as we enjoyed the scenery and memories of previous visits, we were frightened by the endless columns of motorized army units we passed everywhere and all day long. This was only little over two years after Hitler had come to power, but militarization and rearmament had already made huge progress. We returned to Copenhagen with a rather heavy heart. I made one more quick visit to Germany in September and had a trip by car from Leipzig to Bielefeld. Again, it was the same, column after column of heavily armed military vehicles cluttered up the roads and caused us many delays. Almost immediately thereafter, the compulsory military draft was introduced in Germany after which I stayed away from German soil, because I was still of military age, of course.

Back in Denmark we voiced our concerns to our Danish friends. We were convinced that Hitler was preparing for war and we thought it very probable that this time Germany would also invade Denmark. This idea was generally ridiculed by our Danish friends who said: "You may be sure that England will never allow this to happen". Nevertheless, we didn't take any chances. Our first apartment in Blidahlund was only a few minutes walk from the Øresund, the body of water separating Denmark from Sweden, and we had set up our folding boat already the previous summer, and left it fully assembled in an open boat shed. We were fully convinced that one day the Nazis would arrive before dawn and take over the city, but of course we didn't know when this would come to pass. This was the way it actually happened in May 1940. We reckoned that in such an eventuality, we could, at least in the spring or summer, try to make an escape in our folding boat across the Øresund to Sweden. From Copenhagen the nearest point of the Swedish coast was 22 km away, which would make it a rather hazardous crossing at any time in a small

open paddle boat like ours; so, one day we made an exploratory trip of about 20 km northward along the coast where Denmark was separated from the Swedish island of Hven by a mere 5 or 6 km. Hven is famous in history as the site of the observatory of the astronomer Tycho Brahe, a 16th century adversary of Copernicus. Now, Hven is a rather uninteresting place where Tycho Brahe's activities are recognized only by a memorial plaque at the site of his observatory [Today there is a fine little, in part subterranean museum and a reconstructed renaissance garden].

Sundays, which were the only free days of the week, would often see us touring the countryside either on foot or on our bikes. Sjælland, the island on which Copenhagen is situated, had much to offer in the way of small forests and lakes, enticing beaches, old castles, including Helsingør [Elsinore in English] of Hamlet fame. In midsummer the days were long and there was never complete darkness even at midnight. Often, we would take our bicycles on the last train leaving Copenhagen for the country, to some place 20 or 30 km from the city. By the time we got our bicycles on the road, it was light enough to see the road easily and at 3:00 AM at the latest the sun would be rising. The country was asleep, and the roads were ours. We could cycle to our hearts content, through forests or passing strawberry fields, where the pickers were already at work and we would buy a basket full to munch while pedaling along. We would then be back home same time around 8:00 AM and, with an unforgettable experience fresh in our minds, we would fall on our beds, when the city was slowly coming to life.

We both were happy in our jobs. Trude was personal laboratory technician to Professor Ole Chievitz, chief surgeon of the famous Finsen Institute, a renowned radiological hospital. He had a joint project with his friends Niels Bohr and George de Hevesy (respectively past and future Nobel laureates) in which Trude played a very small part. Hevesy was interested to find out if radioactive isotopes could successfully be used in physiological studies. He had resigned from his professorship in Freiburg at the advent of the Third Reich and was one of the many refugee scientists who found a scientific home in Niels Bohr Institute. A young refugee physicist, Hilde Levi, was Hevesy's assistant and worked on producing radioactive phosphorus by bombarding sulfur with neutrons. The only source of neutrons at the time was a glass ampulla filled with radon gas and powdered beryllium. Trude then had to feed this substance to white rats, collect their urine, feces, new-borns, and, after a time, determined by the half time of decay of the radioactivity, kill and completely dissect them, even pulling their teeth! Hilde Levi then took over with a self-built Geiger counter in Bohr's Institute. After 50

years, the techniques used at that time look like from the stone age in our time of atom smashers, but it was pioneer work. Hevesy and Chievitz announced the results of these experiments in a letter to the editor of *Nature* and stated that bone formation was an ongoing process of building up and constant replacement of its material. This was an absolutely novel idea, a real breakthrough, and it gave Trude great pleasure to be a tiny cog in the process of this discovery.

I myself got more interested in the large collections of Ordovician and Silurian fossils which the polar explorers Knud Rasmussen and Peter Freuchen had collected on their Fifth Thule expedition, 1921–1924. Rasmussen was Denmark's most popular polar explorer who, unfortunately, had died a few weeks after we came to Denmark. He was half Eskimo and spoke the Eskimo language, his mother's tongue, as fluently as Danish. Peter Freuchen became a famous author who wrote many delightful books about Eskimos and life in the Arctic in general. He had spent his youth in Greenland. About 1912 he had established, together with Knud Rasmussen, a trading station at Thule, the northernmost Eskimo settlement on the west coast of Greenland. It had been Peary's base during his quest for the North Pole. From the early 1890's, for almost two decades of close contact with Peary's expeditions, the Eskimos had come to depend on supplies that Peary brought up from America. But after he reached his goal in 1908, Peary terminated his Arctic program, did not return to Thule, and the Eskimos were left to fend for themselves as they had done in the distant past which for many of them was now only a memory. Now, in 1912, Rasmussen and Freuchen filled the gap by establishing a trading post, supplying the Eskimos with at least some of the European products to which they had become accustomed, especially knives, guns and ammunition.

In 1921, Rasmussen and Freuchen set out, on foot and by dog sledge, on a three-year journey around the top of the North American continent from Greenland to Bering Strait. Nobody had ever done this before, and especially nobody who spoke the Eskimo language as Knud Rasmussen did. It was on this trip that Knud Rasmussen established the fact that the Eskimos indeed spoke one language from Greenland to Alaska and across the Bering Strait to the northeastern tip of Siberia. Neither of the two explorers were geologists or, as far as I knew, received any particular geological training, but on their long journey, they had picked up a large amount of fossils which they could not help observing in the country traversed by them, where, as we now know, rocks of Ordovician and Silurian age cover very large areas. The fossils collected by them had found their way into the collections of the Mineralogisk Museum where they had been waiting for me for ten years.

Among the highlights of our life in Copenhagen were the occasional contacts with Professor and Mrs. Niels Bohr. I had first met Bohr during our first winter in Copenhagen when he was chairman of the committee for refugee scientists. I had consulted him on finding opportunities for Trude's brother Rudolf and Bohr also consulted me on matters concerning other refugee scientists. As was well known, Professor Bohr always spoke in a very low voice. I remember two or three meetings in his office when everybody, afraid of 'outshouting' the great man, lowered his voice to his level. We ended up huddling over the table with our heads close together and almost whispering into each other's ears. Niels Bohr was at that time the most famous and most revered scientist in Denmark. As such, he and his family occupied an Honorary Mansion, given to the nation by the Carlsberg Brewery for the use of the most outstanding Danish citizen of his time. It is not common knowledge that the Carlsberg Brewery in Copenhagen, whose delightful product is known and appreciated the world over, is a charitable foundation whose profits are almost entirely given over to the support of scientific research. The mansion inhabited by the Bohrs was the original home of the founder of the Carlsberg Brewery, J.C. Jacobsen. It was a very large building with suites of representative rooms and a palatial greenhouse or winter garden maintained at the expense of the Brewery, of course. Here the Bohrs used to entertain, several times each year, scientists of all persuasions and all nationalities who had gathered in Copenhagen, and we were honored to be invited to some of these occasions. We could have wished nothing better than that this idyllic life should have continued indefinitely. But this was not to be and before the end of 1935 we were entering another period of turmoil not of our own making.

In September 1935, when everybody was back in Copenhagen having returned from travel, vacation, or field work, a slim book of 158 pages arrived in the Mineralogisk Museum. It was called *Geologie von Grönland* and its author was Lauge Koch. It was published as part of a series of major handbooks called *Geologie der Erde*, edited by Professor Erich Krenkel of Leipzig. Its publication came as a complete surprise to everybody, because nobody in Copenhagen had had an inkling of the preparation of such a book. It also came as a surprise to me because, some years earlier, I had been asked to contribute a chapter on the geology of Greenland for the same series, *Geologie der Erde*, which was to include one or several volumes on the geology of North America under the editorship of Rudolf Ruedemann in Albany. In 1931, before I went on the expedition to East Greenland, Ruedemann had asked me to ask Lauge Koch if he would prepare a contribution on Greenland to this volume. I had

transmitted this request to Lauge Koch and he had promised to do it. But when I returned from Greenland in 1932, Ruedemann told me that he had never heard from Koch and asked me if I would prepare such a contribution myself. I agreed and sent him a relatively short manuscript in 1933. At that time, however, the future of the volume on the North American geology looked dark, because it was the time of the depth of the Great Depression. In the spring of 1935, the Regents of the University of New York at Albany instructed Ruedemann to discontinue work on this volume, because they wanted him to describe Paleozoic fossils of New York State. His successor as editor was Robert Balk, at that time at the University of Chicago, but from correspondence with him it seemed that no early action on publication of this volume could be expected and I more or less forgot about the whole matter.

Now we had Koch's book and it was soon apparent to everybody who read it, that it was a very bad book. It left unmentioned large areas of the geology of Greenland such as the Archean geology, the economic minerals, and the Pleistocene. The book as a whole dealt very largely with those areas in which Koch himself had carried out investigations, that is, the north of Greenland and East Greenland between Scoresby Sound and approximately Danmarkshavn, and even here he had been very generous in attributing to himself discoveries which he had not made the way he described it in the book. The name Koch appeared 138 times on 158 pages, but, even in the restricted framework he had decided to deal with the subject, there were in his book innumerable misstatements, major and minor errors, and emissions of all kind. At any rate it was obvious to almost everybody that the book did not represent an authoritative treatment of the geology of Greenland such as the profession had become accustomed to expect from volumes appearing in *Geologie der Erde*, as, for example, Serge von Bubnoff's four-volume *Geologie von Europa* which for many years remained a standard reference work on that continent. The idea soon arose in the minds of some of my Danish colleagues that it would be unfortunate to let this book take its place in scientific world literature without telling the profession of its many serious shortcomings. Work on the review began after the middle of October and before long Frebold and I were also drawn into this whirl of activity. It did not really take very long to write a review of an acceptable length, because the deficiencies of the book were so obvious and so many, that the first draft was completed early in November. Its authors were 11 Copenhagen geologists including almost all the members of the Kaffeklub, in addition to some 'outsiders' such as Dr. Victor Madsen, the director of the Geological Survey of Denmark, and Dr. Bøgvad, the geologist of

the Greenland Cryolite Mining Company. The critique was offered to the *Meddelelser fra Dansk Geologisk Forening* for publication in both English and Danish (Bøggild *et al.*, 1935). At the same time it was decided to present the main points of the review at an extraordinary meeting of Dansk Geologisk Forening which was called for December 9th 1935. Koch received galley proof of our review some time in November 1935.

At the meeting on December 9th, Professor Bøggild presented the essential points of our *Remarks* after which Dr. Koch was given the opportunity to reply. This he did in a lengthy presentation in which he never referred to us as critics or reviewers, but only as attackers or assailants (*anklagere*) and to our *Remarks* as 'accusations' or 'indictments' (*Anklageskrift*).

His presentation concluded with the rather sensational announcement that he had sued his 'assailants' for libel and that Mr. Steglich-Petersen (one of the best-known trial lawyers in Copenhagen) was representing him in this case. As it turned out later, he had done nothing of the kind and spent the next two months doing his best to try to avoid going to court.

Koch's speech was followed by an appeal by the Swedish geologist H.G. Backlund to the authors of the *Remarks* to withdraw their criticism. Backlund had been on two of Koch's summer expeditions to East Greenland.

Next, Christian Poulsen introduced a resolution which stated that Koch had disregarded generally accepted professional ethical standards by claiming discoveries he had not made and using unpublished results of my own field work without proper acknowledgment. The meeting was asked to condemn Dr. Koch's professional conduct. Poulsen's presentation of the resolution was followed by an acrimonious debate, the details of which are not of interest in this context. In the end the assembly passed another resolution, declaring itself incompetent to judge these matters, so the case was left hanging in the air.

During the rest of December and most of January there were feverish activities behind the scenes. Koch pulled all the strings he could to avoid bringing the matter to the courts by asking us to retract our comments. He had excellent political connections right up to the Prime Minister and he had always been the Golden Boy of the press, because he could at any time come up with stuff that was good for a sensational headline. But the 11 'assailants' stood their ground.

It is here necessary to record that relationships between Danish geologists and Lauge Koch had been at a very low level for some years. The last time that Danish geologists of note such as Poulsen and Rosenkrantz had participated in an expedition to East Greenland led by Koch had been in 1929. Subsequently, participation by Danish geologists had been

greatly reduced and in the mid 1930's German and Swedish geologists had been engaged. Later in the 1930's there were Swedes and Germans and Estonians, but only one Dane. By the time I arrived on the scene, Koch was barely on speaking terms with any of the Danish geologists. You will remember that he had forbidden me to bring my Greenland collections to the Mineralogisk Museum. In the years before the outbreak of the Second World War Koch's expeditions were almost entirely staffed by Swiss geologists. On the other hand, supported by his excellent political connections, right up to the prime minister level, and his public image as heroic explorer, festered by the press, it was well known that he had set his eyes on high office. Dr. Madsen, director of the Geological Survey, had reached retirement age and it was no secret that Koch aspired to his office. How he could have run such an organization without being on speaking terms with any of the Danish geologists is a matter of speculation.

There was little we could do in the time between 9th December when Koch had said that he had brought in the libel suit, and the 29th January, when he actually did do it. Koch himself had been very busy during this time. There was a widely held opinion outside Denmark which Koch did nothing to discourage, that he was director of an institution called Geological Survey of Greenland. Actually, such an agency was not established until 1946 and then Lauge Koch was not made its director.

Already in December and January, even before the case came to court, Koch had taken very damaging steps against Frebold by denouncing him in letters to the German Embassy in Copenhagen and to the German Ministry of Education in Berlin. He did this somewhat clumsily under the disguise of inquiring whether Frebold, by signing the criticism of his book, had acted as 'representative of the German government'. In the beginning of January, he travelled to Berlin and had an interview with Ministerialdirektor Vahlen in the Ministry of Education to submit personally his grievances against Frebold for having been in on the 'attack' on him. Hr. Vahlen requested the president of the German Mineralogical Society, Professor Drescher-Kaden, to make an investigation of the 'Frebold case'. Presumably he was a reliable Nazi. Many other Nazi figures were involved in the ensuing correspondence and investigations. The end of it was that Frebold's leave from the University of Greifswald was cancelled, his salary was withheld and so was the pension of his mother who lived with him in Copenhagen, and he himself was threatened with arrest. No wonder that under these circumstances he did not comply with an order from the Ministry to return to Greifswald! All this happened in part before

our case ever reached the court, but mostly during the time court proceedings were in progress and the case was sub judice and many months before sentence was passed, acquitting Frebold, with the rest of the accused. The treatment Frebold received was very typical of Nazi justice of that time which, in this case had been set in motion by Lauge Koch.

Koch finally filed his libel suit on 29th January, seven weeks after he had declared publicly that he had already done so. Now I could at last return to full-time research which had suffered grievously during the winter because of all these legal complications. Koch did not submit his detailed documentation to the court until the middle of May and since, as usual, many people were out on field work, travel and vacation during the summer, there was not much for us to do. Trude and I felt that we needed a vacation, and we rented a tiny little house on the shore of the Danish island of Bornholm in the Baltic Sea. It was situated right at the edge of a low cliff above a sandy beach where we could swim; we had also taken our folding boat and took trips along the coast whenever the weather permitted. Bornholm is a lovely little island about 20 x 30 kilometers and has a railroad running all around it. We were close to the southeastern corner of the island and often in the morning we would stick our moist fingers in the air to find out which way the wind was blowing. Then we took the train with our bicycles in the direction against the wind for 20 or 30 kilometers and returned on our bicycles with a convenient breeze pushing us from behind. Every so often we would go to the forests in search of mushrooms of which there were many. We stayed there for a full four weeks and returned to Copenhagen much refreshed and invigorated after the excitements of the winter.

There was still much legal work ahead of us, because detailed rejoinders had to be prepared to the many accusations that Koch had made against us in his libel suit, for which he had submitted documents in May. This required many conferences with our attorney, Ahnfeldt-Rønne, one of the most famous trial lawyers of those days in Copenhagen. He had at first been inclined to treat the whole matter as a squabble among scientists, but as the case progressed, he became more and more genuinely interested. He now really believed in our case and made it his own.

Trude and I had additional worries. Throughout 1935 and 1936 we had been looking to the southern horizon with increasing concern. Hitler's rearmament proceeded at an ever-accelerating pace and his foreign policy successes emboldened him to try ever more adventurous policies. Sometime during the winter of 1936-37 my friend A.K. Miller from the University of Iowa wrote that he would like to come to Europe in 1937 to attend the International Geological Congress

in Moscow: would it be safe to plan on travelling in Europe or did I think that Hitler might start a war by that time? I replied that I was convinced that Hitler would not be ready for a serious war until 1938 and that it would be quite safe to travel to Europe in 1937 which turned out to be true; A.K. visited me without trouble in the early summer of 1937. On this underlying assumption we laid our plans. We wanted to get out of Europe in the summer of 1938 at the latest. My plan was to organize an Arctic expedition of two years duration starting in the early summer of 1938. The expedition should be based on the Eskimo settlement of Thule, in northwest Greenland, which had served as base for Arctic expeditions in that area since Peary's time. I had become very interested in that area since I had worked on fossils from Washington Land on the Greenland side, and from Bache Peninsula on the west side of Kane Basin. Work on the Rasmussen-Freuchen collections from Arctic Canada had increased my interest in the Paleozoic stratigraphy of this entire Arctic area. An additional challenge was the North Greenland mountain chain which had been discovered by Peary and explored on several of his expeditions and had been further mapped and outlined by Knud Rasmussen and Lauge Koch. However, no detailed field work had ever been done and its age was essentially unknown except that it was probably Paleozoic. It furthermore had a probable extension to the southwest across Nares Strait into parts of Ellesmere Island which were then known under such names as Grinnell Land and Grant Land and where only the sketchiest of observations had been made by previous expeditions. My plan was, first to establish the correlation of the Paleozoic strata across the Kane Basin, a comparatively easy task, and second, a study of the western end of the North Greenland folding zone and as much as possible of the folded rocks of Northern Ellesmere Island. This plan of 'escape' was to include my wife Trude. She was to be made a member of the expedition as cook and general camp helper. Both of us were convinced that in the early summer of 1938 Hitler would not yet have started his war, but that he would have been ready later that year as was indeed proved by the Munich agreement in September 1938 when war was avoided only by the complete collapse of French and English diplomacy. At any rate, we reckoned that by the end of the summer of 1940 when our expedition was supposed to return to Europe, a war would be in full swing which would prevent us from returning and allow us to stay at a, hopefully, healthy distance from the action. Rather uncannily, this scenario was played out almost exactly as we had foreseen and planned for ourselves, but by somebody else: In 1939, J. Troelsen, a young Danish geologist who was still a student when I left

Denmark did exactly what I had planned. He went to Thule and made it his headquarters for explorations along Nares Strait and the North Greenland folding zone and its continuation into Ellesmere Island. War broke out a few months after he had left Copenhagen. In 1940 the Americans occupied Thule and made it an advanced military base, and Troelsen and his people were evacuated to the United States where he spent the rest of the war at Yale University. A similar train of events might have been in store for us, if we had left on such an expedition in 1938.

In order to obtain some outside support for my plans I sent a draft of my program, together with preliminary maps to J.M. Wordie in Cambridge, England. In Copenhagen Frøken Callisen, Christian Poulsen, and other friends made careful inquiries about the possibility of local support and found a rather powerful friend in Vice Admiral Amdrup, who had been a great name in early 20th century Arctic exploration from Denmark. Final steps, however, would have to wait until the conclusion of the court case with Koch where we hoped, of course, for complete acquittal.

The court took up our case on 26th January 1936, which was a Monday, and it lasted all week through Saturday. It was a very trying week for everyone. We eleven defendants sat all in a row in front of the judge like sparrows on a telephone line. We were not allowed to say a word and listened enraptured for hours to two highly paid attorneys fighting out arguments about intricate questions of the geology of Greenland. They became involved in technical discussions of angular unconformities as well as disconformities, faults, stratigraphic boundaries, geosynclines, transgressions, regressions, and so forth. As one of the Danish newspapers put it quite well, the proceedings at times resembled a Ph.D. defense. It was of course a celebrity event which was reported with front-page banner headlines not only by every Danish paper but was also widely reported and commented on in the German and Swiss press. Reading the newspaper clippings and the court documents now after 50 years, it seems quite obvious that this case should never have come before a court and that Lauge Koch should have given a scientific reply to our 'attacks'. But he had chosen differently, and it was his choice. There followed another week of uneasy suspense until sentence was passed on 9th March in which we were acquitted of all accusations raised against us by Lauge Koch and Koch was sentenced to pay court costs and several thousand kroner damages to the defendants.

Now it seemed that, at least for a time, we would be able to return to a normal life. Before long Koch's attorney announced that an appeal would be made, but this was far in the future and would require at least another year. I thought that I would now be able

to turn my energies almost full time to the preparation of my Arctic expedition project as outlined above. But fate decreed otherwise.

About a week after the sentence had been passed, I received a letter from the Agent General for Western Australia in London, an agency, of which I had never heard before, inquiring if I would be interested in the position of research paleontologist in the University of Western Australia. The first thing I did was to rush upstairs to the library and get hold of an Atlas to look at a map of Australia, a continent which until then had not occupied much of my attention. I had been told that the University of Western Australia was located in a place named Perth which I found on the map to be situated in the far southwest of the Australian continent. I also found that our library had a small set of publications issued as Bulletins of the Geological Survey of Western Australia.

Next, I called Trude at her laboratory and asked her: "Do you want to go to Australia?" The answer was: "When do we leave?" So, the following day I sent my affirmative reply to the Agent General and within a couple of weeks I was requested to travel to London for one day, where I was interviewed by the Agent General himself, aided by an expert, Dr. Dighton Thomas, a well-known paleontologist of the British Museum, whose name was somewhat familiar to me. The interview went swimmingly, Dighton Thomas must have written a very favorable report on me, and before the end of April my appointment to the University of Western Australia had been confirmed.

It was quite a switch from North Greenland to Western Australia, but we adapted rapidly, because we figured that Australia was many times farther away from Europe and its coming war than even North Greenland and all plans for our Arctic expedition were scrapped. The Western Australians wanted to have me there by July 1st, if possible, but I refused to leave Copenhagen before, I completed my commitments for work on the Arctic faunas from the Thule expedition and also an Ordovician fauna from Washington Land which had lain in the Mineralogisk Museum for many years, completely neglected. Trude resigned from her position at the Finsen Institute with Professor Chievitz, so she could help me with drafting and photography, and the two of us slaved full-time throughout the summer finishing two paleontological monographs which were published before the end of 1937.

The pace quickened as time went on. We had decided to leave for Australia from Marseilles because Trude wanted to risk the journey through Germany to visit her brother Rudolf who was in prison in Bamberg at that time, on a trumped-up charge. The last few weeks before our departure from Europe were simply exhausting. Not only did I have to complete

my paleontological monographs, there were also numerous other businesses to wind up and arrangements for moving an entire household to Australia had to be made.

I should have mentioned earlier that this entire adventure had been made possible by a program of the Carnegie Corporation of Britain which offered to support placement of 'displaced German scholars', as we were called at that time, anywhere in any university in the British Empire. I later learned that my name had been one of two paleontologists submitted on a list which had been distributed to Universities throughout the Empire. This list had come to the knowledge of Professor E. de C. Clarke, head of the Geology Department of the University of Western Australia, who figured that the State of Western Australia had never had a resident paleontologist and that this was a good way of getting one, because the Carnegie Corporation would pay not only his transportation to Australia, but also his salary for two years. However, the Corporation was not prepared to pay for the transportation of our furniture and household goods and our meager savings in Copenhagen were not sufficient to meet such expenses. Fortunately, we found out that my father would be allowed to pay the freight if shipment was made on a German freighter. All this required much correspondence and preparation, but it was finally done. Trude left for Germany about two weeks before we actually shut down our affairs in Copenhagen and my sister, whose name also was Gertrud, came up from Germany to help me. We had asked her to watch out carefully if the name Gertrud Teichert aroused any kind of suspicion at the German passport control, but she reported that this had not been the case. On this somewhat fragile evidence Trude decided to risk the trip through Germany.

As soon as my Western Australian appointment had been confirmed, I started to use every free hour (of which there weren't many) to acquaint myself with the geology of Australia, especially Western Australia, of which I was then totally ignorant. I found out that Western Australia was largely underlain by Precambrian rocks, but some fossiliferous Permian and Cretaceous strata had been described and the French paleontologist Delépine had just published a paper on a few very poorly preserved Devonian ammonoids. By a lucky coincidence, the first airmail service between England and Australia had been inaugurated that very spring which cut the travel time of first-class mail in half, from one month to about 15 days. This meant that with some luck one could receive the answer to a letter sent either way within about 1 month. I immediately started correspondence with Professor Clarke to find out about the library resources in the University of Western Australia which made me an

allowance of 100 Australian pounds to buy needed books and other publications. On the strength of Delépine's little paper, I purchased everything I could lay my hands on about Devonian ammonoids, especially from Germany which then had the only well-known ammonoid sequences of that age in the world. I could not know then how just a few years later this collection which included basic works by Wedekind, Schindewolf and others would help me to unravel the Devonian stratigraphy in the great sedimentary basin in northwestern Australia, later known as the Canning Basin. I also bought as much as I could find on Permian paleontology, including publications from Indonesia (then known as the Dutch East Indies) especially Timor. Again, this was a lucky choice, because the Permian faunas of Western Australia turned out to have close relationships to those of Indonesia. In the course of my reading I had also discovered that Permian and Mesozoic rocks with faunas similar to those in Western Australia were distributed all around the Indian Ocean and I got in touch with scientists in India, Africa, and Madagascar.

One of the outstanding Dutch geologists working in the East Indies at that time was J.H.F. Umbgrove at Utrecht and I had decided to visit him on the way from Copenhagen to Marseille. So, one day very early in September it was farewell to Denmark. A few days before, the Danish geologists had given me a dinner party at which I had thanked them for having enjoyed asylum in their country which had assured me of four peaceful years during which I could follow my research. In his reply the botanist Professor Knud Jessen who was one of the 11 'assailants' of Lauge Koch expressed his astonishment at this statement and thought that at least the last couple of years had been quite horrible for Danish geologists and that my remarks had just underscored how dreadful conditions must be in the country I had come from.

I took the daily boat from Esbjerg to Antwerp. From there I went to Holland, first to Amsterdam to meet my father. We had two very harmonious days in Amsterdam. He still did not believe in the imminence of war in Europe and hoped to be able to visit us in Australia before very long. I never saw him again. From Amsterdam I went to Utrecht for a day of conferences with Umbgrove who proved to be very knowledgeable about all problems of East Indian geology and who gave me copies of all his numerous papers.

Next, I went to Brussels, because I wanted to talk to N. Boutakoff, a Russian emigrant geologist who was working for the Congo Museum in Tervuren, near Brussels. Boutakoff had worked extensively in the Belgian Congo (now Zaire) and had just published a very important monograph on the Permian rocks of glacial origin in the eastern part of the Congo Basin.

So, I spent a pleasant day with him and also had a chance to look at the many treasures of the Congo Museum.

From Brussels I took the very comfortable express train called Edelweiss (in those days not only ships and planes, but also important trains had names) to Basel and late that night I joined my wife in Geneva where she had already arrived a day or two before. Here we also had a reunion with 'Muttchen' Beerwald, Trude's motherly friend from Königsberg. Earlier that year she had made a perilous trip across the mountain country from Germany into Czechoslovakia, to avoid German border controls. She was now in Geneva waiting for an opportunity to proceed to the United States where her daughter, the future distinguished philosopher-writer Hannah Arendt, had preceded her.

Trude had some exciting tales to tell. Thanks to her New York passport which identified her as an 'Auslandsdeutsche' she had entered Germany without a hitch and since she did not look particularly Jewish, or at least not at all what the Nazi propaganda pictured a Jew should look like, she had moved around Germany without molestation. In Berlin she had met my father and the few friends that still remained there. In order to get to Bamberg where her brother Rudolf was in prison, she had first had to travel to Nürnberg (Nuremberg) where, by unhappy coincidence, she arrived at the end of the so-called Reichsparteitag, in English language papers usually referred to as the Nuremberg Rally. The town was filled with milling crowds of 100,000 delirious, fanaticized men and women who had come to hear the screeching voice of their adored Führer Adolf Hitler, and other Nazi prominents. Trude did not leave the crowded railroad station but sat on a windowsill in a waiting room between two SS men in black uniforms who made amorous advances and suggested that they first should have supper together. They grabbed Trude's suitcase and pushed their way towards the overcrowded dining room, then put her suitcase down and asked her to wait until they had found a table. As soon as they were out of sight, Trude grabbed her suitcase and lost herself in the crowd – it was a narrow escape. She caught her train to Bamberg amidst crowds of brown shirts and black shirts, another harrowing experience. In Bamberg she was allowed to talk to her brother through a grill, but they could hold hands. It was barely enough to provide a minimum of moral support. The jailor who took Trude to the visiting room whispered to her: "people like your brother should not be here." Rudolf still had another two years of his sentence to serve.

From Bamberg Trude travelled to Freiburg for a short reunion with her father and then made her way

out of Germany via Basel to Geneva where we met. After a day or so we took the train to Marseille where our ship to Australia, the P & O steamer *Moldavia*, was leaving on 23 September.

## Acknowledgements

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## Selected literature

The list below is selected from Curt Teichert's bibliography and includes his most important publications on Arctic geology and palaeontology. Some references dealing with the feud between Lauge Koch and a group of Danish geologists ('the eleven') are also included, together with two the publications illustrated in Figures 3 and 4, a few obituaries and other relevant publications. The list is deliberately presented in chronological order.

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