

Zdenko Hoyos

1903 – 1941

Born: 16 Aug 1903, Shrivenham

Diagnosis: Schizophrenia

Died: 31 Mar 1941, Hartheim

Age at death: 37



Zdenko aged 9 (far right) with his mother Countess Ilona Hoyos (née Kinsky) and four of his six siblings, on the cover of the society magazine Wiener Salonblatt, April 1912.

Count Zdenko Alexander Anton Hoyos (Cocco) was born into a well-known Anglo-Austrian family. His father, Count Edgar Hoyos, was the grandson of Robert Whitehead, engineer and inventor of the self-propelled torpedo, whose factory was at Fiume on the Adriatic Sea (then part of Austria, now Rijeka, Croatia). Robert owned a large estate at Worth in West Sussex; the family also leased a home, Beckett Hall, in Shrivenham, Oxfordshire where Zdenko was born in 1903.

In 1901, Count Edgar Hoyos married Countess Ilona Hoyos (née Kinsky) who was of Austro-Hungarian descent. They had seven children, one of whom later joined the Heimwehr, the voluntary Austrian anti-Nazi force, and three of whom settled in the UK. The young family lived between England, Fiume and Schloss Sooß, Melk, Austria.

Zdenko graduated from the Schotten Gymnasium in Vienna in 1921 with plans to study political science, but from around 1928, his mental health deteriorated. He was transferred from a clinic in Zurich to the institution at Mauer-Öhling, Mauer bei Amstetten, Austria in 1936, then on to Hartheim, where he was killed on 31 March 1941, just one of the 1300 patients moved from Mauer-Öhling to Hartheim to be gassed between June 1940 and August 1941.

Zdenko's sister Alicemargit Morris (née Hoyos), who married into a Welsh family in 1931, wrote about her happy childhood and her brother in her memoirs:

"We were seven with beloved parents who did their best to make our youth a joy"

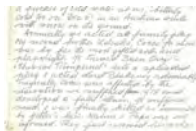
She remembered spending winters in Fiume and summers at Schloss Sooß, and the entourage traveling in a whole railway carriage: parents, children, nannies, governesses, tutors, staff and luggage, to Vienna and then Loosdorf, where they were collected by horse-drawn carriages.



Portrait of Zdenko's mother Ilona Hoyos (née Kinsky) painted by John Quincy Adams in 1914.



After Zdenko was killed, his parents Edgar and Ilona Hoyos buried his ashes in the family grave at Schwerberg, Austria.



A fragment from the memoirs of Alicemargit Morris (née Hoyos) referring to Zdenko. Source: personal archives of the Jennings family.

She wrote:

"Annually, we acted a family play. My second brother Zdenko, Cocco for short, was by far the most gifted actor and playwright. He turned Baron Orczy's Elusive Pimpernel into a splendid play and acted Lord Blakeney admirably,"

and

"He suffered much and was finally killed as incurable by Hitler's law. Mama and Papa were not informed. They just received his ashes with an official statement of his demise."

Edgar and Ilona Hoyos buried Zdenko's ashes in the family grave at Schwerberg, Austria.

Nancy Jennings is the great-niece of Zdenko Hoyos. She constructed this panel, with the help of other family members, to keep Zdenko's memory alive.