

My father bided his time. Words were of little avail in times like this.

The British element in Parliament insisted that neutrality in time of war was an impossibility. The Malanites were loud in their denunciation of those who said they would fight by the side of Great Britain. Was not England the only country that had ever attacked South Africa?

Matters were now swiftly moving to a climax. On 1st September Hitler's armies streamed into Poland. Two days later France and Britain were at war with Germany.

In the middle of July, 1939, my father accompanied Sir Ernest Oppenheimer on a flying trip to the Copper Belt in Northern Rhodesia and to the jewelled wonderland of the Western Rift Valley of the Belgian Congo. Here in a fertile land of breathtaking scenic grandeur he spent a few very pleasant days surveying the superb cluster of giant volcanoes that rose thousands of feet from the Rift Floor. Nyamulagira was at the time in action, pouring forth a three-mile wide stream of molten lava from its 20,000-foot-high summit into idyllic Lake Kivu, causing a great cloud of steam to rise into the sky. They flew over the top of this "boiling cauldron" and "the whole spectacle was awe-inspiring—indeed inexplicably so", he said.

The other giants, including Ninagongo and Karisimbi (with the grave of the United States explorer Carl Akeley on its slopes) were dormant, but at any moment might burst forth again. In the dense mountain forests dwelt the minute pigmy and the gorilla, while in the plains below lived the tall nilotic Wamoi farmer, noted for his feats of high jumping.

To a friend my father wrote after this inspiring flight over the volcanoes: "For me it has been the day of the trip. I can never have a greater experience than a real volcano in full action and