

FEATURES

THE WORLD'S WINDOW

By LUDWIG LEWISOHN

A wave of suicides is sweeping over Viennese Jewry. Great minds prefer death to utter humiliation. The communal leaders, including Robert Stricker, are under "protective arrest." What that means we were taught in 1933. The Jewish masses are being reduced to penury, to beggary at one stroke. Violence is rampant. No one is safe. Even synagogues are being looted. One of our great, one of our illustrious diaspora communities—the community of Herzl and Freud, of Schnitzler and Beer-Hoffman—lies in ruins, is stamped into the mire. Is it not enough to sicken every heart and bow every head? And the world stands by, the Christian world, and lifts no hand of succour.

The spirit resists. The spirit is upright. Let the heathens rage. They have raged before during the long ages. We stand fast. Even in Vienna. For in that city there lives, among many other Jews, a frail, middle-aged man, still suffering severely from the wounds he got while defending the land he thought his fatherland from 1914 to 1918. His name is Ernst Waldinger. And he is a poet. And he is, necessarily from his origins and place of birth, a poet in the German language. He has never, of course, been able to live by his art and has been employed in a commercial establishment to gain bread for his wife and child. His first volume *The Cupola (Die Kuppel)* was published in 1934; his second volume, *The Carver of Gems (Der Gemmenschneider)* was published in the January of this year 1938. Let us not forget the Jewish business men who under the name of the Saturn-Verlag were willing to risk publishing these volumes of highly-wrought poetry by a Jew. Could we match that in America?

Let me define and by this definition explain why I am writing. Since Painer Maria Rilke died and since the poet died in Franz Werfel, himself a Jew of course, this Viennese Jew Ernst Waldinger is the only man who has contributed enduring poetry to the German language. The Nazis rave about their Aryan culture and produce dirt and drivel. They forbid Jews to publish and to be read. They drive their greatest German writer Thomas Mann into exile. Meanwhile the glory of their speech and form is being sustained by Ernst Waldinger, a Jew, a Jew of Vienna, a conscious and self-affirmative Jew. In him in this age (even as I said the other day of a Jewish composer and the Lied) German verse is reaching a certain culmination and may now that Vienna too has fallen, reach its extinction.

His poetry is the firmest in the world. Highest precision of speech is married to an equally high placidity of form. This form aspires to transcend time and does so. Through this form itself Waldinger speaks with a timeless accent of changeless things. He does so intentionally. All the empiric content of life today in Central Europe is bloody, barbarous, sordid, hopeless. The poet, if he would remain a poet must address himself to fashioning in a form as of enduring stone these aspects of mortality which no soilure can touch and no barbarian mar. Waldinger has done so. Unless civilization fails utterly I predict that men in a future time will come back to the work of this poet, this Jew, to prove that amid savagery and savage tumult the human spirit at its highest still survived.

Once and once only in this new and probably last volume Waldinger strikes a personal and explanatory note. He wants it understood that, though by the decree of fate he is a poet in the German language, he is not for a moment deluded. He is a

Jew. He holds those about him who have permitted themselves to lapse back into barbarism at their right valuation from the viewpoint of his spirit and from the mountain-peak of an eternal Israel. He is among them. He is not of them. The personal poem in which he expresses this thought is a sonnet, as magnificently wrought as his other sonnets and stanzas and he has proudly entitled it: *Ich bin vom Volk des Wortes*. "I am of the People of the Word!" . . . Yes, that is what we are, though in America one sometimes doubts and shivers: the people of the Word, the people who conceived of creation as coming through a Word. From age to age, amid darkness and desolation a few of us seek to live in the spirit of the creative Word: *Yihi or va-yihi*

I have translated that great proud sonnet of Ernst Waldinger for its spiritual meaning and message, for that great message of a Jew who, amid circumambient darkness, upholds the eternal Word of his people. But I want it strictly understood that poetically my translation is . . . lags infinitely behind the . . . splendor of the German verse.

I am not of this folk's flesh; more intense
I am vassal neither of its soil or blood,
Nor crouch with mares in steaming stalls of wood.
Unimprisoned by its boundaries' gate or fence.

At their dull hearths had I lost soul or sense?
No heritage is mine of all their good.
My mind is nailed not to their hatred's rood,
And deafness to their jeers is my defense.

Strange am I here, forevermore alone.
They mouth and chew their words as kine the grass,
And though this tongue mine and my mother's was,

Common to us is but the sound, the tone—
Stars perish in the puddles of their reach
And flame up in the crystal of ray

Charley Mendoza, 72-year-old fight trainer, claims he is a direct descendant of Daniel Mendoza, the celebrated Jewish boxer who was world's heavyweight champion 150 years ago. . . Dave Sarnoff, R. C. A. chief, has put his foot down on Jewish dialect "comics" on the N. B. C. networks.

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Tidbits From Everywhere

FLASH!

Italy's deal with England includes the following arrangement. . . Italy to keep her hands off Arab-Palestine propaganda in return for British acceptance of Italian influence over Spain. . . A Jewish State in Palestine is objectionable to Mussolini in any event. . . On the other hand we have just been informed that England is already organizing an army of 10,000 for the Jewish State. . . Our informant is none other than a high ranking British army officer who is slated to be commander-in-chief. . . Unofficial discussions among the Zionist rank and file concerning the successor of Stephen S. Wise as President of the Z. O. A. show that the idea of giving Louis Lipsky the next term is in great favor. . . Weizmann too would be pleased. . . Refugees from Austria and Germany are compelled to take German boats, so don't blame them for doing it. . . An independent producer is preparing to shoot (with a camera) "The Beast of Berlin," a realistic film on Hitler's life. . . The Ort campaign for funds is still looking for a chairman—but there are whisperings that the J.D.

C. will incorporate the Ort appeal. . . Why is the publisher of *Life, Time* and *Fortune*, so eager to publicize Nazi "dissatisfaction" with his publication? . . . The reason is growing resentment among their readers because of the treatment Jewish news receives in the *Luce* magazines. . .

OPEN THE GATES!

The anti-alien bloc in Congress is sharpening the axe for Secretary Hull's refugee relief plan. . . Is it true that the German ambassador in Washington received orders from Berlin to offer a modification of anti-Semitism in Austria in exchange for official action by Uncle Sam against the anti-Nazi boycott? . . . Credit Walter Winchell with this honey. . . He proposes that all Nazis in America who sing the praises of Hitlerland be sent back there to make room here for the victims of Nazi oppression, the ratio to be six Nazis for every refugee from Nazidom. . . And Sports Editor Bradley of the *New York Post* suggests that ten percent of the anticipated million-dollar gate at the Schmeling-Louis fight in June be allotted to ease the plight of Austrian refugees and to aid the anti-lynching crusade. . . The International Relief Association has already established channels for sending immediate aid to the underground anti-Nazi forces in Austria. . .

WHAT HAPPENS HERE?

The principal financial backer of the Reverend Gerald Winrod, anti-Semitic agitator who is running for a U. S. Senate seat from Kansas, is a wealthy oil tycoon. . . Because the papers have quieted down about Nazi spies in this country don't get the idea that your Uncle Sam is asleep. . . Swarms of Germans working in aviation plants are being kept under constant surveillance. . . In the hope of clipping the wings of the boycott against the Schmeling-Lewis fight Schmeling is spreading the word that he's not a member of the Nazi party. . . Latest anti-Semitic charge leveled against the Jew is that of the Christian Free Press of Glendale, California, which holds Jewry responsible for alleged governmental mistreatment of the American Indian. . . Fritz von Schmet, a German who has been wrestling in this country, has been ordered to refrain from giving the Nazi salute from the ring. . . Our recent item that James Wheeler-Hill, national secretary of the German-American Bund, was scrambling for the Bund leadership with Kurt Mertig, fuhrer of the Citizens Protective Alliance, a German-American out fit engaged in boycotting Jews, led Wheeler-Hill to write to the *New York Jewish News* that he never heard of Mertig and that our squib was "fake fiction and flubdub". . . . Maybe so but Mertig is a big shot in Nazi circles hereabout and it seems strange that Wheeler-Hill should disown him. . .

DANUBE BLUES

When Goering came to Vienna and warned the Jews they must clear out in four years did he remember, we wonder, that as a youngster helved in the Mauternburg castle of Dr. von Eppenstein, Jewish friend of Papa Goering? . . . Eppenstein was the medical officer of German Southwest Africa when Goering Senior was vice-governor. . . Josef Buerckel Hitler's personal representative in Austria, is regarded in Nazi circles as a worse Judenfresser than Streicher, who's hard to beat. . . Not until the Nazis fired him did most people learn that Hannes Schneider, Austria's greatest skiing instructor, is a Jew. . .

300 Attend Northwest Conference Of Joint Distribution Committee



More than 300 Jewish leaders from 25 cities and 6 States in the Northwest formed a permanent regional organization of the Joint Distribution Committee at a meeting held in Portland, Ore., Sunday March 20. Principal speaker at the gathering was Rabbi Jonah B. Wise, J. D. C. National Campaign Chairman.
TOP: L. to R. are Rabbi Adolph H. Fink, Spokane, Wash.; Rabbi S. Wohlgelehter, Seattle; Rabbi J. B. Wise, New York City; Rabbi Samuel H. Gordon, Salt Lake City; Rabbi Henry J. Berkowitz, Portland, Ore.
CENTER: L. to R. Aaron M. Frank, Portland, J.D.C. Chairman, Northwest Region; Rabbi Jonah B. Wise, National Chairman, J. D. C. campaign for \$5,100,000, and Richard M. Lang, Seattle, regional vice-chairman, representing Washington State.
BOTTOM: L. to R. are Rabbi Adolph H. Fink, Spokane; Milton Markewitz, Portland Jewish leader, Joseph Shemanski, Portland leader speaking in behalf of J. D. C. campaign; Alfred Shemanski, Seattle, member, J. D. C. Board of Directors, and honorary chairman of Northwest Region; and Sol Esfeld, of Seattle during the luncheon recess.