



—Austrian Information Service.

The battleground was the literary coffeehouse which habitués considered their real home.

FRANZ WERFEL'S VIENNA

By JOSEPH WECHSBERG

BETWEEN the two World Wars, the Vienna of Franz Werfel was a city of brilliant talents and lively literary feuds. For a short time, there was a real Viennese school of novelists, poets, essayists; Austrian literature was not considered a branch of German literature. The focus and battleground was the literary coffeehouse which habitués considered their real home, while their homes were only places where one slept.

Until 1925, the Café Central on the Herrengasse had been the meeting place, but then writers moved to the Café Herrenhof, on the same street, a bourgeois-looking establishment with dark panelings, brocade tapestries, and elegant chandeliers. Writers would eat lunch there and take a nap on the red plush benches alongside the wall. Waiters knew exactly the preferences of each guest, to his particular favorite

among the thirty-odd kinds of coffee and ice creams, some of which came in impressionistic shades. Few great old writers of the "Young Vienna" school, such as Schnitzler and Hofmannsthal, were still around. Werfel came there often, although Alma Mahler objected to coffeehouse *littérateurs* and wanted him to stay home.

Alma, the beautiful daughter of the Austrian landscape painter Emil Jacob Schindler, had married Gustav Mahler in 1902. Mahler died in 1911. Alma later had married Oskar Kokoschka, who she said "fulfilled and destroyed my life," and then, in 1914, she married architect Walter Gropius, a union she characterized as "a tired twilight marriage." At that point Werfel stepped into her "unfulfilled" life, "a stocky man with sensuous lips and wonderful great blue eyes below a Goethe-esque forehead." Gropius departed for the front late in 1917, and his wife saw a lot of Werfel; they often went to concerts together.

On January 5, 1918, she wrote in her diary: "I am out of my mind . . . so is Werfel. If I were twenty years younger, I would drop everything and run away with him." Alma was eleven years older. Werfel later wrote that she gave him the happiness "that only mature women with their infinitely soft embrace . . . can give to men who are still boys." Gropius, a civilized man, discovered the truth and quietly bowed out. He and Alma remained "harmonious friends."

Literary historians have wondered how Werfel might have developed as poet and writer if he hadn't met Alma, the unfulfilled one. Werfel himself later said he might not have written some of his successful novels if Alma hadn't pushed him so hard; but at any rate he would have left "some fifteen poems" that are among the most beautiful in German poetry.

In 1923, Werfel had his first great success with his novel, *Verdi*, which was brought out by Paul Zsolnay, the son of



See all the Queen's horses...and the sport of Kings

Come to Britain—ancient & mod

Her Majesty's Horse Guards are the best rehearsed show in London. They've been at it 300 years.

You'll find them changing the guard at Horse Guards Parade every morning (11:00 A.M. weekdays, and 10:00 A.M. Sundays). Then stroll up the Mall. You'll be in time to see the foot regiments change the guard at Buckingham Palace. The band strikes up at 11:30.

There are fleetier horses at Ascot racetrack just outside London. And you can place a few bob on some likely nose.

If you come to Ascot on June 20-23, you'll see the Queen! She drives up in an open carriage, and her family and friends sit with her in the royal enclosure. Ladies wear their most elegant fashions. Gentlemen wear grey top hats, morning coats with tails, and *ascots*.

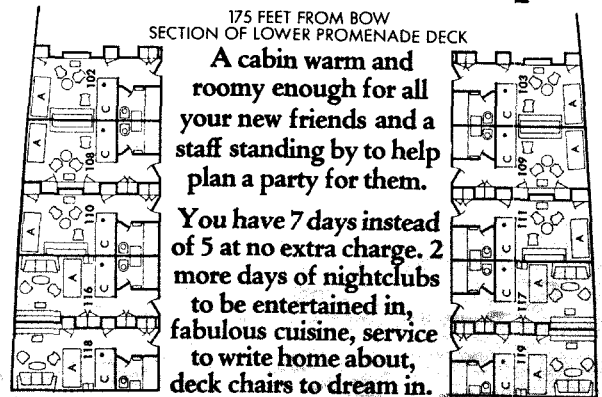
But up in the stands you'll see girls so mod they've given up the mini-skirt. They wear micro-skirts.

See your travel agent about a trip to Britain. Send for the 52-page color guide *Vacations in Britain*. It's free.

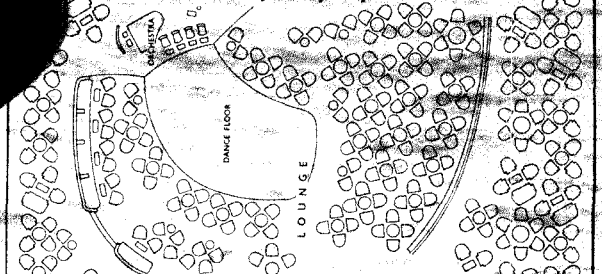
This is a mailing label. Please type or use block letters.

British Travel, Box 4100, New York, N. Y. 10017		
TO:	502	
NAME _____		
ADDRESS _____		
CITY _____	STATE _____	ZIP _____

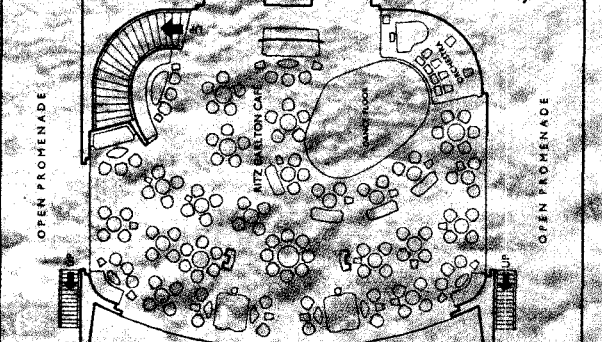
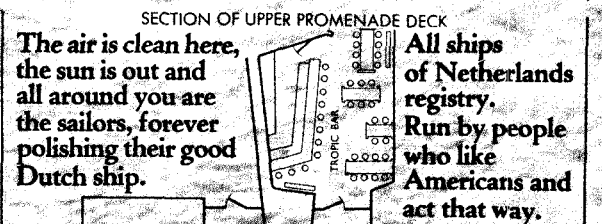
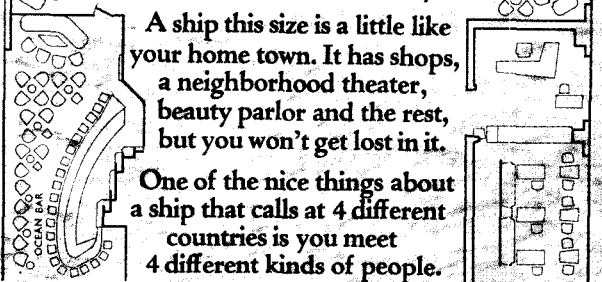
There are bigger and faster ships on the sea. Why choose life aboard Holland-America to Europe?



SECTION OF PROMENADE DECK
Where else would you find a ship with a special officer whose only duty is your recreation?



Before Manhattan is out of sight, people will start to smile and say hello.



Sail to Ireland, England, France or Holland.
Or cruise to the West Indies, Mexico, Europe,
around the world or to the Orient and Pacific.
Call your travel agent or write for literature to
HOLLAND-AMERICA LINE
(609 5th Avenue, Dept. I, New York 10017).

a wealthy Viennese tobacco merchant. Until then Werfel had been published by Kurt Wolff in Germany. Zsolnay, a friend of Alma's, suggested that she get him the *Verdi* manuscript and he would start a publishing firm. He offered Werfel 5,000 Swiss francs—an astronomical sum during those days of inflation in Germany. He was to have his last popular success far away in Beverly Hills a score of years later. There, in the freedom of America, he wrote *The Song of Bernadette*, a celebrated book and film. A travel novel—as he termed it—called *Star of the Unborn*, was to be his last work. Many thought it his best book.

In his warmest years, the years in Vienna, Werfel, like all those of the city's intellectual circles, was often in the cafés. Prominent writers had their *stammtisch* at the Herrenhof, surrounded by wealthy admirers and minor talents whom satirist Anton Kuh called "bank clerks with an ethical background." Werfel usually met with two old friends from his Prague school days, Ernst Polak and Leo Perutz. They never got away from Prague's mysticism. At the tables alongside them were Anton Kuh, that subtle feuilletonist Alfred Polgar, and the great Austrian novelist Hermann Broch.

When Werfel worked, he spent the nights writing, sustained only by coffee and cigarettes, a combination of habits which often worried Alma. But between his literary projects he was gregarious and loved the company of congenial friends. He went often to the bar of the Grand Hotel on Ringstrasse, now the headquarters of the International Atomic Energy Commission.

The Grand Hotel's restaurant was one of the best in a town that then had a myriad of gastronomic attractions in addition to its 1,250 coffeehouses and some 800 pastry shops. Werfel showed

up often at the restaurant of the Hotel Meissl & Schadn in Neuer Markt. It stands no more, having been hit by United States bombs in the closing days of the war; but there are many for whom the memory is still green of its twenty-four different varieties of boiled beef served in elaborate ritual with various sorts of grated horseradish, whipped cream, and applesauce, not to mention a famous hot mushroom sauce and an equally celebrated cold chive sauce.

Werfel was a scholarly connoisseur of these *gustostueckerln*. In her memoirs Alma reports that during their Egyptian trip in 1924 the English hotel food was so awful that Werfel conjured happy hallucinations of boiled beef with *schwammerlsauce*, or that old Prague specialty, roast pork with sauerkraut and dumplings, and Vienna's fanciest roast saddle of venison with *preisselbeeren*.

Once home, he was contentedly back at his other gastronomic haunts, restaurant Hartmann near the Hotel Imperial, which has since disappeared, and Frau Schoener's restaurant that survived until two years ago. There were, of course, always the Demel and the Hotel Sacher, all run by ladies. Alma herself had good cooks in their mountain retreat at Breitenfeld Semmering and in Vienna, often elderly Bohemian women who knew Werfel's nostalgia for Prague and his appetite for old Austrian dishes. Despite his predilection for the fine gastronomic specialties of middle Europe, he never liked alcohol, and sometimes irritated Alma by ignoring good wines.

In 1931 they moved from Elisabethstrasse 22 to Steinfeldgasse 2, in Vienna's exclusive Hohe Warte district. There they lived in a splendid mansion with its own garden. It was near the Grinzing, a suburb famous for Heuriger inns and Heiligenstadt, which Beethoven loved so much. The countryside was fairly redolent of music, and perfect for the music lover and the opera fan. Werfel was both.

HIS house still stands, and the location is still beautiful, but it has been divided into several apartments. Not many people in Vienna can afford to support such a grand mansion by themselves. Visitors who come today can still see the villa standing at the foot of the Vienna Woods, surrounded by its beautiful views. It is easy to imagine Alma giving her great dinner parties and to think of Werfel, when he was engrossed in a new work, in isolation in his upper-floor study. In the social interludes, managed by Alma, he was joined by prominent poets, composers, politicians, and celebrities. In this brilliant assembly he once noted he was the only Jew. Later he was joined by his Jewish friend, Julius Tandler, the great professor of anatomy and prominent socialist city



—Austrian Information Office.

Hotel Sacher—"Once home he was at his gastronomic haunts."

councilor, who looked around and said to Werfel, "I am glad that our majority is again re-established."

Of all of Vienna's pleasures, Werfel loved opera best, and the Vienna State Opera was then in a brilliant epoch under Richard Strauss and Franz Schalk, perhaps its greatest period since Mahler. After the success of his *Verdi* novel, Werfel was often in touch with Strauss and Schoenberg and Alban Berg and Pfitzner and other prominent composers. He even had a tiny piano in his study where he played *Verdi* melodies with one finger. It was a great time, but, retrospectively, people who were there with Werfel admit they closed their eyes to realities and did not want to know what was going to happen. Novelist Friedrich Torberg, an intimate of Werfel, admits that until 1931, the Herrenhof crowd lived in an artificial dream world. As the days dwindled down, Alma's glittering salon met for the last time there at the edge of the Vienna woods. Then the Nazi invasion blew out the candles.

The End

By Samuel Hazo

THE curtain stuck, leaving the couple who had played the scene stranded in character and forced to exit as themselves. They crossed

offstage in opposite directions like lovers unexpectedly surprised and shamed apart—the mood shattered, the feeling lost.



—Black Star.

Franz Werfel—"his warmest years, the years in Vienna between the wars."

THOMAS WOLFE'S BERLIN

By C. HUGH HOLMAN

THOMAS WOLFE's love affair with Berlin was intense on both sides, Byronic in its extravagance, like a *blitzkrieg* in its brevity, and a little ludicrous.

"Byron, they say, awoke one morning at the age of twenty-four, and found himself a famous man," Wolfe said. "Well, I had to wait some ten years longer, but the day came when I walked at morning through the Brandenburger Gate, and into the enchanted avenues of the faëry green Tiergarten, and found that fame . . . had come to me."

Wolfe was first in Berlin in May and June, 1935, and back in August and September the next year for the Olympic games. His affair with Berlin ran its course from initial enchantment to sorrowful farewell in these two summers. Before 1935, Wolfe had known only the southern part of Germany, of which he said, "I had gone back to it in 10,000 dreams of memory and desire—the sunken bell, the Gothic town, the plash of waters in the midnight fountain, the Old Place, the broken

chime, and the blond flesh of secret, lavish women."

Wolfe came to Berlin in this extravagant mood, but more than Wagnerian romanticism was working for Hitler's Berlin with him. He was a perennial provincial, fascinated but a little overwhelmed by strange cities. Although he spent about a fourth of the time between 1924 and 1936 in Europe, Wolfe remained a wide-eyed tourist, seldom seeing beneath the surface of the countries he visited. He went to Berlin weary from a five-year struggle with *Of Time and the River* and was, he said, "fed up to the roots of my soul with . . . being alone." Thus it is not surprising that he found in Berlin a mistress suited to his romantic adoration.

His first novel, *Look Homeward Angel*, published in Berlin in a fine translation by Hans Schiebelhuth, was greeted with praise by German critics, who called it, in Hermann Hesse's words, "the most impressive poetical work from present-day America." Its poetic qualities and its freedom from political commitment made Wolfe a writer about whom both the repressed

German intellectual and the Nazi party member could agree. Hence, he satisfied a cultural hunger in the Berliners, and his visits were what Martha Dodd, the daughter of the American Ambassador, called "the most vital experience literary Berlin had in the Hitler years."

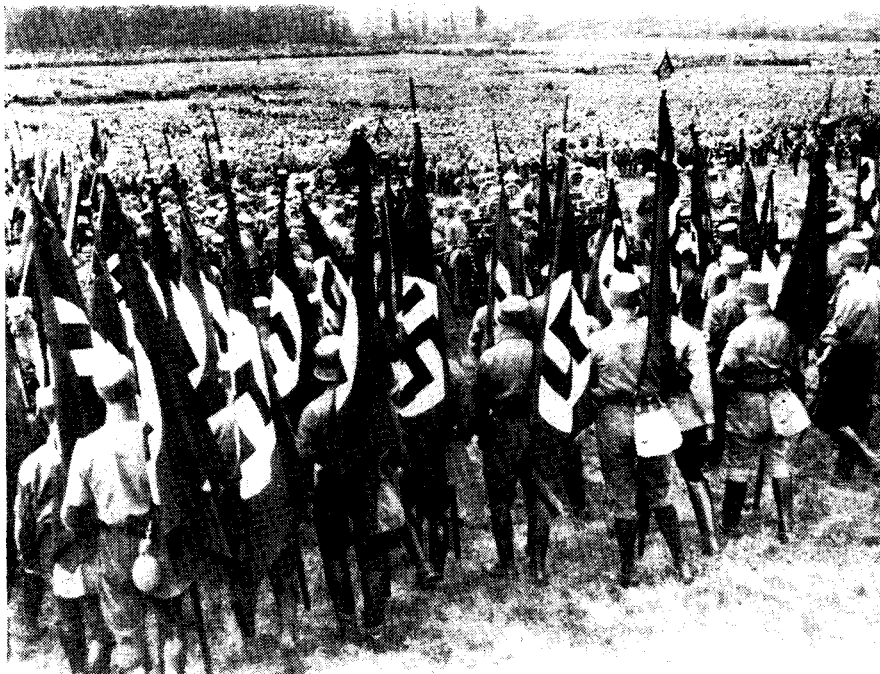
Wolfe's was the Berlin of the Tiergarten, and Charlottenburg. Its eastward extension from the Brandenburger Gate was almost exclusively along the Unter den Linden. To the west it extended to Westend and to the beaches and restaurants of the Wannsee and the Grunewaldsee. This was, in 1935 as it is now, the visitors' Berlin, the city of gay nightlife, of restaurants, cafés, and fine stores, of twinkling lights, great trees, and parks.

His first view of the city came as his train from Hannover moved to the Bahnhof Am Zoo. From there he went three blocks to his hotel, and then on to a reception at the American Ambassador's house on Tiergarten Strasse. He said, "Along the streets in the Tiergarten, in all the great gardens, and along the Spree Canal the horse chestnut trees were in full bloom. The crowds sauntered underneath the trees on the Kurfürstendamm, the terraces of the cafés were jammed with people, and always, through the golden sparkle of the days, there was a sound of music in the air." It was plainly love at first sight.

Wolfe lived both summers at the Hotel Am Zoo on the Kurfürstendamm—well established, in that day and in this, as a leading Berlin hotel and a headquarters for journalists and writers, and the home now of the International Film Festival. But he spent so much time with the Dodds that he could say that he was almost a resident of the American Embassy.

Martha Dodd introduced Wolfe to important places, political figures, and celebrities, among them Charles A. Lindbergh and William L. Shirer, who imprisoned a complimentary vignette of Wolfe in his *Berlin Diary*.

She took him to Weimar, where he shouted rhapsodies to "the demented wind" in the great trees at Goethe's garden house, much as he had shouted them to the winds and trees in his native North Carolina mountains. Wolfe was delighted by the flaming blood beach, the pines, the limes, and the great flowering horse chestnuts of northern Germany. He visited Schiller's tomb at Weimar, thought he found Luther's spirit at Eisenach, relived the Venusburg drama at The Wartburg, and returned through the dark beauty of the Harz mountains. His mind was haunted by the spirit of Germany's past, and he declared that "there was not a man or woman alive in the world who was not, in one way or another,



Brown Shirts in Berlin, April 1932—"He even thrilled to the marching soldiers . . . He wrote of the Brown Shirts as 'young men laughing and talking with each other . . . the solid smack of 10,000 leather boots as they came together. . . .'"

—UPI.