

EUROPEANS by Emanuel Litvinoff

EUROPEAN COMMUTER, by Willi Frischauer (*Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 30s.*)

THE FOUR LIVES OF ELSBETH ROSENFELD (*Gollancz, 21s.*)

NO one, surely, could be more Viennese than Willi Frischauer. Born of an upper-class Roman Catholic father and a Jewish mother, at home in that cosy prewar Austrian society in which every other person claimed aristocratic connections, his early life seems a Viennese waltz of girls, water-polo, and dizzy speculation as an *Inflationsgewinner*. But he soon became a journalist, involved in the tragic farce of Central European politics soon to swallow the world in war, and there was a taste of iron on the tongue even in the happy-go-lucky pursuit of pleasure.

Here we know Frischauer as an international reporter with a flair for the sensational, largely because his responses to events are colourful. It would be a mistake to underestimate the shrewdness of his judgments. Few would share his tolerant view of Göring, but he saw through Hitler and the Nazis from the beginning and has never lost sight of the way that West German society is honey-combed by former Nazis. Frischauer's account of behind-the-scenes events in pre-Nazi Austria, and particularly of his personal relationship with Dolfuss, are a contribution to contemporary history. He inclines to the unpopular view that Dolfuss was justified in creating a corporate State and fighting the Social Democrats as well as the Nazis. This was the price paid for the support of Mussolini, and Frischauer argues that even if morally wrong it was at the time politically expedient. Well, it is no longer heinous to prefer "expediency" to "morality" and he may be right that Dolfuss bought Austria four years of reprieve.

More to the point is the author's devastating criticism of Konrad Adenauer, whom he sees as "the dummy on the knee" of Hitler, and of the widespread influence in military and political affairs of the "old Nazis (who) shook off shame and deference like snakes shed their skin." If this is at all justified, the world has much to fear from Hitler's heirs.

This would not be the view of that remarkable old lady, Dr Elsbeth Rosenfeld, Christian and half-Jewish, who grew up in the Berlin of Imperial Germany, married a Prussian-Jewish Parliamentarian, suffered in the Munich ghetto, lived underground for nearly two years helped by German friends, escaped to Switzerland, and eventually reached England. To survive this history required extraordinary vitality; to survive unembittered required deep reserves of goodness and faith. Dr Rosenfeld believes that the majority of Germans did not know about the horrors of the concentration camps. Certainly, her first-hand experiences show that those who helped her were not aware. She estimates that more than a million Germans were involved in sustaining 100,000 refugees who remained in hiding in Nazi Germany. These are largely emotional assertions, incapable of proof, and there is considerable evidence—perhaps equally emotional—to the contrary. But it is good to have the open-hearted testimony of this courageous lady and to know that many Germans stood firm against the avalanche of Nazi evil.