

György Fałudy: REFUGEE, 1940

Translated from the Hungarian
& Edited
by Thomas Ország-Land



The burden of guilt assumed by the French state and society by participating in the WW2 Holocaust of Jews has emerged as an issue of international concern in the presidential elections there set for April 23/May 7. The prescient piece below reflects the disgust of a Jewish-Hungarian poet at the treatment meted out by the French to the flood of mostly East European Jewish refugees fleeing the racist wrath of Nazi Germany.

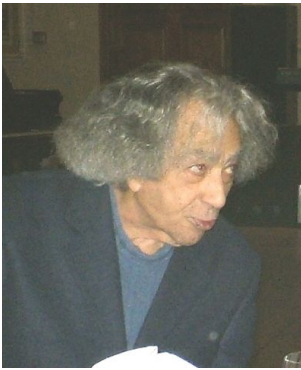
Like our hosts, we thought the French army
was the mightiest under the sun.
And what did it show to the German Nazis?
Beaten backsides on the run.

The French distrust and despise us aliens
for fleeing to their land for salvation.
It was their own deceit, not ours,

that callously brought down this nation.

They boast: defeat will bring them peace
(too bad for the Jews). Oh, hunky-dory...
Few of them know that it's only the start
and very far from the end of the story.

The Nazis will settle into their homes.
They'll drink their cellars dry, abuse
their women and, should they object,
treat their hosts as they treat the Jews.



György Faludy (1910-2006): a towering figure of European literature and a relentless opponent of both Fascism and Communism. As the Nazis advanced across Europe during WW2, he retreated via France and North Africa to the United States where he served the Free Hungary Movement as its honorary secretary and enlisted with the American Air Force to fight in the Far East theatre. He was widely described during his prolific writing career as the reigning king of Hungarian poetry. His work in English translation is at last winning a global readership.

✘ Thomas Ország-Land is an award-winning poet and foreign correspondent who writes for *Iconoclast* from Jerusalem and London as well as his native Budapest. His last book was [*Reading for Rush Hour: A Pamphlet in Praise of Passion*](#)

(Snakeskin, England, 2016).