

# Dr. Zipper

**He tasted concentration camps, both Jap and German style, and now he's free for his music.**

**By Cpl. HYMAN GOLDBERG**

**YANK Staff Correspondent**

**M**ANILA—Dr. Herbert Zipper, the prewar leader of the Manila Symphony, who dropped his underground work against the Japs and began reorganizing his orchestra within a month after the American forces landed on the island of Luzon, is one of the few men who have had first-hand experience with both German and Japanese brands of fascism. He learned about both systems the hard way, in German concentration camps and in an internment camp run by the Japs in Manila.



Dr. Zipper—he disclaims all credit for the invention of the device that closes officers' pants and ladies' girdles—began his anti-fascist life back in 1933, in Vienna. That was when Adolf Hitler came into power just across the way in Germany. Zipper was one of a group of musicians, artists, writers and assorted intellectuals who saw the danger in Hitler's hysterical appeals to prejudice and hatred and who did what they could to fight him.

One of Hitler's most efficiently organized lists was in his Sonovabitch Division, and one of the names on the sonovabitch list was Dr. Herbert Zipper's. *Der Fuehrer* was a sensitive soul who couldn't stand anybody making fun of him, and Zipper had been taking him for a ride for a number of years by the time the Nazis moved into Austria and took over in 1938. Zipper had known for some time, of course, that Austria was doomed and that he was a dead duck if the Nazis got hold of him. For weeks before the Nazis moved into Vienna he hid out, sleeping in different places every night.

They got him, though, on the one night when it was imperative, for various reasons, for Zipper to be home. He was nabbed by a Viennese cop whom Zipper had known for 20 years.

He was held in concentration camps for a year.

"I am very proud," he said, "of the history of

They got him, though, on the one night when it was imperative, for various reasons, for Zipper to be home. He was nabbed by a Viennese cop whom Zipper had known for 20 years.

He was held in concentration camps for a year.

"I am very proud," he said, "of the history of my arrests by the fascists, German and Japanese. I have never thought of myself as a very important person politically, but the Nazis and the Japs evidently both thought I was. In Vienna, I was arrested among the first. With me were five cabinet members, the mayor of Vienna, and some of the most important artists of the city. When the Japs arrested me in Manila I was again in the best company."

In Germany he was held in the notorious concentration camp at Dachau for six months and was then evacuated to the equally notorious slaughter-house of the Nazis at Buchenwald, where he spent another six months.

"The reason they moved me and others from Dachau," said Dr. Zipper, "was because the Nazis were planning to move into new territories and they had to make room for new victims. When I was finally released from the concentration camp at Buchenwald it was for the same reason. The Nazis were going to take Czechoslovakia, and they were planning to throw thousands of Czechs into Buchenwald."

**W**HATEVER the reason for his release, Zipper was brought back to Vienna and forced to sign papers saying that he had not been mistreated, that he had not seen anyone mistreated and that he would not talk about his mistreatment and the mistreatment of others he had witnessed.

"I did not point out to the Nazis the contradictory statements they put before me," said Dr. Zipper.

He was given a few days to settle his affairs and was then permitted to leave Austria. He had been forced to give up all his property and personal belongings. He arrived in Paris with 10 Reichsmarks.

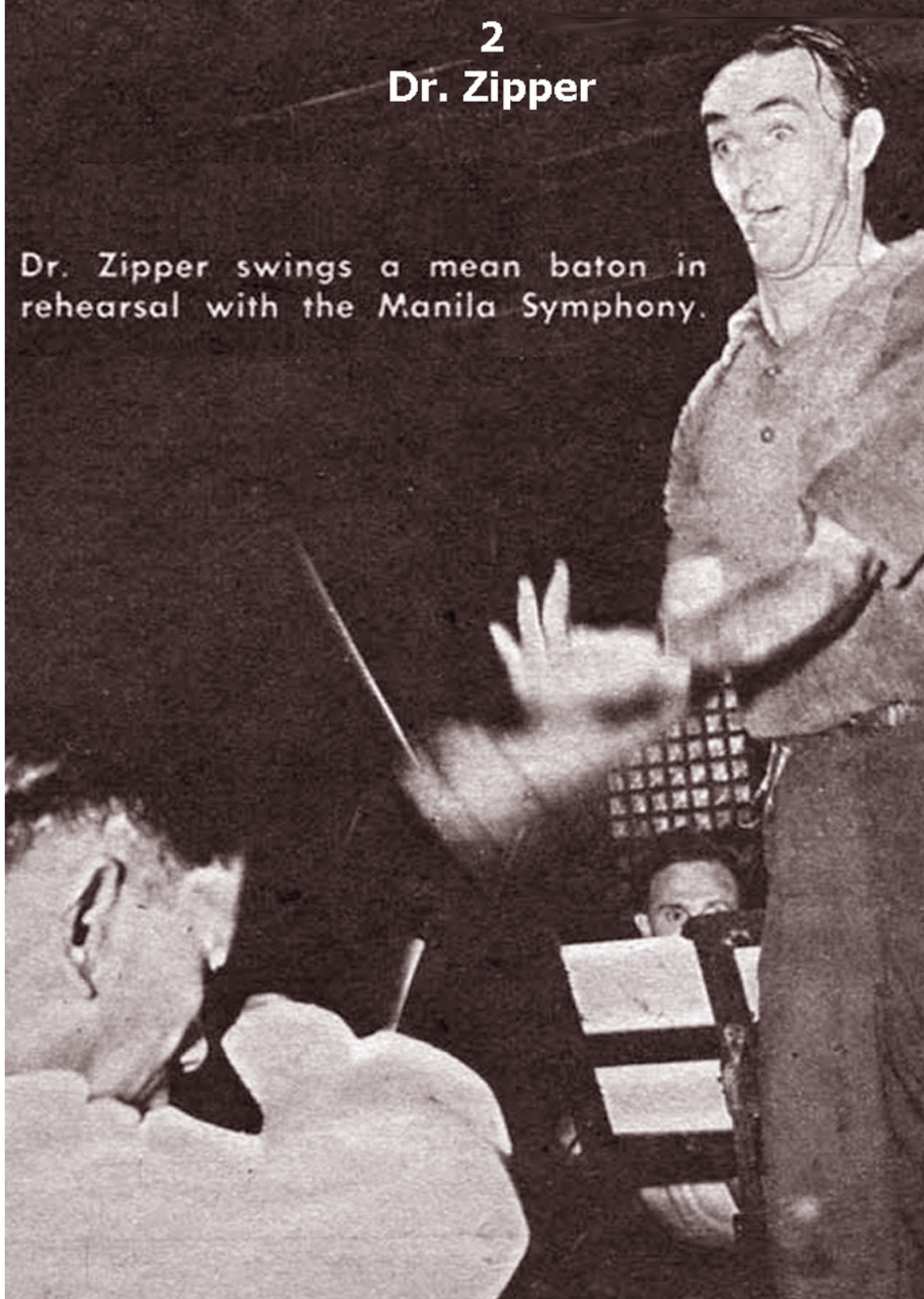
"That was in 1939," said Zipper. "It was before the American soldiers overran the concentration camps and the newsreel pictures of the dead and dying were taken and before the publishers and Congressmen came and saw those scenes with their own eyes. When I told what I had seen in the Nazi camps and what had been done to me some people thought that I was an hysteric."

While he was in Paris, Dr. Zipper received a cable from Manila informing him of the death of Dr. Alexander Lippay, a Viennese friend who had been conductor of the Manila Symphony for a number of years. The cable offered him the post of conductor. He accepted the offer for two reasons. Probably the most important of the two was the presence in Manila of Miss Trudi Dub-

OldMagazineArticles.com

2  
Dr. Zipper

Dr. Zipper swings a mean baton in rehearsal with the Manila Symphony.



sky, Zipper's fiancee who had gone to Manila in 1937 to teach ballet dancing at the University of the Philippines. The other was the promise of security and peace. There were loud rumblings of war in the Far East at that time, but not everyone had the ears to hear them.

Dr. Zipper arrived in Manila in June, 1939 and took over the Manila Symphony. He married Miss Dubsy, who continued her ballet career and who acted as choreographer for the Manila Ballet Moderne.

"We had a fine life," said Dr. Zipper. "Manila was a highly civilized place and there were many intelligent people here. We had our apartment in a fine new house in South Manila. Can you imagine, a house with an elevator that ran, with electricity that could be turned on and off, with running water? Hot and cold water! And a weekend house in Tagaytay, where it was always cool. We were not wealthy, but it was a good life."

**D**ESPITE the good life, Dr. Zipper did not grow fat and complacent. He could see the signs and hear the rumblings.

"When I first arrived here," he said, "I got a letter from the German Consulate, ordering me to report there and to register as a German national. I sent him an answer saying that he had apparently been misinformed about my nationality. I said I was an Austrian, not a German."

Zipper was asked to speak before such Manila organizations as the Rotary Club. He told them about fascism in Europe and the similarities it had to the brand of fascism in the Far East.

"The last concert of the Manila Symphony was on December 5th," he said. "On the 22d, High Commissioner Sayre gave a farewell dinner, and on the following day we packed up our instruments and our musical library and hid them in a secret vault in the distillery of the husband of Senora Trinidad F. Legarda, the president of the Manila Symphony Society."

A week later, the Japs were in Manila, which had been declared an open city. It was not long before the Japs came for Dr. Zipper. They had apparently been keeping a sonovabitch list too.

"Seventeen of them came to my house, with a little major in charge," said Zipper. "They were not polite. They told me that I would die that day. But at the same time they told my wife that I was merely being held in 'protective custody,' although they didn't say against whom they were protecting me. And just like with the Germans, I was again arrested among the first, and with some of the most important people in Manila. It was flattering.

"The place where they held me prisoner was the Conservatory of Music, which I thought was a nice touch."

Zipper was held there for nine weeks, undergoing constant questioning.

"And such questions!" he said. "They asked me such things as, 'Is President Roosevelt a Communist? Where is Gen. MacArthur? What is your relationship with Stalin? Why didn't Germany

## Dr. Zipper

capture Moscow?' They were very angry about Germany not capturing Moscow and for some reason I couldn't understand, they seemed to think that was my fault. This was very flattering too, but also a little embarrassing."

The Japs finally released Zipper after deciding that it wasn't his fault that Germany got turned back from Moscow, and that he really didn't know General MacArthur's whereabouts. Then they tried to get him to reorganize the Symphony, but he told them that the musicians had disappeared and that the instruments and music could not be found. The Japs could understand that because most of the stuff in Manila that had disappeared had vanished under their auspices.

Meanwhile, Dr. Zipper was working with the underground resistance movement, gathering information and collating it and forwarding it to the military resistance movement. And during the Jap occupation he and his wife continued to teach music and the ballet. Toward the end of the occupation, the students paid for their lessons with food.

"On February 3d," said Zipper, "Legarda, the distiller whose wife is the president of the Symphony Society, called me up the telephone. The Legardas lived near Santo Tomas, the big Jap internment camp. Legarda screamed into the telephone, 'Hey Herbert, we are liberated! The Americans are here!'"

"I hung up on him," said Zipper. "Right outside our house there were three Jap machine-guns."

Manila was liberated 16 days later, and a week afterwards Dr. Zipper began the reorganization of the Manila Symphony. One of the newspapers printed a story about the reorganization and the musicians began coming in. A number of them were in the uniform of the Philippine Army and others were guerrillas. Fourteen members of the orchestra had been killed. Rehearsals began with the empty chairs filled by children as young as 13, and elderly gentlemen of 60. Several American soldiers showed up and were accepted as members of the orchestra.

The U. S. Army is giving its support to the Manila Symphony. The Special Services Division has brought out a series of concerts and is allowing soldiers in without charge. At one of the civilian concerts given recently, about 200 GI music lovers showed up and found that it was not a GI free show and that all the seats had been sold out. Dr. Zipper heard about it and found one soldier who had walked and hitch-hiked 70 miles to hear Beethoven's "Violin Concerto." He was Dr. Zipper's guest at that evening's concert.

# YANK

November, 1945