

LOWELL THOMAS' BROADCAST FROM PARIS

May 1, 1945

At press headquarters here in Paris, there is much excitement tonight; that is, during the last few minutes. All caused by Admiral Doenitz' broadcast, ~~from~~, telling the Germans, and the rest of the world, that Hitler is dead, that he died yesterday defending the Reichschancellery in Berlin; and that he, Admiral Doenitz, is stepping into his place to lead the German forces and fight on. It all has the ring of authenticity. It would be dramatic indeed to have both dictators, Mussolini and Hitler, die by violence, almost at the same time.

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I hesitate to break in tonight, there seems to be so little news over here. But maybe it's the same in America. Over here everybody seems to be waiting. You can almost feel that millions of people are holding their breath. Many thought that today would be the Big Day. But, it's past midnight here in Paris. So, will it be tomorrow? Or is the day still some distance off? All I know is that I haven't the answer.

Aside from the fact that my colleagues tell me there has been no news breaking, I wouldn't know much about any of the day's developments because I have been in a plane most of the day, buffeted about and delayed by a storm, a storm that hit Paris during the night, including a five-hour snowfall. It had all

disappeared from the streets of Paris by the time I got here tonight -- all except one snowman at a roadside near Versailles. But that storm held up the Rome-to-Paris plane. We couldn't get through it or over it, and after we had flown almost as far north as Corsica, we had to turn back to the Italian Coast, and then fly way to the West and approach France by coming up between Sardinia and Spain.

When we stopped in Marseilles we discovered that people there all thought this was to be the day of days. So! many hadn't turned up for work. In Rome, before we left we heard the same story. But in Rome it had been officially proclaimed a fiesta; and on the way to the airport I ran into a crowd of fully a hundred thousand people in the Piazza del Popolo. Communists, with red flags; and many wearing red shirts. There were speeches, probably over the same loud-speaker system that Mussolini used to use. But it seemed to be an exceedingly well-behaved crowd, with plenty of

well-dressed Romans on the fringe of the throng, apparently not at all unhappy about it.

When I got to Paris tonight I asked how fully the junction had been made between the Russian and American armies; and was surprised to find that so far they have only made contact in three or four isolated places. As you have already heard, it was a young, new division, the 69th, of the First Army, that had the honor of making that first contact. But they almost were not the first.

As I mentioned a few nights ago, the day I left the First Army, to fly to Berlin, and then on down to the Italian Front, the 104th Division, Terry Allen's Timber Wolves, were nearer the Russians than any other outfit. And over the radio, from Rome, I remarked that I would like to know what fate befell Lieutenant Harland Shanks of Portland, Oregon, who had just left the 104th, to try and get through the German lines, cross two rivers, make contact with the Russians, and

then radio back word to his commander of what he found. Tonight I know the answer, direct from General Terry Allen. We met at the airfield. He flying in from the far side of Germany; I from Italy. My first question was: What happened to Lieutenant Shank? Did he make it? The answer is that he did. But he ran into a delay and a strange experience.

After crossing the Mulde River, by night, he had almost crossed the eighteen-mile-zone held by the Germans. He was almost to the Russian lines, when he ran right into a nest of sixteen hundred Germans. Some of those German soldiers wanted to surrender to the young American Lieutenant, and some didn't. And during the negotiations that lasted over a period of two days, the 69th Division, a little farther South, made the first contact with the Russians. Otherwise it no doubt would have been the Timber Wolves.

Returning to Lieutenant Shank, out there between the Mulde and the Elbe, on that hazardous voluntary

mission, two commanders of those sixteen hundred German soldiers had already followed Hitler's instructions and run away from their men. As you no doubt know, it has been discovered that the Prussian officer caste had been instructed to get away, everywhere; get away so they can play a part in the rebuilding of Germany and in getting ready for the next war. The sixteen hundred German soldiers were tired of the war, but not tired enough to give up to the Russians. They wanted Lieutenant Shank to take them; but, with some sort of show of force so they could give in "with honor" as they put it.

Finally Shank got through to the Russians at a place called Annanberg, on the east side of the Elbe. He got in touch with General Allen by short wave, and the American General sent over some small army liaison planes to pick up a party of Russians and bring them to the American lines. Major General Sohanow, of the 118th Russian Division, came with three members of his staff.

He was greeted by the chief of the Timber Wolves, at his headquarters, which happened to be in a German chocolate factory -- a place a little like Hershey, Pennsylvania. Tears coursed down the cheeks of the Russians as they heard their national anthem played by the American 104th Division band. Then there was a reception; and the next day General Terry Allen, and three members of his staff flew to the Russian headquarters, at Annan berg, where they were feted and treated royally. The point of it all is that General Allen and his men were much impressed by the attitude of the Russians. As fellow soldiers, who had long been fighting the same enemy, they literally fell into each others' arms.

Today in Leipzig a still larger ceremony was taking place; the American Corps Commander, General Collins, meeting the Russian Corps Commander, Lieutenant General Baklanoff. While we are all wondering how soon the word will come, or will it come soon, that the European War is over?

Substitute LEAD HITLER

L.I. - Standard. Tues., May 1, 1945.
Sunoco.

Good Evening, Everybody! - (P.T. on June 1st, 1945)

The dramatics of Nazi propoganda are working hard to give the impression that Hitler died a ~~hero's~~ hero's death in battle. The announcement was made with all the tricks of Nazi heroics -- Wagnerian music and the rolling of drums. It ~~is~~ ^{was} stated that Der Fuehrer was killed this afternoon. // "Fighting 'til his last breath" -- was the propoganda phraseology. Hitler was described as having been killed at his post in the Reichchance~~ry~~. It is known that the Russians, in the bitter street fighting for Berlin, are within several hundred yards of the Chance~~ry~~, and it might conceivably be that Hitler lost his life in the battle for that building.

The Nazi annou~~ncement~~ brings up an interesting point ~~of~~ of dates. It is appropriate to note that Hitler, if the German story be true, met his doom three days after that of his Axis partner, Mussolini, who was executed ignominiously in Italy. But a more pertinent matter of dates is this. The German annou~~ncement~~ states that Hitler was killed today, also that he appointed his successor yesterday. Which seems like

an exceedingly prompt sequence of events.

The reports during the last few days of Gestapo Leader Himmler trying to make peace have pictured Himmler as saying that Hitler could not live more than a few days. Was that a matter of illness? Or did it signify that the top figures of the doomed Nazi hierarchy might dispose of Hitler? Or, ~~was~~ how did it fit in with suppositions, often expressed, that Hitler would kill himself when the final moment of catastrophe was at hand? All we know tonight is what the Nazi radio announced this afternoon - the swift sequence of events, Hitler appointing a successor yesterday and being killed today.

One major surprise is - the successor.

The place of the Nazi Fuehrer is taken not by Goering, Not by Himmler, not by a general - but by an Admiral.

He is Admiral Doenitz, who personally read the

proclamation, after the announcement that Hitler had been killed?

~~Was~~ The news has told about him as ~~the~~ ^a Nazi naval commander, and in particular as a director of the submarine war. He represented the Nazi policy of ruthlessness in the undersea campaign, and for that reason was held in favor by Hitler and the Nazi Party. But, we are told, Admiral Doenitz was not a fanatical Nazi, not one of the Hitler zealots. ~~It had always been supposed that the Brown Shirt Dictator would be succeeded by one of the high Nazis, Goering, Himmler, possibly Goebbels.~~ But now, as Naziism is in its last hour of disaster, Hitler is succeeded by an Admiral, a rather neutral figure, not the kind of successor that Hitler was supposed to have.

FOLLOW HITLER

18

Does ^{this} ~~it~~ mean that Doenitz, heading what is left of the Nazi regime, will bring the European war to the end that has been expected hourly -- unconditional surrender? In his proclamation he gave no indication of this -- he called upon the Germans to continue the fight. But this may have been little more than a formality, and the impression in the Allied capitals is that Doenitz's call to arms ~~xx~~ can be little more than hollow sound. ~~He has not the prestige or personality to back it up -- with Hitler gone. The general presumption is that the death of the Nazi Fuehrer will hasten the end in Europe -- the end that cannot be long delayed in any case.~~

One ~~xx~~ ghost of a question comes forward -- was Hitler really killed? ~~And~~ There had been rumors that, in the end, he would fake death and go into hiding, go underground. In Washington tonight and in London, there were quick suggestions that in any German surrender there must be proof that Hitler really was killed.

ITALY

Thank you, Lowell.

In Italy, American troops today made contact with

the partisan forces of ~~Jugoslav Marshal~~ Tito. This occurred

in the vicinity of Trieste, which city on the Adriatic

is now being besieged by the Jugoslavs. This ~~junction~~

5.1 /- junction of forces is a vivid sign of the wiping out

of Nazi resistance in Italy. Trieste is outside of the

Italian peninsula, around the corner, ^{around} ~~at~~ the head of the

Adriatic Sea. And, in fact, American troops are driving

through the barrier of the Alps toward Austria - the

rugged mountains that were expected to have been a

major barrier in the enemy defense of the Nazi redoubt,

which turns out to be largely a myth.

Not only are the Germans out of northern Italy,

6 but the Fascist Republican army surrendered today -

that puppet force of the fake government of which

Mussolini was supposed to have been the head. It had

been reported that, along with the execution of

Mussolini, Fascist Marshal Graziani had also been shot.



That story, however, was false. Graziani is now a
prisoner of the Allies, and it was he who made the
surrender of the puppet Fascist army.

troops of General Patton's Third Army raced forward in
a nearly five mile drive to the heart of the heavily
mountain, which had been spoken of as the mountain core
of the redoubt. Patton's drive carried to the San River,
within less than eight miles of the town where Hitler
was born, and within a distance of a mere
place, the city of Liège, a great center of
communications. They are within forty-three miles of
Brechtelshausen, Hitler's post, and a junction with the
Ruhr is an imminent possibility.

Today's dispatch described American forces as
'rushing wild', speeding through the mountains were
is supposed to have been the Nazi redoubt.

That Nazi redoubt of last resistance, about which the Hitlerites ^{have} ~~had~~ talked so big, turns out to be a mere legend. This was made vividly evident today when troops of General Patton's Third Army raced forward in a twenty-five mile drive to the heart of the Bavarian mountains, which had been spoken of as the mountain core of the redoubt. Patton's drive carried to the Inn River, within less than eight miles of the town where Hitler was born, and within eighteen miles of a more important place, the city of Linz, a great center of communications. They are within forty-three miles of Berchtesgaden, Hitler's roost, and a junction with the Russians is an imminent possibility.

Today's dispatch described American forces as "running wild", speeding through the mountains where is supposed to have been the Nazi redoubt.

OKINAWA

The latest tonight from Okinawa states that American troops are approaching Naha, the chief town on the island -- advancing slowly against stubborn opposition. Earlier reports had placed our soldiers within two thousand yards of Shuri, the second ~~big~~ biggest town on Okinawa -- that place being put under the fire of American seventy-five millimeter guns.

SUBSTITUTE CONFERENCE

28

We have confirmation of reports that Soviet Foreign Commissar Molotov will soon leave the San Francisco conference, and return home. This was stated in San Francisco tonight by American Secretary of State Stettinius, who said that Molotov will remain at the conference a few days more, and then fly back to Moscow. Previous reports ~~have~~ explained that Molotov's ^{speedy} ~~imminent~~ departure ^{would have} ~~no~~ no connection with the rebuffs he has encountered at San Francisco -- like the admission of Argentina in spite of strong Soviet protest. The explanation is that ^{the} Soviet Foreign Commissar has already overstayed the time allotted for his trip to San Francisco. With things going as they are in Europe, he is needed at his post in the Kremlin.

28 1/2 And now, Hugh James

LOWELL THOMAS' BROADCAST FROM PARIS

May 2, 1945

GOOD EVENING, EVERYBODY:

With the word just in from the Russians that they have completed the capture of Berlin, and with the announcement earlier in the day, from Italy -- it came through President Truman, as you know -- that the German commander there had surrendered all of his forces, including around a million men, -- it appears to us over here in Europe, at Supreme Allied Headquarters, that the hour we are all waiting for can't be far off.

The attitude of the Germans in Holland, allowing our people to drop vast quantities of food to the civilian population, that also is a most encouraging sign -- an indication that the big news may come at almost any time.

Meanwhile, fighting has still been going on. In the air, for example, some fifteen hundred sorties today, but with no Allied losses. The airmen reporting vast confusion along the roads in northern Germany, especially near the Danish border.

Troops of the 21st Army Group swept through the Germans today, entered the city of Lubeck shortly before five o'clock, and kept on going along the Baltic. The Sixth Airborne captured Wismar, halfway between Lubeck and Rostock; with the Russians in Rostock thirty miles to the East.

American troops were involved in these swift operations, capturing Schwerin, a short distance south-east of Lubeck, as well as many other places. At one point a German commander, his staff and two thousand men giving themselves up.

Farther to the south, not much news. But one report did come in telling of stiffening German

resistance at one point in the Alps, where a German battalion tried to make a counter-attack.

Mussolini dead, and the war officially coming to an end in Italy; Hitler dead, so it appears, if we can believe Admiral Doenitz, and Berlin tonight entirely in the hands of the Russians; German forces everywhere trying to give themselves up; our airmen given orders not to fire on horse-drawn transport along roads for fear of killing refugees; it all adds up to one thing: that the Nazis have little, if any, fight left in them.

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By the way, there is one story that so far as I know hasn't been told in any detail, the story of the one large city in Germany that hasn't been largely destroyed. In a previous broadcast I referred to the fact that the Sea Devil, Count Felix von Luckner, had come out to meet the approaching American forces. In so doing he played an important part in saving his home town, the city of Halle. For Halle is the only place of more

than a quarter of a million people where comparatively few buildings have been destroyed. All other German cities -- Berlin, Munich, Nuremberg, Hamburg, Bremen, Hannover, and of course, Cologne, and dozens of others -- have been laid waste. But not Halle.

The American general in command of the forces driving on Halle told me that Count Luckner had acted as intermediary between him and the German troops in the city. This American General also said that the Sea Devil had carried out his promises to the letter. The old sea dog, who had been out of favor with Hitler and his gangsters, was asked by the civilian population of Halle to do everything within his power to prevent the destruction of their homes. Thousands of civilians were clamoring for him to do this. Most of them women. So the old Count -- he's nearly seventy now -- said he would try. And out he went, with one lone companion, to meet the Americans.

A senior officer was so impressed with the

way von Luckner handled the situation, and with his attitude then and afterwards, that he said to me that he thought it might not be a bad idea if our people would make further use of the Sea Devil, possibly even put him at the head of all Germany, since the Allies must have someone to work with and work through. It's a novel idea.

Luckner never has been a political figure. But he might be able to help the occupation forces, help them find Germans, if any, who can be trusted. What a climax that would be to the career of the old boy from Saxony, who ran away to sea, sailed under many flags, and during World War One became a sea raider who always boasted that although he sank ships, he never killed even a ship's cat.

The hour approaches at high speed when the fighting will be over. Then will come the postwar problems. And we all wonder who the Allies will find in Germany to whom they can delegate authority. The

American General who captured and spared the city of Halle, says he thinks he has found one person who might do.

And now back to North America to Hugh Gibson, in New York.

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