

LOWELL THOMAS' BROADCAST FROM PARIS

April 13, 1945

GOOD EVENING, EVERYBODY:

I am speaking from Paris tonight. A group of us who have been up in Germany, with the American Ninth Air Force, and much of the time with General Simpson's Ninth Army, flew in to Paris together this morning. Our reason for leaving the troops in the field was that we wanted to be in touch with the outside world. On this, the day following the tragic news of the death of the President of the United States. We knew what the reaction to that news bulletin from the White House would be so far as our troops over here are concerned. But we wanted to see and hear what the reaction would be in this, one of the world's great capitals, and we wanted to get the

RETAKE

word of what was being said in other countries today.

And then, too, radio transmission from the various armies by short wave to America is uncertain. Last night, shortly after midnight, when four of us went to a radio transmitter with the Twelfth Army Group, I apparently was the only one who got through, and we were not too sure about that. A moment later the short wave signal grew so weak that my colleagues were not on the air at all. So now we have come down to Paris, to make use of the more powerful radio transmitter here.

As for the reaction to the news of the death of President Roosevelt, among our soldiers over here, it seems to be the same as it was at midnight when I spoke to you from Germany. Every man you get into conversation with tells you that he is stunned, that

he did not expect it, and is unable to comprehend it. Riding in to Paris today, in a bus, from a big military airfield with its smashed hangars and its wrecked Nazi planes that haven't yet been cleaned up, I talked to one young Lieutenant who just about summed it up for all the young Americans of his generation. He said: "I can't believe it. To me the office of President, and Mr. Roosevelt, have always been synonymous. He is the only President we have ever had so far as I am concerned." And then he added: "You see, he had been President since I was eight years old!" We used to hear that remark last Fall, during the campaign. But it never hit me with such force as it did today, over here with the American Army.

Of course it's important to know what the reaction is going to be in Germany, and what those Nazi propaganda wizards are saying. Many over here

have been listening to the German radio today, waiting to get the Goebbels-Hitler reaction. So far it hasn't come. I have just been discussing this with one of our Allied experts on propaganda, and he says we may not get the German reaction for another day or two. Then he added: "You may be sure they will try and translate it into a Nazi victory."

As for France, you may have heard what the newspapers here in Paris had to say this morning. The two most important evening papers are Le Monde, which is conservative, and Ce Soir, which is the leading Communist sheet. Le Monde, which is the successor to Le Temps, after praising Mr. Roosevelt for the part he played in building the victory, says: "But peace had become his greatest preoccupation, and his greatest task. Animated by the same idealism as Wilson, he added to it a sense of the practical and a

diplomacy that Wilson lacked. Many will have the opinion," continues the editor of Le Monde, "that his experience, his savoir faire, his prestige, will not easily be replaced." And he concludes with these words: "France will never forget that he was one of her principal liberators."

Ce Soir, the evening paper that is as far to the Left as Le Monde is to the Right, tonight sings the praises of the American President who has passed from the world stage. "We salute in him the patriot who never doubted victory," says the Communist editor, "the democrat who has never despaired of liberty; and the citizen of the world who has never lost his faith in France." And then CeSoir concludes: "The same message that told us of the death of the President also told us that American tanks were within twenty-five kilometers of Berlin. The Good Workman may

rest in peace!"

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As for detailed news from the various fronts, we have less of it than usual here in Paris tonight. Mr. Gibson will give you a summary of that. But there is high hope over here that the Allied Armies and the Russians will meet within the next few days. There also is a belief that the Germans are not going to put up any stiff fight for Berlin. Then will come a big job of mopping up, and the far far bigger one of the Peace and of educating the seventy-odd million surviving Germans so that in a generation or two we will not have a third World War.

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By the way, I have just learned on good authority that German losses in this war in killed, seriously wounded and made prisoner total between nine and ten million men.

Another good Patton story -- released for publication. The story of how General Patton and one of his armored spearheads slammed into a German town, up beyond Kassel, where there was a prison camp. The General's son-in-law, Lieutenant Colonel John Waters, has been a German prisoner, and the word was brought to Patton that his son-in-law was in the prison camp in that town.

Whereupon the General shouted that he wanted fourteen tanks right away. He got them, and off they roared. They headed for that prison camp, and all but tore it apart. There was a fight. And it ended up with the prisoners getting away -- including the Patton son-in-law, who is resting up in Paris tonight.

So long, and back to Hugh Gibson in New York.

TRUMAN

Hugh Gibson - Standard. Friday, April 13, 1945.
Sunoco.

(Mr. Truman is from Chicago
5 mins.)

Perhaps

I think the most important story tonight is an account of how one American citizen spent the day - ~~xxxxxx~~ a small slight graying man named Harry Truman. What a new president, a president ~~xxxx~~ thrust so suddenly into national leadership, does on his first day in office is likely to be interesting, and I believe an account of what President Truman did today is of large political significance - for this nation and for the world.

of
~~It is vivid that the personality of the new chief executive, where personality will count for so much, and gives strong intimations concerning future White House policy.~~

~~The~~
This morning he left ~~his modest~~ apartment where he has lived as Senator and Vice-President, and arrived, nine o'clock sharp at the presidential offices in the White House. His step was brisk and buoyant, ~~and when he~~ ~~saw a crowd of newsmen and photographers waiting for him,~~

he smiled and called to them: "My, I seem to be popular
this morning." An immediate tip that the personality of
Harry Truman is in the tradition of geniality of humor
set by Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

Buckling down to his first day of business as
President, Harry Truman went into a series of conferences.
His first was unofficial - his visitor being an old friend
and close associate, Hugh Fulton, who was counsel for the
Senate War Investigating Committee when that body was
headed by Senator Truman. Word has been that Hugh Fulton
will play a prominent part in the new administration, and
the fact that he was the first presidential visitor at
the White House this morning would seem to bear that out.

The first official conference today was ~~that~~ with
Secretary of State Stettinius [~~the new President~~
~~plunging into the great business of these days - the task~~
~~of organizing for peace.~~] His talk with the Secretary of

State was along the line of his immediate announcement yesterday, when he took the oath of office - that he would continue the war policies and world organization program of President Roosevelt. [He instructed

~~Stettinius to go right ahead with plans for the San Francisco Conference of the United Nations - this not to be delayed.~~

And President Truman commissioned the Secretary of State to carry out the first official act of the new administration - a proclamation of a month of mourning for President Roosevelt. [He signed the proclamation, putting his signature to his official document Number One.]

Next he held a war conference - with Secretary of War Stimson, Secretary of the Navy Forrestal, President Roosevelt's Chief of Staff Admiral Leahy, Army Chief of Staff General Marshall, and Navy Commander Admiral King. They reported to him on the progress of the

war - and the proceedings were along the line of the Truman declaration that he would follow precisely the Roosevelt program of total victory.

Next a meeting with leaders of Congress. Franklin D. Roosevelt was a breaker of precedents, and promptly today, on his first day in office, President ~~RM~~ Truman broke a precedent. According to previous custom, he would have called the congressional leaders to confer with him at the White House. He did no such thing. He went to Congress to meet them, and that unquestionably is a sign of future White House policy. ~~The bulk of Harry Truman's political life has been in Congress, as a member of the House, then of the Senate, and as Vice-President presiding over the Senate. It was to be expected, that with this background, he ^{would} be one to work closely with Congress and have a knack of getting on with the national legislature. That was borne out today, when the~~

~~new President went over to the capital, and foregathered with his old friends of long legislative years.~~

In the hall he encountered a group of newspapermen covering the Senate - old friends of his. What was his attitude toward them? It has been noted that Harry Truman is a plain and modest mid-westerner, whom surprising circumstance has carried from war ~~and~~ politics back in Missouri to the President of the United States. ~~He never put on any airs, never thought himself superior.~~ And today with the newsmen he certainly was in character.

Talking to them he said: "Boys, ~~I don't know whether you've ever had a load of hay fall on you.~~ But when they told me yesterday what had happened, I felt like the moon and stars and all the planets had fallen on me."

~~One of his old newspaper friends ~~with~~ addressed him as "Mr. President." He replied quickly: "I wish you'd never had to call me that." And then he said with a deep and earnest humility: "Boys, if you ever pray,~~

~~pray for me now. And he smiled: "You boys of the press
have been good to me."~~

He had lunch in the Senate dining room, and everybody from both Houses of Congress piled in on him - Republicans as well as Democrats. ~~That~~ ~~With his old colleagues~~ ~~should be~~ ~~in his own party~~ ~~marked his cordial supporters is to be~~ ~~taken for granted. And in Washington they'll tell you~~ ~~that the cordiality of the Republicans, members of the~~ ~~opposite party, is equally to be taken for granted. That~~ ~~was the case today~~] with Republican leaders in Congress joining in promising support to the new Democratic President, and Republican Senator Homer Ferguson of Michigan offered the prediction that President Truman will achieve unity in Congress.

Everywhere among the legislators there was high praise of Truman's gesture in going to Congress on his first day in office - a gesture that is taken to mean

~~in the strongest possible way~~ that the new President intends to work in close harmony with Congress.

On his return to the White House, the new President conferred with former presidential advisor Byrnes, who resigned recently after having accompanied President Roosevelt to the Yalta Conference. The importance of Byrnes is, that he is one of the few who is intimately acquainted with what transpired at that meeting of the Big Three. He has been close to the White House handling of foreign affairs - and is a long time friend of President Truman. All of which leads to the belief that Byrnes may return to service in Washington as an advisor on foreign affairs to the new President.

FOLLOW TRUMAN

We learn tonight about the portrait painter who was with President Roosevelt when he was stricken yesterday. She was Mrs. Elizabeth Shumatoff, a Russian born artist. She was alone with the President, sketching him -- he sitting before the living room fireplace and reading through official papers. When President Roosevelt complained of a "terrific headache" she summoned help but he had lost consciousness ^{when} ~~before~~ help arrived.

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WESTERN FRONT

The race for Berlin goes on with five American armored columns on their way to the Nazi capital. Far out in front is the Second Armored Division of the Ninth Army, Hell on Wheels still keeping its lead in the race for Berlin. We hear that the Second Armored *is going so fast it* Division has outrun its communications, ~~going so fast~~. On our side its movements are covered by a security blackout, but the Germans report that Hell on Wheels is closing in on the town of Brandenburg, which is twenty-one miles from the capital of Germany. And the German account continues that the objective ~~is~~ of the Second Armored Division is -- Berlin.

To the south General Patch's Seventh Army *army* is driving on a legendary town -- Bayreuth, with its famous shrine dedicated to the music of Richard Wagner. Hitler has a personal theatre there, the Nazis having adopted Wagner as their favorite composer. Well, it won't be long before Bayreuth, Wagnerian shrine, Hitler's personal theatre and all -- will be in American hands.

FOLLOW WESTERN FRONT

Late news informs us that American troops have reached the suburbs of Leipzig in a drive to join forces with the Russians.

VIENNA

Vienna fell today - that's final and official, an announcement by Soviet Premier Stalin. The legendary capital of Austria was captured by the Russians after a vicious ~~battle for~~ ^{battle} seven days, ~~with~~ that ruined large sections of the beautiful city on the Danube. The Russians captured a hundred and thirty thousand troops at Vienna, their biggest bag of prisoners since the Nazi disaster at Stalingrad.

For the first time we have official word of Jap suicide air attacks against the fleet off Okinawa.

~~Hitherto, there have been rumors of this, but military secrecy has concealed the activities of Jap air units which are called - "The Special Attack Corps." That is - suicide bombers.~~

~~Now, however, we have an official disclosure~~
~~with~~ ^{tells} Admiral Nimitz ^{telling} us that in the sea and air battle yesterday, the Japs threw in swarms of suicide bombers. They concentrated on American cargo vessels off Okinawa, the supply line for the invasion forces. A hundred and eighteen Japanese planes were shot down. We lost a destroyer, and several other American ships were damaged.

Today's dispatch informs us that the Jap suicide planes are often of obsolete types. Their engines are protected by armorplate, designed to prevent their being

knocked out before they reach the target. The Jap suicide pilots fly in a set course, straight at an American warship, and try to crash into it with their bomb loads.

The defense against them is anti-aircraft fire and American fighter planes - an effective defense.

states in an
~~Some~~ Admiral Nimitz [^] ~~the~~ official bulletin ~~states~~

"For some months the Japanese have been employing aircraft on a gradually increasing scale in suicidal attacks upon our forces in the Pacific. The enemy," he goes on, "has expended a large number of planes and personnel on missions of this nature - with negligible effect on the continuing success of our operations."

~~("Some major units of the fleet," Admiral Nimitz reports, "have been damaged - but no battleship, fast carrier or cruiser has been sunk.")~~

~~And the Admiral ^{ends with} ~~summarizes in~~ the following declaration: "Pushed back to their ~~own~~ inner defenses,"~~

ADD PACIFIC

Late news indicates that the enemy has lost two hundred and thirty nine planes in three days of sea and air battle featured by Jap suicide attacks.

On Okinawa the ground fighting is still stalemated. Tonight's news ~~is~~ telling of Jap counter attacks beaten off.

~~And now etc.~~

Speaking for Lowell Thomas
So long until Monday,

JAPAN

~~Secret~~ ~~or~~ ~~Code~~

Tokyo has been hit by what is apparently the heaviest blow thus far -- a huge force of B-29s raining a deluge of fire bombs on a five-square-mile ~~area~~ area of the Tokyo arsenal. Previously smaller fire raids have swept the Japanese capital with tempests of flame. Today's news indicates a bigger blaze than ever for the central section of war production in Tokyo.

Speaking for Lowell Thomas
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