

LOWELL THOMAS' BROADCAST FROM PARIS

April 20, 1945

GOOD EVENING, EVERYBODY:

The Russian drive on Berlin is in full swing. So say the Germans tonight. The Reds within seven miles of the outskirts of the city, and pouring across both the Oder and the Neisse; with furious air battles overhead. Moscow says nothing about this.

I am broadcasting tonight from Supreme Allied Army Headquarters. The talk here today -- aside from the Russian drive -- has centered largely around the topic of the Nazi Murder Camps that have been liberated by the advancing First and Third Armies. General Patton was the first, I believe, to issue an order that as many German civilians, and military people too as transportation facilities will allow,

be taken through these Murder Camps. And now General Eisenhower follows with a letter to General Marshall, suggesting that a dozen congressmen and a dozen prominent American editors be invited to come over and see with their own eyes the almost unbelievable horrors perpetrated by the Nazis. Prime Minister Churchill already has made a similar move, and the British delegation is said to be on the way to Buchenwald, a huge concentration camp that I visited several days ago. In fact, I described what I saw there with my own eyes, in a broadcast from a mobile radio transmitter, and then heard afterward that the short wave signal was bad and that I had failed to get through. Meanwhile, the story of the liberated Murder Camps has been published throughout the world.

Apparently there are many Germans who had little knowledge of the crimes the Nazis were committing in these enormous camps, or who had closed their eyes and ears and refused to believe. As witness to this,

take the burgomeister and his wife, who visited Buchenwald at General Patton's request, and who saw the gallows where the mass hangings had taken place daily, the torture chambers you no doubt have read or heard about by now, the furnaces, the piles of human bones, yes and the piles of dead. What is more, they saw the eighteen thousand pitiful creatures who are still in that Buchenwald camp, eighteen thousand remaining of the fifty thousand who were jammed into the place shortly before our troops got there. That burgomeister and his wife, loyal Germans, went home so overwhelmed with shame that they killed themselves.

One of our top Air Forces generals had been discussing these things with a Lieutenant General who had just been captured. The German military leader -- one of the old school -- said he had fought simply because the government in power had ordered him to do so. He considered that the honorable thing to do, since

fighting is a soldier's profession. As for the stories of the Nazi Murder Camps, he denied that he had heard of them, and was sure no such places existed. Whereupon our Air Force general brought in pictures taken that very day. The German general looked at them in apparent horror, and then broke down. He said: "I have lost my country. I have lost my family. And now, from what you tell me and from what I see here with my own eyes, I have lost my honor." He, too, wanted to kill himself.

The Murder Camp at Buchenwald, the largest of all those liberated thus far -- and this makes it all the more tragic, the depth to which a modern nation has fallen -- this camp is on the outskirts of the once famous and fair city of Weimar, referred to in times gone by as the Athens of Germany, center of German culture, home of Goethe and Schiller, and birthplace of the Nineteen Nineteen German Republic.

I am not going to give you a detailed description of that Camp near Weimar. Although it is after midnight over here in Europe, at Supreme Allied Headquarters, I haven't forgotten that this is the dinner hour in countless American homes. You will hear more of these Murder Camps from others, and you will see pictures of them. You may even see my picture, for I learned after I hurried out of one compound from which I couldn't get away soon enough -- I learned that press photographers had been snapping pictures at the time. There were a dozen or more persons in the compound at the time.

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I wouldn't be surprised if we were in for a period of mass suicide in Germany, the country which already has committed national suicide. Take the scene in the great City Hall in Leipzig this morning, when our troops entered and found high officials slumped over their desks. There were two German generals among them, one on one side of a desk, the other on the other

side, each holding a Luger. They had shot each other. Members of our party entered Leipzig with the troops of Hodges' First Army who were mopping up the city. And then the fall of Nuremburg to Patch's Seventh is of vast importance -- mainly because of the airfields around Nuremburg. No wonder General Eisenhower in an order of the day released a few hours ago, calls all this a "fitting prelude to the final battles to crush the ragged remnants of Hitler's armies of the West now tottering on the threshold of defeat."

The bewildering speed with which our armies have been overrunning all Germany is all the more striking to me since it was only a few days ago that I flew around the huge Ruhr pocket. At that time the Nazis were so strong in the Ruhr it looked as though they might hold out there for months. And now, not only has the Ruhr Pocket been eliminated, but in today's order of the day General Eisenhower tells us that among the three hundred and seventeen thousand prisoners in uniform

taken in the Ruhr, there were twenty-four generals and one Admiral. And he adds that "the enemy's losses in killed and wounded will never be accurately known.

On top of this tonight comes the word that the big Hartz Pocket, in the rugged and heavily forested Hartz Mountains, around which I flew only yesterday, has been mopped up. Great forest fires were burning in some of the towns in Hartz that we could see from the plane.

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Let's keep in mind, as we hear and read about the victories of our own American soldiers, that our Allies are also doing a great job against the remaining Germans; the Nazis in the Gironde Area surrendering today to the French, which means that the Allies will soon be able to use the great port of Bordeaux; the British, Canadians and Poles winning more victories over the Germans in Holland, and around the great German seaports of Bremen and Hamburg, which may be in their hands before long, although at Hamburg the city

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is across a broad estuary, a formidable barrier.

And far to the South the French are sweeping ahead at high speed, southwest of Stuttgart and on down to the Swiss border.

Oh yes, and today probably marks the end of Hitler's navy. By which I mean the announcement that the R.A.F. has knocked out the last German pocket battleship, the Lutzow.

And now, for more news about the war, and, American news that I wish I could hear, I return you to Radio City -- to Hugh Gibson.

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OKINAWA *Hugh Gibson - Standard*. Friday, April 20, 1945.
Sunoco.

~~(B.I. on from Paris for 6 mins.)~~

On Okinawa, the big drive for the final capture of the island is on, and great progress was made today.

The commander of the American invasion forces, Major General Hodge, describes the advance in these words:

"A drive through the heart of the enemy's main line of resistance and into key territory."

The smash forward was made under cover of a tremendous bombardment - by bombing planes, warships guns, and massed land artillery. The terrain in front of the advancing troops was simply smothered by bombs and shells. Yet the going was tough, the resistance bitter. The Japs were underground, as usual, and they swarmed out for a savage fight. The marines and army 50 soldiers battled forward with tanks and flame throwers.

The prospects are the same as usual in the Pacific war. The enemy will have to be destroyed practically to the last man in close combat.

And ~~One~~ high American officer stated today: ~~xxxxxx~~

"We all know that we must still use a blow torch and a

cock
cpiscrew to get the Japs out of their caves."

Sixty thousand Japs are making a desperate fight.

FOLLOW OKINAWA

The latest from Okinawa tells of a drive for nearly a mile through powerful lines of enemy fortifications that are said to be five miles deep. Sixty thousand Japs are making a desperate fight.

with a ~~gift of leadership~~ can jump forward and do a lot -
and the ~~Sergeant~~ from Louisiana did.

Nearby was an American tank. Whittington ran to it, and jumped aboard. Riding the tank, he shouted orders into the turret - orders for the tank driver to move up and square off against the ^{up} column of Nazi armor. The tank ^{moved up,} ~~did~~, the sergeant still riding it. And he held his position astride the tank, directing the duel of guns. American shells hit the leading German ^{panzer} ~~tank~~, and knocked it out of commission. The disabled tank blocked the rest of the panzer column. Whereupon the Sergeant shouted orders to his men at the roadblock, and they swarmed up with hand-grenades and bazookas - against the stalled column of German armor. They blasted and knocked out one panzer after another. German infantry was coming up, and the Sergeant led a bayonet attack that drove them off.

The roadblock was saved - all because of his gift of leadership.

NAZI ATROCITIES

Some more poetic justice was put into effect today

~~by~~ ^{at} a Nazi horror camp. Near Hannover, ~~the~~ Allied troops, upon occupying a concentration camp, found the usual atrocity - heaped up bodies of people murdered by the Nazis. The other day German civilians were compelled to make a tour of a similar place at Weimar, and survey with their own eyes the hideous evidences of Nazi savagry. At Hannover, Nazi Storm Troopers of the Hitler Relief were taken into the place of horror - and ^{today} they were compelled to bury the bodies. They were not so arrogant, those Hitler Storm Troopers, as they did the gruesome work under the muzzles of British tommy guns.

Another heavy loss for the vanishing fleet of Germany - the pocket battleship LUETZOW. On April Sixteenth, the R.A.F. bombed the port of Sweinemund. Tons of high explosives were hurled on the docks and on ships in the harbor. One of these was the pocket battleship, and today London announces the news - the LUETZOW was sunk.

GERMAN RUMORS

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The news today brings along a dispatch that casts enlightenment on one phenomenon of this war - the vast and varied assortment of rumors about Hitler and other Nazi leaders. A United Press correspondent cables that in occupied Germany you can pick your own rumor - and you'll always find some German civilian who will say - Ja, that's right, ~~it's thus and so.~~

This particular newspaperman cites things that he has been told by Germans - about Goering, for example. "Has Goering been killed?" he asked. Some Germans declared that Goering had been murdered on order from Gestapo Chief Himmler. Others asserted he was killed in an air-raid. Another version was that Hitler's long time Number Two man died of drug taking - he is known to have been a drug addict in times past. Still another story was that Goering was assassinated by the German anti-Nazi underground.

What about Hitler? The war correspondent declares that the shortage of newsprint does not permit a list of all the rumors circulating among German civilians about ^{The} ~~Der~~ Fuehrer.

As Secretary for Peace and Exile, President Truman named J. Leonard Spivack, who had been managing director of three radio stations. Spivack left after having worked on the White House staff for only about a week. President Truman today explained that the radio station owner had sent him a telegram asking that Spivack be allowed to return to his former job. He was urgently needed because of his technical knowledge. The President agreed to this, and therefore selected another secretary to handle press and radio. Charles C. Ross, Washington correspondent of the St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

Today's announcement by President Truman...
...all premises, as both President himself...
...explained...
...with an old friend of Calvin Coolidge.

already

There has been a change in the new secretariat at the White House. ~~Presidential Secretaries were appointed right after President Truman took office, and now there is a change -- so soon.~~

As Secretary for Press and Radio, President Truman named J. Leonard Reinsch, who had been managing director of three radio stations. Now he's out -- after having been on the White House job for only about a week.

President Truman today explained that the radio station owner had sent him a telegram, asking that Reinsch be allowed to return to his former job. He was urgently needed -- because of his technical knowledge.

~~The~~ The President agreed to that, and thereupon selected another secretary to handle press and radio -- Charles G. Ross, Washington correspondent of the St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

(Today's announcement by President Truman was a bit premature, as the new President himself explained.

He's an old friend of Charlie Ross.

They went to high school together. Last night President Truman talked things over with him, and today the President said that he and Charlie had grown a bit sentimental -- talking about old times in Missouri. They called up their one-time high school teacher, Miss Matilda Brown of Independence, and they also had a telephone chat with members of the family of Charlie Ross. In other words, they spread the word around ~~xxxx~~ considerably out in Missouri. They had intended to keep the appointment a secret for the present, but with so many of the home folks knowing it, they were afraid that it might leak out. Hence the announcement today.)

About a hundred and fifty years ago, the composer Carl Maria von Weber wrote a famous piece of music called, "Invitation to the Dance." That composition has been played innumerable times ever since, but nobody ever accepted the invitation to the dance until last night - when Maestro ^{Toscanini} ~~Foxmannini~~ was conducting it at Hollywood. At a concert of the Los Angeles Symphony Orchestra, the Invitation to the Dance was being played in inspiring Toscanini style when, lo and behold, the invitation was accepted! Up onto the orchestra platform bounded a slender young woman in slacks, and she went waltzing across the stage with high kicks and pirouettes. The maestro was astonished, the orchestra musicians were astonished - but kept right on playing. Everybody was astonished. The audience applauded. The orchestra manager bounded on the stage and tried to intercept the young lady, but she danced right around him. Three policemen

appeared, climbed on the stage, and joined in the dance. They finally cornered the young woman and carried her off

Today she protested indignantly - her view seems to be that if there is an invitation to a dance, it ought to be accepted. Anyway, she declared that the three cops, in removing her from the stage, committed an act of disrespect - disrespect to her and also to Toscanini.

~~Remember what the people have always said to that!~~