

April 23, 1945
Germany

Darling,

We have not been busy here. A few casualties derived from that German task force that had us cut off for a short while until they were dispersed.

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Life, meanwhile, has continued to be morbidly intense and totally discouraging.

The burying of the massacre victims continues. It is possible to identify about 10-20% of them. One party member is each responsible for the digging of one grave, the attempt to identify the grisly corpse, the wrapping in a shroud, and the erection of a cross. It will be a military cemetery. Each Nazi is to be made responsible for the upkeep of the grave for the duration of his life. (I suspect that there will, of necessity, be occupation troops for at least that long.)

They have made every effort to have as many soldiers as possible see the sight. Pictures can be taken freely. There will be thousands of unbelievable pictures returning to America soon. The Signal Corps should have taken an official movie of this whole affair (perhaps they did) and it should be shown at the San Francisco conference.

Here, as at Weimar, they have shown the barn to as many Germans as possible. They gathered the burgomeisters of the surrounding towns and put them in the barn, with its gruesome sights and nauseating odor. There they staid for half an hour. Then they were asked, "Now, Mr. Burgomeister, what do you think of Nazi culture?" None of them had anything to say.

The investigation is being completed as rapidly as possible, and they plan an early trial and swift justice. It is very difficult to hang on to witnesses. Three have committed suicide; five made an attempt to break out, and were shot. The Kriesleiter who gave the basic order escaped before the atrocity was known. He donned a Wehrmacht uniform and was one of the first to surrender. So he was passed back to the cages along with thousands of other prisoners, and hence is now lost in the multitude. Since he probably has false identification papers, finding him will probably not be too easy.

The officer in charge of the CIC here and on whose shoulders fell the task of governing this town and making the initial arrests is

a very charming and intelligent New York boy. His work - counter intelligence - brings him closer to the heart and soul of the German people than perhaps any other job. He is set up in the house of the leading doctor of the town. (The doctor is a member of the SS and played a leading part in the massacre. On Saturday he is said to have gone through the barn asking if anyone needed medical care. A few still clinging to a tortured life, moaned or called for help. The treatment he gave was a bullet through the head.)

The other night we asked this CIC boy how many Germans he thought were pro-Nazi. He thinks about 95% of them are. They are a fanatical, united people with a mania for power. Today, the Russians are fighting in Berlin; tomorrow, the Russian and American armies may meet near Dresden; in the weeks to come the remainder of the armies and the rest of the German landscape will be conquered or destroyed. But the fight will not be over! The German people as a whole, and underground resistance movements in particular, will continue to plan, to organize, to build, to raid and kill, to coerce, to spread their propaganda and mould their children toward the goal that Germany may arise again to enslave the world.

One speaks lightly and unthinkingly in America of "slave labor." Thousands and thousands of them. I have seen them and talked to them and have seen how they lived. It is a very well chosen name - slave labor. They are concentrated in wooden barracks near the town, where they live in tenement conditions. They usually work from six in the morning to six at night - 12 hours. Their bosses work in eight hour shifts. They are marched to work and marched back, and the barbed wire enclosures are guarded with machine-guns. They are fed a watery potato soup and a fifth of a loaf of bread twice a day. If one becomes an agitator or too weak or sick to work, he disappears. The children are sent to the Nazi schools, where they are kept isolated in special groups for specific indoctrination. Many of the factories are entirely underground. The noise is often almost unbearable. There is never any daylight. When they are through with their shift, they march wearily home and fall asleep on their straw mattresses. Some of them have been doing this for five years.

Do you think the poorest laborer in America would like to trade positions?

Seeing these things puts a terrific punch into reading Hayek's "Road to Serfdom." That book, as we read it in the condensed form in the Reader's Digest, is an extraordinarily provocative and sobering document. I think I have seldom encountered a political analysis so direct and well-

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reasoned. Its logic is so cogent that his conclusions seem inescapable. It is a most alarming and discouraging portrayal of the truth. Be sure and have a copy in our library.

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