

Recaptured Treasure

Visit the Reich Bank, conducted by Col. Bernstein, Finance Minister for the American Army. Here we see untold quantities of German gold bullion, currency of all nations, art treasures, etc., all captured from the German salt mines. We are told there is two and three-quarter billions of Reich marks in currency; two million dollars in U. S. currency (greenbacks); and three hundred million dollars in gold bars from Germany and Hungary—each gold bar estimated to be worth about thirty-eight thousand dollars (I found one of them rather heavy to lift).

We saw the Hungarian crown jewels—thousands of sacks of currency from all countries of Europe, even some of our own gold pieces—some 87 suitcases (common, ordinary, cheap suitcases) of which 2 or 3 were filled with gold teeth taken from the dead of the prison camp . . . wedding rings . . . thimbles . . . babies' picture frame . . . watch cases and various things of gold . . . 900 bags of Russian rubles in currency . . . 87 monstrosities . . . huge rooms full of securities of German corporations . . . spacious rooms filled with priceless paintings of old masters. One authority said that the Hungarian Royal Crown, which I lifted, was valued by an antique dealer at over a million dollars. There were sacks and bags of bracelets and every other conceivable kind of gold trinket. We saw rooms filled with silver bars, sacks of gold coins of every country, weighing about 100 pounds each, all of which was indeed an impressive sight.

The cases of gold teeth were in themselves an everlasting recollection of the fiendishness of the Nazis.

The Germans meticulously catalogued everything, which is of great assistance to our officials.

Bad Fogs to Berlin

We took off from Hanau airfield for Berlin at 4:25 p.m. This was the worst flight of our entire trip. The weather

was completely "socked in"—thunder and lightning all the way.

Going into Berlin we dropped down to what appeared to be a 500-foot ceiling, and the pilot headed for Templehof Airdrome. Just as he was about to circle the field for a landing, the field completely closed in. He turned around and headed for another airport—Gatau. When we arrived there, that also closed in. In a momentary lifting of the fog, the pilot slipped back to Templehof and made a landing with about a 50-foot ceiling. We put on the ground in a deluging rain.

I said a prayer of thanks for a safe landing. Incidentally, we were the last plane into Berlin for five days, as the airport was entirely closed in after our arrival. Our Army is very strict on allowing admittance into Berlin, and we were among the first civilians allowed in.

Pete Huss, Manager of the INS Berlin Bureau, met us at the airport along with an accommodating Army officer. We had dinner in the mess-room at the Templehof Airdrome after going through the Army Inspection Bureau. We had here our first sight of devastated Berlin. The famous Templehof was badly wrecked.

After dinner we motored to the Harnack House, located in the American zone. It is a professors' home—formerly occupied by the German scientists who developed the V bombs; here also they were working on the atomic bomb. We were met by our friend, Herman Phleger, from San Francisco, serving on the War Crimes Commission. Herman says, "There is a new kind of legal work. You call your secretary for dictation and say, 'Take a law!'"

A reception was being given at the Harnack House for Ingrid Bergman, Jack Benny, and other motion picture actors who were in Berlin doing a USO show.

We were told not to drink the water as it was contaminated; we were given insect-repellent powder and warned there was malaria from mosquitoes, caused by wrecked sewer mains, uninterred bodies, etc.

Friday, August 10

At breakfast an officer told us, "We captured all the German records and the books of their corporations. Russia has the manufacturing plants."

Touring the city, a block away from the hotel we saw evidences of street fighting. There are beautifully-kept Russian graves at street intersections between the sidewalks and the curbstones, which the Germans are required to care for. The Russians buried their dead where they fell.

Motored towards the center of Berlin, past the headquarters of the former Ministry of Labor that had been headed by Dr. Ley. Incidentally, he was in charge of the "Strength Through Joy" movement. This organization regimented all of the young unmarried women of Germany for breeding purposes. Everywhere in Germany are unmarried girls who have as many as 4 and 5 children, this being an honorable contribution to the State for which Hitler decorated the girls with medals.

On all sides we saw overturned tanks and cars. In an area of about 10 miles wide in the center of the city every building is smashed and destroyed. Berlin ordinarily has a population of 4,000,000 people. Now it is estimated there are 3,500,000 population, living in cellars, hovels, and anywhere for shelter. Everyone shudders when he speaks of the winter with no coal. They say that if the medical authorities can control the epidemics which are bound to come with winter, it will be a superhuman achievement. It is estimated there are at least a hundred thousand bodies still buried in the debris—the stench testifies to these figures.

Continually you see food lines—hundreds of people standing in queues for food.

Passed the Sport Palace—completely wrecked. Here is where Goebbels made his speeches. Graves are everywhere alongside the sidewalks. The old Haus Vaterland, famous restaurant of pre-war days, has vanished, as has everything else in Potsdamer Platz. Saw Himmler's and Goering's headquarters—completely

smashed. Architects estimate it will take 12 years to tear down and remove the rubble and another 25 years to reconstruct. Familiar landmarks such as the Kaiserhof Hotel, Wertheim's Department Store, Anhauser Railroad Station—are all obliterated.

This vicinity is still mined and full of booby-traps. We are warned to be cautious.

What Happened to Hitler

At Hitler's Chancellery offices—completely smashed—a Russian guard (small Mongolian type; looked about 15 years of age) stopped us. When we gave him a few cigarettes he passed us in.

The roof was completely gone. The rain fell on the walls of pink Italian marble. Everything was in shambles. Hitler's large desk was overturned and its marble top smashed. We observed warnings and looked overhead for falling masonry and girders.

Pete Huss, the INS correspondent most familiar with the building, took us to Hitler's private office, showed us where the Rome-Berlin-Tokyo Axis was signed in the ambassador's room. Here we saw the ruins of beautiful crystal chandeliers hanging from a wall. Went through Hitler's private offices and walked out into adjoining gardens. Huss warned us to follow closely behind him, as the gardens had been mined—two Germans were killed there last week by booby traps. We carefully followed Huss to two large pill-boxes. There we came to the entrance to Hitler's underground air-raid shelter.

Huss displayed a map drawn for him by Hitler's chauffeur, whom he had recognized and picked up on a street in southern Germany. The chauffeur vowed that Hitler unmistakably committed suicide just before the surrender of Berlin. The chauffeur drew for Huss a complete diagram of Hitler's air-raid shelter. The man confessed Hitler had said he would never allow his body to be displayed in Moscow Red Square as a museum piece.