Washington Digest

Germans Hope to Rebuild Country Out of Wreckage

Expect Quality of Products to Restore Reputation of Lost Beauty of Cities; Seek Raw Materials for Industry.

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NUERNBERG, GERMANY.—One German who otherwise gets along very well with the American occupation officials and is thoroughly in sympathy with what is going on in the Nuernberg court house will nevertheless be one of the happiest men in Germany when the trials are over. He is a little black-haired, bespectacled man named Hans Ziegler, Oberbuergermeister of the city. The best translation for his title is plain "mayor" but because all German cities have at least one deputy mayor, some of the American writers who have seen service in London translate "Oberbuergermeister" as "Lord Mayor."

Herr Ziegler says frankly that his work will be easier when the huge organization required to support the international military tribunal has folded its tents and departed. When he told me this I was rather surprised since at first blush it might seem that the city would benefit from all this American activity. However, when one considers that what the Americans here buy with the Germans own money (we print it and they have to redeem it) the profits can hardly seem desirable. The central German government, when there is one, will eventually redeem the paper marks but all Germans will have to contribute in the form of taxes. In Nuernberg although as I said, the city budget had been cut 50 per cent, the taxes have already been increased 33⅓ per cent.

Military Tribunal Imposes Burden

The chief burden which the military tribunal imposes on the town and the one which presses down hard on the mayor, derives from the fact that it takes a lot of tons, volts and manpower to keep the wheels of justice moving.

Coal is Nuernberg's (as it is Germany's) chief problem. What the Russians didn't get out in their zone, the chief coal areas in Germany, the French have taken in theirs. Transportation has broken down. Without fuel to heat their homes or to cook with, Nuernbergers have bought up every sort of electrical heater and cooker and this plus the large amount of power used by the Americans has put a terrific drain not only on the power plants but the cables. It takes coal to make electricity here where there are no tumbling cataracts. As I write the snow is falling in great Christmas card flakes and even the ruined houses are assuming a touch of beauty. But that beauty is of little comfort to people living in cellars or rooms without roofs.

Half of Nuernberg's houses were destroyed, the mayor told me, a third partly demolished. The rest can be made livable. But alas, the military tribunal took over one-third of the labor available for building and repair and a large stock of materials.

A two hour walk through the city revealed no shops open except a few food and meat stores. In spite of this almost total eclipse of visible industrial existence I was surprised that the mayor placed first on his list of objectives, a restoration of Nuernberg's long - established reputation for expert craftsmanship —for goods of high quality. Toys, of course, but also precision instruments, light machinery and pottery.

"We cannot restore Nuernberg's beauty, its historical buildings which brought so many tourists here," said Mayor Ziegler, "but we can win back our reputation as hard workers and fine workers. The city has a long established record for industriousness and expert handicraft as producers of high quality goods. That reputation goes back to the middle ages. Of course we will have to be very patient. We must first rehabilitate our city, then we must wait for good raw materials which we must have to produce high quality products. And of course all this must wait until Germany is once more permitted to trade in world markets."

But, I interjected at this point, what about the food situation? That wasn't in the mayor's province. He took the view which later proved sound enough, that America would not let the Germans starve. If that was our intention, after all, it solved all problems and there was no need to discuss the other questions.

The mayor by no means took for granted that America was an endless source of supplies, that we would forever provide the food which Germany herself never had and never could produce. All he expected was to be tided over until Germany could pay her own way and buy the food for her people and feed for her cattle. That brought this keen-eyed little man right back to his original theme.

"Our small industries must get back on their feet so that we can sell our goods in the world market and obtain exchange for food imports. Remember," he said, "the Russians have taken over Germany's bread basket. A great segment of the country has been cut away. And a million and a quarter German food producers, who are also food-consumers, have moved back within the non-food producing area of Germany. The Ruhr and Saar areas never could possibly feed themselves. Now more people are crowded into them, as well as into this area where most of the land is already under cultivation.

"These newcomers cannot raise food but they can work in our factories and produce products who can buy the food from the rest of the world. To do that we must be allowed to get the raw materials and be permitted to trade in the world markets. Otherwise, there will be starvation, riots and chaos which will spread all over Europe."

European Economy Out of Kilter

Later on I learned more about that "spreading." In Berlin I sat in the office of American food and agriculture administration. Through that office that morning had passed a Czech, a Belgian and a Hollander.

The Czech came in to beg permits to bring sugar into Germany which has none. The Czechs' best beet fields have not been destroyed. They can't ship the beet sugar abroad but they could easily push it across the Czech-German border where the Germans are starving for it. And the Germans have great piles of unused salt.

The Hollander said: "The Germans love my fish. They are starving. You are importing food for them. My fish is rotting and there are still enough parts for agricultural machinery in Germany and plenty can be turned out in small factories which we must have if we are to continue our farming."

The Belgian had the same story. From time immemorial Belgian cheap beef has gone to Luebec and other west German cities to go into German sausage. The Belgians have plenty of scrawny cattle which concocted into German sausage would be received only too gladly by the Germans.

"What shall I do with this cattle? They are no good for anything else. And we could get plenty of manufactured products in Germany to pay for them if you would let only a few shops start manufacturing the things we need."

In the Russian zone a number of factories are working, supplying the Russians of course, but likewise yielding return enough to keep the Germans alive to make more things the Russians need.

I witnessed striking evidence of this will-to-survive on the part of Nuernberg business men. For the most part it represented the retailer but it is typical of the town. I walked through the nightmare of the Altstadt (the old town) which is within the ancient city wall and was the famous sight-seeing center as well as the location of the main police station and city hall where the SS troops held out to the last man. The destruction is too horrible to dwell upon. It is an exaggerated Coventry. But all along the main streets, now cleared of rubble, were brand new, well painted signs bearing the name of the shop owners who had once done business there with visitors from all the world, and plain to see was the notice of a new address. It gave one a strange feeling to see bright bits of neat board stuck in a dump heap —a neat dump heap. It made you think of the restless hand in the old tale, projecting from the grave.

BARBS . . . *by Baukhage*

My most embarrassing moment in Nuernberg: When the guard in the court house came up to the broadcasting booth and said: "Pipe down, the judge can't hear the lawyers." Well, I got my commission in the artillery because I could outshout the horses.

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Here is Churchill's latest epigram: "Atlee soit qui Laski pense."

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And Mr. and Mrs. Churchill have chosen Florida for their "vacation" —they'll call on Mr. Truman of Washington en route but what a chance for the Florida chamber of commerce.

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I'll never sneer at long underwear again. It is worth five dollars a fraction in Europe with an extra wrist watch for the lower half.

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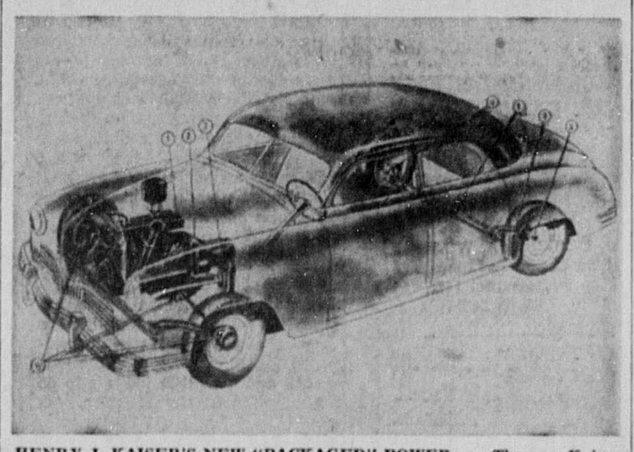
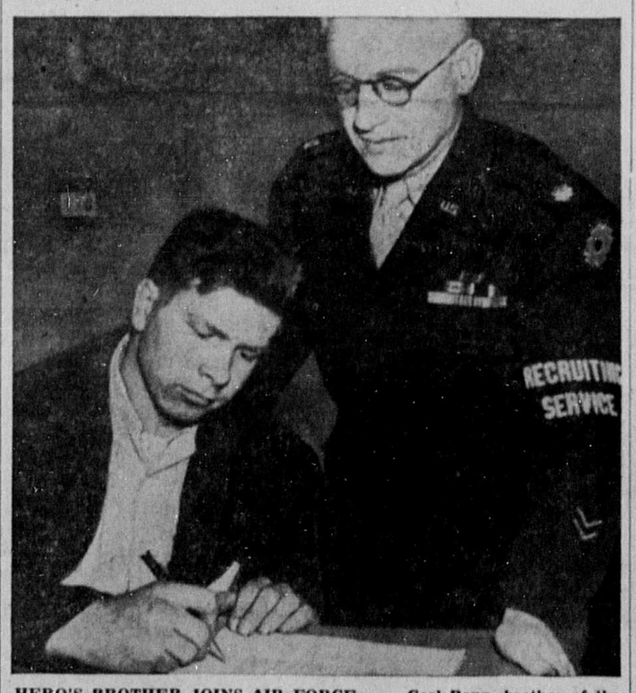
LAD HELPS TO MOW DOWN POLIO . . . Here is little Donald Anderson, five, Prineville, Ore., the spirited youngster who is inspiring victory over infantile paralysis as he keynotes the 1946 "March of Dimes" campaign. Donald stands in front of the poster, showing him during and after his battle with the dread disease. He holds a toy gun as if he would like to meet the polio enemy in mortal combat and beat it for all other kids.



HENRY J. KAISER'S NEW "PACKAGED" POWER . . . The new Kaiser car, first of American low-priced autos to have front wheel drive. It is also first mass production passenger car in America to have independent "torsionetic suspension" on all four wheels. The body and chassis form a single unit of the type known as "monocoque" construction. The new Kaiser was designed by Howard A. Darrin, with pressure-chamber ventilating system.

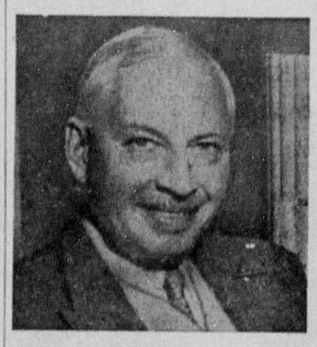


HERO'S BROTHER JOINS AIR FORCE . . . Carl Bong, brother of the late Richard Bong, Poplar, Wis., is pictured checking in at army recruiting office, Milwaukee, where he enlisted in air corps. Maj. S. T. Holzman, in charge of the office, is shown at right. Young Bong, 19, was sent to Fort Sheridan, to await assignment to some regular air force training camp. Like his late brother, he plans to become a star of the skies.

"LES MISERABLES" RE-ENACTED IN BUFFALO . . . This invitation on the bulletin board of Central Church of Christ in Buffalo, put there by the Rev. Harry T. Birdwell, in hopes that the thief who robbed the church of a candle from the Christmas altar.

FROM CAPT. TO SGT. . . . John Richard Schader, Yonkers, N. Y., who came up the hard way from enlisted man in army air force to captain, re-enlisted as a master sergeant. He is shown sewing on his sergeant stripes.

CURLEY RETURNS . . . For the fourth time in over 50 years of active political life, James Michael Curley is sworn in as mayor of Boston. At 71 he becomes the 40th mayor of Massachusetts city.



CHURCHILL'S HOST . . . Frank W. Clark, Miami Beach, Fla., host to Winston Churchill, Britain's wartime prime minister, for the winter. Churchill will continue his paintings, some of which were recently published in U. S.

WOMAN SCIENTIST . . . Dr. Florence B. Seibert, University of Pennsylvania biochemist, world - renowned for her work in isolating substance used to diagnose tuberculosis, was awarded the Gimble prize for her work.

CONN TRAINS . . . Billy Conn, heavyweight contender from Pittsburgh, pedals the exercise bike as he trains for his bout with Joe Louis. His work-out is taking place at Hot Springs, Ark., where he will train until his championship bout.

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