Washington Digest

Distance Dims Reality Of Europe's Need of Aid

Well-Being of U. S. in Contrast to Bleak Ruins Of Old World; Trials of Nazis Point Up Evils of Militarism.

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Back in this beautiful country where houses have roofs, furnaces have coal and larders have food in them, and cigarettes are thrown away half-smoked, I find it hard to realize that what I saw in wracked and aching Europe is other than an ugly nightmare.

For that reason I am less stunned by the American attitude which borders on indifference as to what happens across the Atlantic. Less stunned, yes. Not less alarmed. When you walk among the ruins it never occurs to you that Americans who are the most generous, the most sentimental and kindly people in the world, who will empty their pockets for famine-stricken, flood-drenched, fire-swept folk from Murmansk to Cape Horn, are not willing and anxious to help rebuild what others have torn down. Last winter people died of exposure inside their own homes in the city of Paris. This winter will be worse for vast sections of many European countries. Trees have been cut down and burned for fuel, clothing has been worn out, bedding has been refashioned into crude garments, the flapping sheets of canvas which patched bombholes in the roof have been shredded by the wind and sleet.

But all that is far away. Far away from me and I find that when I lean back and look up from my keyboard at the tip of the Washington monument, hazy as it is in the distance, it appears a real, living and adjacent thing, compared to the scenes of which I was a part such a short time ago. The things I saw with my eyes, the voices I heard, the emotions I felt seem so unreal now that they form only a strange shadow-show in the recesses of my mind.

How, then, can you and I, going about our business, reading a few lines in newspapers and periodicals, listening to a husky voice on the radio, seeing the quick flash of events in the newsreels of these distant folk, realize that we are still, as we were in the days of Cain and Abel, our brothers' keeper?

Seek to Curb Aggressive War

Since I returned, the question asked most often of me concerning the Nuernberg trials is the very same one the Germans asked me before the trials began: "Why don't they shoot those rats and get it over with?" (To the Germans the prisoners are the men who led them to bondage and defeat.)

And so I have to repeat, wearily, with the realization that most people have missed the whole point of the trials, that the miserable prisoners in the dock, despite the fact that their names were once blazoned across the world as the arch-infamous of history, are unimportant. That it is far more important to convict in open court, through due process of law with all the voluminous evidence, the ideas for which a Goering, or a Keitel or a Von Papen, or a Schacht, stood, than to convict the men themselves.

That is the purpose of the trials which are dragging their slow, democratic length across the pages of current history: to convict the prisoners as conspirators in the planning and the carrying out of aggressive warfare; to establish in the law we recognize that such warfare is illegal.

Many lawyers quibble over the technicalities of the process but I think when this case is studied in the perspective of history, it will be clear that the creation of the precedent which it seeks to establish is worth all the time and money and effort which has been expended upon it. The law makes precedents as well as follows them. This precedent, if established, will serve as the foundation stone in a structure of collective security, a structure we cannot build as long as we are blind to the evil of a nation's deeds, which we accept as a crime when they are done by the individual.

I reported in my first article from Nuernberg that there was doubt that certain of the prisoners could be convicted, that the military leaders might escape on the slender excuse that they merely obeyed orders, the minor sub-humans like Streicher because they were too small to be caught in the meshes of an all-enveloping law. Since then the prosecution has shown how all these men were deeply involved in the vicious plot and counterplot of Nazidom whose prime purpose was aggressive, predatory war itself.

Why didn't we shoot the conspirators in the first place and be done with it? Because we wished to show to the world that democratic nations can put behind them the law of the jungle, an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. Because we wish to demonstrate that we, the conquerors, do not intend to invoke the law of the conqueror — "victor, volentes per populos, dat dura"—that we believe in the dignity of man and are willing to give that spark of manhood a chance to be judged by his peers, that we do not believe that two wrongs make a right or that that right is implemented by might alone.

Must Reform German Mind

The battle of the democracies is not a fight of body against body, it is a fight of mind against mind. The democratic concept which is based on the teachings of the Christian religion must triumph unless the world be divided forever into a race of fighters and a race of slaves. The long task ahead of us in Germany is the re-forming of the German mind. That will take the patience of the teacher, not the skill of the fighter. If we are unwilling to spend the money and the time and make the sacrifices necessary to re-mould the German mentality, that mentality will be used by others who know only too well how to channel it back into the ways of the warrior.

It is no trick to kill Naziism, that itself is unpalatable to those who have borne its yoke. The Germans are sick of it for it brought them only defeat. But Naziism was only a local affliction of the German people. Their chronic ailment is militarism. It will take a long and patient schooling to remove that poison from their blood and to transmute its power, its sacrifice, its stubborn energy into the constructive forces without which Europe cannot survive nor live at peace with its neighbors.

As I look back on the efforts which were made by the United States military government to exploit the trials as a means of developing an understanding of democracy in Germany, I feel that they have missed a remarkable opportunity. As far as I know at this writing, the speech of Justice Jackson, which explained the purpose of the trials and convicted Nazidom out of its own mouth, is yet to reach the Germans in full text. It is exceedingly difficult for the Information Control division (former OWI) to take any positive steps over and beyond the established institutions which they created before the lid was clamped down (the few established American published magazines, the one newspaper, the news service and the radio). However, the speech will eventually be translated and appear as a brochure which will be sold at a low price and will be greedily absorbed like every other piece of reading matter in the book-hungry Reich.

Nor was the trial properly covered by the German newspaper men. After a long argument an arrangement was finally permitted whereby a certain number of seats —eight at first—were assigned to German newspaper men. They were never all filled while I was there. The explanation was that transportation was difficult for Germans. Newsmen were furnished with permits to travel but they weren't furnished with jeeps, or space in a bouncing truck, or seats on the overcrowded trains. They were left to fight it out for themselves. And believe me, there is no room for a "kraut" on a vehicle if anyone else wants the space and if he does get a seat, what will he eat? There is no food available for the itinerant ex-enemy. The authorities should have seen to it that every German newsman for whom space at the trials was available was occupying that space. And he wouldn't have needed a second invitation.

BARBS . . . *by Baukhage*

Careful checking by American authorities have revealed that most anti-Nazis come from homes where the father is either dead, an invalid or dominated by his wife.

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Fatal home accidents have been decreasing for more than a decade, which when we think of crossing the street, makes us believe there IS no place like home.

The Twentieth Century fund says that in 1942 half our farmers received only 12 per cent of all farm money income.

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The Dean of Canterbury, England, after visiting America, said we were 100 years behind Europe—and from what I have seen of Europe recently I hope we'll stay that far behind.

LADY ASTOR COMES HOME . . . Pictured against a backdrop of a British flag at the pier, following their arrival in New York City, are Lord and Lady Astor. The viscountess, American-born former member of parliament, is en route to Virginia to visit relatives. When asked her plans, Lady Astor stated that she "might run for congress." Matter of lack of American citizenship stands in her way at present, however.

NATIONAL WESTERN GRAND CHAMPION HEREFORD . . . To be crowned kingpin of the hereford family is no small honor. This stately and obviously self-satisfied hereford bull was crowned grand champion of his breed in the National Western Stock show in Denver. He's called Larry Domino 37th and is shown in the top picture with his proud owner, Alan Feeney, left, of the Milky Way Hereford ranch, Phoenix, Ariz., and herdsman Pete Graves.

FLORIDA BIRDS WELCOME "MRS. WINNIE" . . . Vacationing in Miami with her distinguished husband, Mrs. Winston Churchill, wife of Britain's wartime prime minister, enjoys a session with the glamorous denizens of Sherr's parrot jungle. She is surrounded by macaws and cockatoos, which are not in the least timid or awed by the gracious lady. Her husband is spending most of his time with his hobby, oil painting.

FUTURE FARMERS AT WHITE HOUSE . . . President Truman shown as he received members of the board of trustees of the "Future Farmers of America." Left to right: Virgil Getto, Fallon, Neb.; Eugene Starkey, Orlan, Calif.; President Truman; J. Glyndon, Polo, Ill.; Joseph E. Espey, Maryville, Mo., and Marion Baumgardner, Wellington, Texas. The organization has an active membership of 200,000, all training to become farmers.

LEADS FRANCE . . . Felix Gouin, 61, Socialist leader of the constituent assembly, who has been elected as interim president of France. He replaces Gen. Charles de Gaulle, having received 497 votes out of a possible 555.

PAULEY TO NAVY . . . Edwin W. Pauley, California oil man, has been named by President Truman to be undersecretary of the navy. Washington reports that he will be named head of the merged army-navy when and if authorized.

NAVY'S COACH . . . Capt. Thomas J. Hamilton, who has just been appointed head football coach of the U. S. naval academy. This will be his second coaching tour at Annapolis, having coached in 1934, 1935 and 1936.

RESERVE BOARD . . . Comdr. James K. Vardaman Jr., naval aide to President Truman, nominated for a 14-year term on the Federal Reserve board of governors. Vardaman, a former St. Louis banker, is the son of the late U. S. senator of Mississippi.

PRESENT AND FUTURE . . . "Another glass of milk and I'll be there, pop," says three-year-old junior as he compares muscles with his dad, light-heavyweight champion Gus Lesnevich. Gus was just discharged from service. He has announced that he will soon book fights.

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