

July 29, 1945

GERMANY

With Secretary of the Navy, Forrestal and others of his party, we left Paris at about three o'clock in the Secretary's C54 plane for Berlin.

In flying over Germany, the small towns and fields looked peaceful, but in the larger cities like Frankfort the buildings are merely of the sods. All the centers of the big cities are of the same ash gray color from the air - the color of churned up and powdered stone and brick. Railroad centers are especially badly hit, but the harvest seems to be reasonably good and the fields appear as though they were being worked fully.

At the field at Berlin where we arrived, Prime Minister Attlee came in just ahead of us. There was a large crowd, and he inspected the same Guard of Honor which Prime Minister had inspected only a few days before. We drove immediately to Potsdam through miles of Russian soldiers. They were stationed on both sides of the road at about 40 yard intervals -- green-hatted and green-epauleted -- Stalin's personal and picked guard. They looked rugged and tough, unsmiling but with perfect discipline. As the cars drove by, they presented arms.

We stopped in front of the President's house which was in a peaceful Potsdam square untouched by war. It was small but surrounded by our own M.P.'s, evidently influenced by the Russians because they saluted and stood at attention like Marines.

Here, as in all the rest of Germany, the Army discipline was perfect - a far cry from the laxity of Paris. Outside of the President's house were the plain-clothes men of the American Secret Service. They looked big and tough and equally as unsmiling as the Russians.

The Secretary talked to the President for a few minutes, and then we drove to a house on the Kleine Wann See -- a beautifully furnished house on a wonderful location along a beautiful lake. It was untouched by bombs, but during the evening as we drove along the lake in a speed boat, many of the houses in this residential section were badly hit.

Notes:

The Russian Army in Berlin now is the second Russian Army to be in occupation. The first army, which was the fighting army, had been withdrawn by the time we arrived. The Russians gave the first army a 72-hour pass after they had taken the city, and raping and looting was general. What they didn't take, they destroyed. When that army had been withdrawn, the second Russian Army was given the same leave and the same privileges, but since that time the discipline has been better. The Russians have been taking all the able-bodied men and women and shipping them away. Prisoners that we released are taken up and sent back to Russia.

All the children under fifteen or women over fifty and old men are dumped into the American zone and thus become an American responsibility.

(Feeding)

There are approximately 900,000 originally in the American zone. The French have been added to the occupation forces at the expense of the British who now have 200,000 fewer to feed. But it means that the Americans now have 200,000 extra mouths to feed as the Americans are supplying food for the French district.

(Note)

There seems to be a general feeling here that the Germans hoped that the German Army would stop fighting in the West and permit the Allies to come in before the Russians. As far as the Russian treatment of the Germans, most admit that it was as bad as the propaganda had told them it would be. Raping was general. The Russians stole watches in payment and cameras were second choice. The Russians have recently been paid and they are very free with their money. The standard price for watches brought some Americans over \$400. The official rate of exchange is 10 marks to the dollar.



One opinion here is that the Russians are never going to pull out of their zone of occupation but plan to make their part of Germany a Soviet Socialist Republic. The question, therefore, is whether the other three occupying forces can afford to leave their zones. So far, the British seem to be encouraging a German economic revival. (The new British government may change this.)

The French who are in the Rhine area will probably want to continue to take large portions of German production. The United States will probably want to pull out -- the present plan is to keep an occupying army of 400,000. If a split among the Big Four develops as far as long-time administrative procedure, it will be serious. Germany will be unable to build and maintain communications, roads, canals, trade, coal, and food. If we don't withdraw and allow them to administer their own affairs, we will be confronted with an extremely difficult administrative problem. Yet, if we pull out, we may leave a political vacuum that the Russians will be only too glad to fill.