

INSIDE GERMANY TODAY

There are no parades, no bands, no singing in Germany now. When American internees heard the Allied bombers, saw cities in flames and felt the shock of four-ton bombs they knew why



French "volunteer workers" march to work in Nazi war plants. One in every five persons in Germany is a foreigner, a fact which causes many a Nazi to revolve like a pinwheel in his sleep

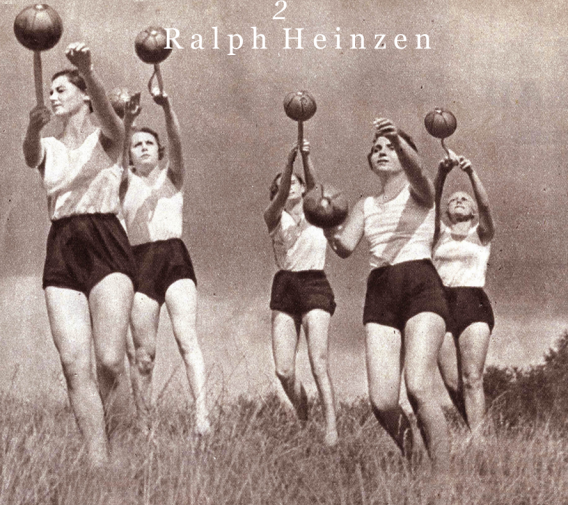
BY RALPH HEINZEN
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WHEN he was mustered out of the A.E.F. after the last war, Ralph Heinzen didn't come home. He stayed in Paris, covering the country for English-language newspapers, and in 1925 became France director for the United Press. As a war correspondent he retreated with the French army to Paris in 1940, then retreated with the government from Paris to Bordeaux to Vichy. When the Germans occupied all of France he was interned in Baden-Baden. On March 15th he came home on the Gripsholm.

THE most striking thing about Germany today is its quiet. There is no noise. The people are sullen. Long ago they learned not to express their opinions in public, so now they talk hardly at all. There is no traffic; in a town as big as Baden-Baden, where we were interned, there are less than ten automobiles and trucks operating—the necessary doctors, truckers, public utilities. There are no military bands, no parades, no noisy patriotic demonstrations.

With the exception of the Brown Shirt girls of the Hitler Youth Movement, I heard no singing. That organization contains the daughters of Party members, who demonstrate more patriotism and public enthusiasm for the war than any other group, military or civil.

The Brown Shirt girls go in strongly for gymnastics, parading, group singing and, generally, keep fit for their major eventual purpose of producing more and better babies for the Fatherland.



In skin-tight clothes, Hitler's Brown Shirt maidens go through punishing games every day to toughen themselves to produce more and better babies for the greater glory of the Fatherland.

In Baden-Baden, the Brown Shirt girls used for their outdoor gymnastics the only available soccer field, which was also used by the interned American diplomats and reporters. We frequently played softball and Hitler games simultaneously on the same field, because neither group was willing to concede a point to the other.

Volleyball Casualties Large

The girls, whose rubber-soled sports shoes were worn out, played barefooted on the pressed cinders. They played with a volleyball which had a leather loop serving as a throwing handle. Catching the ball is about as comfortable as playing big-league baseball without a glove. The strap stings like a buggy whip. The girls, however, were so hardened by fear of ridicule that they caught the ball even when the strap raised welts across their faces, arms and bosoms. After a half hour of the game there were more mobile casualties than in an American college football game. But they played it every day.

The girls wore Hitler Youth group uniforms, most of which were sizes too small. Other German children solve the clothing problem by going as naked as is decently possible. Boys of 17 or 18 wear shorts which barely hide their appendicitis scars. Almost all wear some sort of uniform.

Very few German women wore fur coats this past winter. It was considered the patriotic thing to give your fur coats to keep the soldiers warm on the Russian front. Some did give their coats, but even those who kept theirs were afraid to wear them.

The shopwindows look tempting enough, but all have little cards announcing that the articles displayed are for window dressing, not for sale. Practically everything anyone needs is rationed. Even unnecessary luxuries are rationed or their sale limited. If you buy a can of any kind of food, the merchant punches a hole in it with an ice pick to prevent you from hoarding it.

Newspapers are rationed and you can buy them only by subscription. They limit war coverage to the official communiqués and a daily explanatory article by an official analyst. There are no casualty lists, but bereaved families are allowed to publish paid death notices, and in that way it is possible to judge the tempo of military losses.

Except in Berlin, there is almost no amusement. Rural Germany is sullen, silent, sad. The only distraction, outside of the radio, is the cinema. Although the materials

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have all been pooled and are rationed out to officially approved studios, there are far too few films.

Everywhere in Germany the blackout is complete. As a result, only those who are hard up for entertainment, or soldiers back from the fighting lines, go out at night. All the bars must close early and since public transport stops at 10 o'clock Germany retires early—but not necessarily to sleep.

The deep incursions of R.A.F. and American bombers and the ease and regularity with which they penetrate the "curtain of steel," which Goering promised would preserve the country from air attack, were a shocking surprise to the Germans. They pass many sleepless nights, out of worry and fear.

While at the hotel, I was on the receiving end of 127 Allied air-raid alarms. We were on the main route to the upper Rhineland, the industrial basin of Mannheim, Frankfort, Strasbourg and Munich. I saw British and American bombers fall out of the skies, but I also saw the red glare of burning German towns; I heard and felt the explosion of bombs which tipped the scales at four tons. The shock was terrific, morally and materially.

Up to fifty per cent of that vital portion of Germany's war production machine which is located in the Rhineland, the Ruhr, the Saar and the Main valley has been destroyed. There are thirty great towns in that quadrangle which are more than half destroyed. They include factories as well as churches, decentralized warehouses filled with vital war stocks as well as hospitals, crucial communications, canals, railways, river ports as well as orphanages.

From a mountaintop in the Black Forest at 10:30 A.M. on September 6, 1943, I had a ringside seat for the first great all-American daylight raid on the Rhineland. During more than an hour I watched a perfect performance by more than 400 Flying Fortresses. The Gestapo guard who was in charge of our exercise party crouched for safety in a gully. Overhead for 50 minutes the Americans flew in paradelike formation. Not a shot was fired, not a plane crashed within my sight, not a single German fighter dared to take to the sky.

Witness to Allied Bombings

I saw one squadron bomb and hit, from about 12,000 feet, the vital Rhineland North-South railroad at Bühl. The bombs whistled their dangerous catcall over our heads as they fell in an arc from a mile behind us to a target visible another mile or so in front of us. We saw every bomb hit and explode on or near the railway tracks. One direct hit burned the freight house to the ground.

I saw another squadron veer sharply to the left and, unhindered, bomb the airport, railroad yards and river port at Strasbourg.

More than 2,000 tons of bombs had been dropped by those planes. Yet the German communiqué announced the Americans had been shot out of the skies and the formations broken up before they could plant a single bomb on a useful target.

After every such raid, the fields and forest around the target were combed for Allied propaganda newspapers. The Gestapo and local police, forest guards and troops found thousands of them and burned them. Outside of the Gestapo, I couldn't find a German who had read a tract.

Goebbels had a field day when the first American Negro airman was taken prisoner—or so he says. Immediately, German newspapers blazed with indignant headlines and sour cartoons picturing our airmen as naked cannibals of Africa brandishing fire bombs and high-explosive bombs as their African ancestors used their spears.

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The November bombing of Frankfort came just in time to squash a story which got widespread belief—that Frankfort was a “taboo city” for American and British bombers because it was the biggest Jewish residential community in all Germany, and American Jews had obtained an official promise to spare it. Then we raided it five times in a month.

Goering was one of the few high Germans who didn't resort to the easy custom of calling British and American bomber pilots “Terror-fliers,” “Air Gangsters,” and “Murderers.” He assigned his best fighter squadrons, the revamped Richthofen “Circus” and the “Schlageter Squadron,” to the hard task of stopping them. Each squadron now claims more than 2,000 victories over British and American planes.

The Richthofen Squadron is commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Mayer, who won his 100th air victory by shooting down a four-motored bomber on February 7th.

But these continuous raids have taken their toll of German manpower, which is critically short. Boys of 18 are now inducted directly into the army and I was told of several cases where they were under fire less than 18 weeks later. The military mobilization of manpower is so complete that the chances are 7 out of 10 that any young man not in uniform is either a member of the Gestapo or he stands high in the Party. Hitler maintains his police and home-front protection forces at full strength and exempts them from mobilization.

The mobilization of women and children to supply farm and forest labor is only one consequence of the terrific German losses—unofficially estimated by careful observers at not less than three and a half million dead and permanently maimed.

But the forced labor of millions of prisoners of war—perfectly legal under existing international conventions—is a poor palliative for Germany's manpower shortage and labor ills. The prisoners of war are notoriously underfed and are physically incapable of long or heavy effort.

The 1,200,000 French prisoners of war are given preferential treatment, momentarily, because Germany hopes to use them for political propaganda. More than half have been put on German farms, and have adapted themselves very well. I know of several who replaced mobilized German farmers in all their functions, even in their bedchambers. Those fortunate Frenchmen live really luxurious lives, because they direct the labor of the farmers' wives and children, live in their houses, do all the duties of a husband, eat and sleep well and are paid besides. It is not surprising that many of them decline their liberation. Some have even taken “wives,” have fathered families and cut themselves off from their French families forever.

Attitude Toward Americans

The first American prisoners of war, taken in Tunisia, only began to arrive in German camps in May, 1943. They are not as adaptable as Europeans and may even be said to inspire a little awe, if not envy. Like the British prisoners, they may expect to escape drudgery and may not be forced to work unless they consent.

American aviators are in a camp by themselves. The Luftwaffe makes a point of keeping its own prisoners and since there is a sort of gentlemen's agreement among airmen of all nations to treat defeated aviators well, the Americans are living a prison life of comparative luxury. Parachutists who were captured in Tunisia and Italy, however, go to the general prison camp.

Even in prison they have their triumphs.

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A group of Americans in a camp near the great Friedrichshafen Zeppelin factories was ordered to lay a concrete runway in a new airfield. They protested it was "war work" and refused to do it. The Germans continued to insist and delivered to the camp a new tractor for the job.

Within an hour the entire tractor had disappeared. Able mechanics among the Americans had taken the tractor apart. Small pieces disappeared in pockets—bolts wrapped in handkerchiefs made very dangerous weapons in the dark. Rubber tires were hacked into bits. Pieces too big to disappear into pockets were either buried or thrown into a river. When the German authorities came back they could find neither their tractor nor any trace of it. The runway job was called off.

The Polish and Russian prisoners, however, have a hard life. The Russians lived in ramshackle huts set in muddy fields which were surrounded by double rows of barbed wire; the whole was inside another camp where their German guards lived. Outside of the German camp was another double hedge of barbed wire, 15 feet high.

They and the Poles were used for all the menial jobs in the region. They repaired the roads, dug the drainage ditches, collected the garbage, hauled coal, emptied freight cars, chopped down the pine forests, buried the dead. Silent and sullen, those prisoners of war ran the silent, sullen German civilians a close second for cold indifference.

The incentive to escape alive in all prisoners is strongest among the newly captured. The most common method is to group a small number of prospective escapists and dig a tunnel. The dirt extracted from the hole has to be carried in pockets and hurled over the barbed-wire fences to the fields outside or scattered on the camp grounds.

One ingenious French prisoner of war, put to work on a farm, stole a cow and a halter and started west. Whenever he was halted he explained he was leading the cow to market in the next village. He kept moving toward France from village to village until he finally crossed the frontier, sold the cow to a "black market" butcher and rode home in style with plenty of money in his pockets.

Others conceive fantastic plans, most of which fail. One very able American sewed himself the complete uniform of a German officer out of a field-gray blanket from his bed.

The Ultimate in Disguise

Unfortunately he aimed too high, for instead of making a simple lieutenant's uniform, he made a general's. When he boldly walked out the prison gate, his handiwork was so excellent that the astonished sentry called out the guard for inspection.

The camp commander had not been informed of any visiting general and made an immediate inquiry. Walking up to the "general" he saluted and barked his name in guttural German. The American stammered, turned and ran back into camp.

Confinement seems to bring out latent talents as cook, actor or tinkerer in all prisoners. In any camp they may be seen cooking their own meals at any hour of the day. In almost every camp there are "universities" with daily classes and a really imposing curriculum. Amateur actors stage weekly shows, make all their own scenery, props, costumes and even write their own scripts. Softball or touch football leagues function. Tinkerers turn every bit of string, cardboard, wire or cloth which gets into their hands into something for the camp decoration. Musicians are banded into camp orchestras or choruses so professional that in one camp the orchestra has given a "Mozart season."

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The Y.M.C.A., through its agency in Switzerland, sends instruments to camp bands, books and magazines for libraries and "universities" and sporting equipment for the baseball and football teams.

The American Red Cross, through Geneva, sends each American prisoner a food package every week, and the civilian internees fortnightly parcels. These boxes contain coffee, sugar, hardtack, corned beef, pork loaf, chocolate, oleomargarine, powdered milk, salmon, soap and cigarettes.

In the early days the quality of the food packages was low, doubtless because the Red Cross lacked experience in planning and packaging food which might spend many weeks in transit. Coffee arrived with lids carelessly unscrewed so that all the powdered coffee had fallen out, or had hardened into the consistency of lava. Orange concentrate was often replaced by a poor orange-flavored powder which was useless to the vitamin-hungry prisoners. The cigarettes were sometimes not the standard brands, but of cheaper quality.

Soon, however, these kinks were eliminated and now the packages are literally the staff of life to the prisoners.

But these men will never see an egg, an orange, an apple, or poultry until the end of the war. Their standard food consists of ersatz coffee—acorns and barley roasted and blended—in the morning, with dry black bread. At noon they have a thick soup which is chiefly potatoes or cabbage with very little meat. At night they have bread and lard. They never see a roast or chop. They have no relishes, no puddings, no fish, no fruit.

Camp populations are constantly increasing. In each of the big day or night air raids over Germany, a number of big bombers are shot down. Since there are ten men in each big bomber and as many as 30 or 40 bombers are shot down in a single big raid, the number of prisoners rounded up the next day is considerable. After every big raid, special squads of German military police "cover" the countryside by motorcycle, scouring woods and fields, to find the wandering or hidden escapees. Most of the British airmen shot down are in full uniform.

The American fliers, contrarily, have adopted the unfortunate habit of wearing their old clothes when they leave on a raid. Many are shot down in their shirt sleeves. Some wear bedroom slippers. Most are hatless, and few take the precaution to bring a toothbrush. Yet these are the clothes they must often wear for months.

Effect of the Foreign Element

In addition to prisoners there are twenty million non-German "volunteers" working in Germany, chiefly in war factories, but also in hundreds of other types of civilian jobs. They are hated by the Germans because they escape all military obligations and because each has made it possible for the German he has replaced to be inducted into the army.

This is fast becoming a serious problem, because one of every five persons in Germany now is a foreigner, and, in the absence of the ten million Germans engaged in war outside the country, these twenty million form a very dangerous fifth column.

Many Germans, who are very keenly aware of the problem, are afraid of what may happen if those millions should succeed in staging a revolt when the Allied armies cross the German frontiers.

They got a foretaste of this when two Russian war prisoners broke out of their camp on Christmas Day, 1943, by assaulting their guard. They gouged out his eyes, slit his throat and took his bayonet.

Going to a neighboring farm they killed a fifty-three-year-old German peasant, his wife and son and sister-in-law. The two escaped prisoners were then killed by more guards as they were trying to bind up each other's wounds.

Even this labor force cannot supply all wants, for the Allied blockade is almost airtight on anything which has to be brought from outside of Europe.

Down to the Bare Essentials

Baby carriages have no rubber tires; a can is prized as a rare metal because tin has disappeared. Housewives cannot buy kitchen utensils, or tea, coffee, natural silks, quinine. There is not enough insulin in Germany to give diabetic Germans one per cent of what they need to stay alive.

Doctors ceased writing prescriptions because druggists have almost nothing in stock except domestic medicinal herbs. There is not enough radium to take care of all the cancer cases.

The shortage of fats is evident on all sides. Since there is nothing from which to make good soap, there is no soap. As a result, linen has disappeared from tables and beds, and the population is visibly dirty.

All children's diseases have increased sharply—diphtheria, scarlet fever, infantile paralysis and spinal meningitis—but the gravest consequence of the unbalanced rations is the swift rise in the infant mortality rate and in the spread of child tuberculosis and rickets. I saw reports that in Munich only 3 per cent of the school children are wholly free from some degree of rickets.

Tuberculosis is no longer a bar to mobilization on the war or the labor front. Unless the patient is in the advanced stage of the disease, he or she is subject to special classification in the armed forces or factories.

The death rate of civilians has risen, especially in the 1-to-15 and 20-to-45 age groups. The birth rate is higher than before the war, despite the absence of thirteen million men, as a consequence of the high-pressure campaign urging all German women patriots, married or unmarried, to have more babies.

But the increase in births is now considerably less than the tremendously increased death rate.

German boys and girls, the Hitler Jugend, from little more than diaper age to the labor camps, are the real problem children of Europe. They are the generals, politicians, electors and teachers of the next generation. They are the Army of the Revenge of 1965-1970, unless the problem they present is solved.

Since they toddled at their mother's apron strings, they have been regimented. They were educated not to reason for themselves but to obey blindly. Their nationalism has been superheated to the extent of fanaticism. Hitler is their god, and Mein Kampf their bible.

German boys at fifteen are warmly invited by newspaper advertisements, billboard posters and direct pressure to volunteer for the army before they are drafted.

Long before they reach the age of fifteen, however, they have been taught the rudiments of war and have been pointed toward some military specialty.

In many villages and small towns, where the men have been called to the colors, boys and girls man the fire engines. During my stay I saw a propaganda film of one such, in which all but one of the 40 volunteers were boys under sixteen.

German children get fifty per cent more to eat than their parents. In the schools and in the camps they receive extra vitamins and are subjected to frequent physical examinations.

Hitler interned us—145 Americans and

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others—in the best hotel of Germany's finest watering place, Baden-Baden, in the Black Forest, so near to France that on clear days you could look across the Rhine valley into Strasbourg 40 miles away.

Gentlemen of the Gestapo

Our contact with the Gestapo began there. Ten very suave, smooth, suspicious gentlemen in mufti took over and we soon learned that their much-touted ferocity was phony. A Gestapo agent playing banned American jazz on a piano for forbidden dancing by American internees on New Year's Eve is a picture of "Gestapo terror."

Another Gestapo agent charged with taking us on an exercise walk was actually goaded into escorting us 10 miles to the Rhine, right in the center of the Siegfried Line. I washed a handkerchief in the river and hung it to dry on one of the casemates of the Line just to beat the British out in the promise they made so widely in song in 1939. On either side of us stretched great curves of the Rhine and we counted 31 casemates and forts.

We were allowed, for exercise, to quit our hotel and walk in the Black Forest. Gradually, we stretched the walks into all-day picnics to Neuweier, whence comes the justly famous Mauerwein vintage of Riesling.



The arrogance of the Hitler Jugend, shown parading in their sports uniforms before the war, has now worn as thin as the uniforms themselves. The youth groups no longer parade in the sullen, silent Reich, and the chances are that many of the youngsters shown here are now dead in Russia or Africa

As time went on, the picnics developed into pub-crawls which resulted in some outsize hang-overs. Our Gestapo guards entered into the spirit of the crawls so enthusiastically that on one dramatic occasion the picnickers had to carry their Gestapo guard back to the hotel.

We were completely isolated during our stay, and were, of course, deprived of our radio sets. There was but one radio in the hotel which was kept dialed to the official German stations. Every day at 2 P.M. Americans and Germans gathered to hear the communiqués, but, regardless of which way the news leaned, both were painfully careful that the other should see no signs of elation.

Berlin ordered us to be "educated" in German political theories. A pile of English-language pamphlets appeared in our reading room. The Outcasts: Documents of British Social Policy, and Britain and the Boers were typical of what they wanted us to read. Since the supply was limited, it was easy to wear them out. After a week none were left.

Late Mail for the Internees

Mails were a source of continuous discontent. Incoming mail always arrived two to three months late.

The Berlin censors held up much of it because of the American "Victory" stamps on the envelopes. Finally, after much complaint, the stamps were steamed off and in

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each letter was placed a typed slip announcing that they had been removed because of their "political tendency" or "unfriendly sentiment."

Outgoing mail had to be submitted to triple censorship at the hands of the Foreign Office, the Gestapo and the military censors in Berlin.

The German-American relations in Baden-Baden began with a chill. Herr Brenner objected to the requisitioning of his hotel as an internment camp. He sniped at his unwanted American "guests" in a series of daily notes addressed to Dr. Schlemann, the German Foreign Office representative, or to the Gestapo:

"Herr Heinzen's dog has torn the curtain in his room. Heil Hitler. Brenner," read one.

"One of the dogs forgot himself on the carpet between the second and third floor. Heil Hitler. Brenner," read another.

Finally, Brenner said that the dogs and cats had to go. He was not running the world's finest hotel to provide a kennel for dogs.

The Americans pooled their indignation. If Herr Brenner was afraid for his carpets he could take them up. If the German government wanted to send the dogs back to France, the Americans would gladly accompany them.

That settled the argument; we kept our dogs, the carpets stayed down and Herr Brenner's face was red.

Collier's

THE NATIONAL WEEKLY
FOR JUNE 10, 1944

p. 11