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Top Nazis Awaiting Trial Suddenly Get Religious

By RICHARD R. KASISCHKE

NUREMBERG, Sept. 1 (AP)—About half of the Nazi leaders held here for war crimes trials are professing an interest in religion, the Army said today in disclosing new details of their prison life.

Hitler's henchmen have Bibles in their cells, many of them say long prayers, and they keep U. S. Army chaplains busy holding church services.

But almost to a man, according to Col. Burton Andrus, of Denver, head jailer, the prisoners still revere Hitler. To anybody who will listen, they describe him as a hero who "fell leading his people in the struggle."

"Had No Church."

"When we first asked the prisoners what their religious requirements were, half immediately turned down our offer flatly, saying they had no church," Andrus said.

"But recently, at least half took it up, and now United States Army chaplains visit them and hold mass and Protestant services in the cell blocks. All are permitted Bibles."

Andrus said the most avid Bible reader and church-goer was Dr. Hans Frank, now awaiting trial for numerous atrocities committed during his rule as overlord of Poland.

Wore Silk Panties

Until lately, Frank an ungainly and sweaty man wearing only a pair of silk panties, had been a problem case. He tried to commit suicide, but botched the job, underwent mental treatment, and took up religion.

Now he is "apparently very penitent" and wants to help other prisoners, the colonel said.

In addition to Bibles, the prisoners have access to a small library filled with religious tracts and novels, such as the late Harold Bell Wright's "The Winning of Barbara Worth."

Andrus said not all prisoners patronized the library. Some prefer to write their memoirs, using writing materials available at the jail.

Not all of them are repentant. For example, said Andrus, Julius Streicher, head Jew-baiter for Hitler, remains defiant.

"You probably will hang me for what I have done to the Jews, but some day America and England will realize I was right," Andrus quoted Streicher.

Horthy Remained "Sassy"

Adm. Nicholas Horthy, former Hungarian Regent, was described by Andrus as "the only sassy devil in the lot." Horthy is not now in Andrus' custody, but when he was held in Luxembourg where the Nazi leaders previously were confined, he objected when guards took anti-

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suicide precautions—such as removing prisoners' belts and shoe laces.

"Remember—I am Regent of Hungary!" Horthy told the guards.

A guard answered:

"You were Regent of Hungary."

Andrus said the once pompous Hermann Goering, who was "told off" early in his confinement, has become docile and agreeable.

"For a long time we have never had a peep out of 'fat stuff,' and he is a model of what has generally been a courteous lot of prisoners," the colonel declared.

Early in his captivity, Goering objected to the food, saying:

"I fed better stuff than this to my dog."

The waiter, a German prisoner of war, as quoted by Andrus, answered:

"Then you fed your dog better than you fed the German people."

The plain prison fare has slimmed Goering down. There are a few wrinkles in his great white belly, and less strain on his heart, which still gives him some trouble. He recently had a slight heart attack here.

But Goering has admitted to jailers, said Andrus, that he is in the best physical condition he has been in for 12 years.

Concession in Rations

The Nazi leaders get the same rations provided for prisoners of war doing heavy labor. Andrus explained this concession was made "because a number of them are aged, and we are guarding them against colds and other susceptibilities of their age."

"This is not coddling, but it is no Dachau (a notorious Nazi starvation camp)," Andrus asserted. "We aim to deliver them all to trial, and to their fate, in good shape, physically and mentally."

Rudolph Hess, Hitler lieutenant who made a mysterious flight to Britain early in the war, will get the same treatment as the others when he arrives from England.

Andrus said he was getting plenty of free advice by mail from persons in the United States. Some persons wrote urging him to treat the Nazis roughly. Others have sent religious tracts for distribution to particular prisoners.

Still others have mailed stacks of cards with requests for prisoners' autographs.

Andrus' ideas of the prisoners are not very complimentary.

"They are the poorest bunch of supermen I have ever seen," he remarked.

"Hell—I wouldn't even have one for a buck sergeant."

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