

# **Nazi Death Factory Shocks Germans on a Forced Tour**

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By Wireless to THE NEW YORK TIMES.

BUCHENWALD, Germany, April 16 (Delayed)—German civilians—1,200 of them—were brought from the neighboring city of Weimar today to see for themselves the horror, brutality and human indecency perpetrated against their “neighbors” at the infamous Buchenwald concentration camp. They saw sights that brought tears to their eyes, and scores of them, including German nurses, just fainted away.

They saw more than 20,000 non-descript prisoners, many of them barely living, who were all that remained of the normal complement of 80,000. The Germans were able to evacuate the others before we overran the place on April 10.

There were 32,705 that the “vis-

**Continued on Page 8, Column 1**

# GERMAN CIVILIANS VIEW NAZI HORRORS

Continued From Page 1

iting" Germans didn't see, although they saw some of their bodies. It was this number that had been murdered since the camp was established in July, 1937. There was a time when the population reached more than 110,000, but the average was always below that. It included doctors, professors, scientists, statesmen, army officers, diplomats and an assortment of peasants and merchants from all over Europe and Asia.

There was a group of British officers among those left behind and one of seven French generals, but this was obviously an oversight in the great confusion that followed the news of our approach.

Five generals died and one escaped. This Government-controlled camp was considered second only to that at Dachau, near Munich, as the world's worst atrocity center.

## Cruelty Raised to an Art

It had its gallows, torture rooms, dissection rooms, modern crematoria, laboratories where fiendish experiments were made on living human beings and its sections where people were systematically starved to death.

This correspondent made a tour of the camp today and saw everything herein described. The statistics and an account of the events that happened before our troops liberated the camp were obtained from a special committee of prisoners, some of whom had been in the camp since its inception and others who had been German prisoners for twelve years. Their information was documented and in most cases confirmed by the records.

This story has already been told in part, but not until today has the full import of the atrocities been completely felt.

One of the first things that the German civilian visitors saw as they passed through the gates and into the interior of the camp was a display of "parchment." This consisted of large pieces of human flesh on which were elaborate tattooed markings. These strips had been collected by a German doctor who was writing a treatise on tattoos, and also by the 28-year-old wife of the Standartenfuhrer or commanding officer. This woman, according to prisoners, was an energetic sportswoman who, back in Brandenburg, used to ride to hounds. She had a mania for unusual tattoos, and whenever a prisoner arrived who had a rare marking on his body, she would indicate that that trophy would make a valuable addition to her collection.

In addition to the "parchments" were two large table lamps, with parchment shades also made of human flesh.

The German people saw all this today, and they wept. Those who didn't weep were ashamed. They said they didn't know about it, and maybe they didn't, because the

camp was restricted to Army personnel, but there it was right at their back doors for eight years.

The visitors stood in lines, one group at a time passing by the table on which the exhibits were displayed. A German-speaking American sergeant explained from an adjacent jeep what they were witnessing, while all around them were thousands of liberated "slaves" just looking on. Even the

barracks roof was crowded with them. They watched silently. Some of them looked as if they were about to die, but this assemblage of "slaves" constituted the more healthy elements of the camp.

In barracks farther down the line were 3,000 sick who could not move and 4,800 aged who were unable to leave their squalid quarters. In addition, there were untold hundreds just roaming around, not

knowing where they were or what was going on.

There were human skeletons who had lost all likeness to anything human. Most of them had become idiots, but they still had the power of locomotion. Those in the sick bay were beyond all help. They were packed into three-tier bunks, which ran to the roof of the barn-like barracks. They were dying there and no one could do anything about it.

The German visitors were to see them, too—and much more—but at the moment they were merely seeing "Exhibit A" and fainting.

Some Germans were skeptical at first as if this show had been staged for their benefit, but they were soon convinced. Even as they had milled along from one place to another, their own countrymen, who had been prisoners there, told them the story. Men went white and women turned away. It was too much for them.

## German 'Science' Exhibited

These persons, who had been fed on Nazi propaganda since 1933, were beginning to see the light. They were seeing with their own eyes what no quantity of American propaganda could convince them of. Here was what their own Government had perpetrated.

But they hadn't seen anything yet. In a barracks building in front of them was a scientific laboratory where captured scientists worked with material supplied by their overlords. There were shelves of bottles filled with various organs of the human body. In one was half a human head. It had been cut longitudinally to show all its component parts. This head once belonged to a prisoner, as did all the other human parts so displayed. In another room were a dozen death masks, skulls and shrunken human heads. A Czechoslovak scientist and surgeon who worked in the laboratory told us the history of each part, each head, each mask—because he had known the human beings to which they belonged. Some had been his own countrymen.

The German visitors saw this, too.

And then they were taken to another laboratory, where victims had been injected with typhus so that Germany could have typhus serum. There were still a score of "patients" who were still alive although the Polish doctor left behind, who had been forced to give these injections even to his own people, said the death rate had been 98 per cent.

## Children Poisoned, Too

This sight was too much for many German housewives, especially a little farther on, where only the children were kept. One 9-year-old boy, who had had only the first few injections, seemed quite chipper. He was Andor Gutman, a Hungarian Jew of Budapest. He had been in the camp three years. When asked where his parents were, he replied, without any emotion: "My father was killed and my mother was burned to death."

As one watched the Germans filing out of this building there was hardly a dry eye, although some tried to maintain their composure. There was real horror ahead, but some of them just couldn't go on.

From there they were taken to

the living quarters. The stench, filth and misery here defied description. Those human wrecks standing in the corridor were beyond the stage where any amount of hospitalization could restore them to normal, while others peering helplessly from their bunks would be fortunate when they died.

There was a still lower grade in another barracks, where the prisoners were alive but could not rouse themselves. They were living skeletons. This was Barracks 58, and it was from here that they were taken to the crematory. This was the end of the road, and for them it was probably a godsend. The Germans saw this, too—and there was more to come.

The next exhibit was the most ghastly of all, although it was merely the disposal of the dead.

## Well-Appointed Crematory

In a little one-story red brick building, with a red tile roof, was a crematory with the most modern ovens that science can provide. But before you enter, you see a trailer stacked high with withered, starved, naked bodies. A few moments ago you saw the same thing, but those still had life in them. On top of the pile was a big robust body, fully clothed. This one had been murdered brutally.

Next to him was the body of an SS guard who had hanged himself on the day of our arrival. Former prisoners who had felt the lash of his whip cheerfully pointed out his body, and it was easy to identify because it had one stump leg.

In the crematory itself were two batteries of three ovens, each prominently marked with the makers' name—J. A. Topf & Sohne, Erfurt. This concern customarily manufactured baking ovens. These ovens were of extremely modern design and heated by coke. Narrow-gauge trucks were built into the concrete floor, and over these traveled steel contrivances resembling stretchers. Each oven had the remains of at least two bodies that had not yet been sifted into the chamber below. On a table near by were urns for the ashes. They looked like flower pots and were packed within metal containers, which, in turn, were packed in cardboard boxes for shipment to relatives. The names on the boxes, however, indicated that only Germans' remains were shipped.

Diminishing columns of German civilians also saw this. Then they were taken to the rear of the building where there was a gallows equipped for hanging five persons at a time. Just beyond was a pile of ashes from the furnaces.

The basement of the building was a torture chamber, where victims were forced to stand on low chairs, place a rope through a ring high on the wall and fasten the noose around their necks. The next victim got the job of kicking the chair from under them.

The next exhibit was the dissection room, adjacent to the crematory. This was a small, well-equipped cubicle with a white tile operating table and cabinets filled with surgical instruments. Or

hooks were several rubber aprons, and on the floor piles of prisoners' clothing. This was the room where the original owners of the "parchments" had been stripped of their skin.

The first prisoners to arrive at this camp were from Sachsenburg and Lichtenburg. In May and June of 1938, during the Gestapo wave of terror, the death rate was 10 per cent. After von Rath was shot in Paris, 12,500 Jews were transported to Buchenwald.

In September, 1939, arrivals at the camp included 2,500 Jews from old people's homes in Vienna. The following month 2,900 more arrived.

After the attempted assassination of Hitler twenty-one Jews were selected arbitrarily and shot to death. All other Jews were kept in darkness for three days without food, and several days later the entire camp was deprived of food for five days.

## Auxiliary Death Camps Used

Before Buchenwald obtained its elaborate crematories prisoners who no longer could work were sent to Auschwitz to die or be killed in gas chambers. Auschwitz also had great furnaces. Reliable statements claim that 5,000 were disposed of there in three days. It was also at Auschwitz that Jewish women among the 30,000 once here at Buchenwald were sent to be exterminated after they had become pregnant. "Aryan" women in this group who were in similar physical condition were sent to Ravensbruck to have their children.

Buchenwald was bombed from the air on August 24 of last year because it was the site of a V-2 plant, which was just outside the main gates of the camp. It was here that many prisoners worked. The Nazis claimed that this bombing was the excuse for the murder of the German Communist party leader Ernst Thaelmann, but records show that Thaelmann was never in the camp.

The camp was liberated April 10 by the Eightieth Division. Two days later President Roosevelt died, and the liberated prisoners unfurled a large black flag over the building at the entrance way. It still flies as a memorial to his death and to the dead within the camp. Those still living realize what he tried to do, and they doff their caps every time they see an American uniform.

As the sun went down tonight, and its last glow gave a softer touch to this distorted scene, which, paradoxically, is in a magnificent setting on a hilltop overlooking a valley, the German visitors were taken back to their homes. If they still think that Hitler and what he stands for is supreme, then we have lost the war. But observations made by this correspondent indicate that they are chastened people who have suffered today, but who will benefit by reflection in the long run.