

Wednesday, May 2, 1945

New Yorkers See Death Camp Films And Prescribe 'An Eye for an Eye'

Few Weep, But Many Curse as They Leave Theaters

By TOM O'CONNOR

New Yorkers sat in stunned silence yesterday as they watched the incontrovertible proof of the unbelievable.

The official U. S. Army Signal Corps motion pictures of Nazi horror camps and charnel houses, severely cut and edited, but still the most important movie of the year, were exhibited to the public at newsreel and first-run houses for the first time yesterday.

They produced mixed reactions—a mixture of horror, of grief, of anger, of hate. Audiences did not cry out, did not demonstrate. Few people wept—even women whose sons are missing in action in Germany; it is not the kind of thing you can wash out of your mind with tears.

People Curse

People came out of the theaters shaking their heads, or gazing blankly off into space, or cursing under their breaths. Most of them did not want to talk at first—"How can you say anything about a thing like that?"—but once they got started, they talked furiously, words tumbling over one another.

They talked about what should be done to the people responsible for the maggoty cadavers and half-burned skeletons they had seen, and the living-dead, the emaciated American prisoners with their pipe-stem arms and legs, the Russians and Poles and Frenchmen and Jews, starved and beaten into obscene caricatures of men. They prescribed, for the Nazi criminals, every punishment from castration to hanging. "An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth," "Handle them the way the Italians handled Mussolini." "Wipe them off the face of the earth." "They should suffer the way they made other people suffer."

Show Nazi Bestiality

The newsreels, as presented to the public, are but a skimpy portion of the full tale of Nazi bestiality which has been recorded by Army photographers. The pictures are introduced with a warning that

Death Camp Films

"those who are susceptible to gruesome sights" should not look at the screen. The camera is never allowed to linger for more than a moment on the piles of corpses, the heaps of skulls, the crematory ovens filled with charred bones. And, of course, the camera cannot bring into the theater the smell of thousands of rotting corpses. Still, there is enough; no one is going to say, after seeing these pictures, that the stories of German atrocities are "propaganda."

On this page we present a cross-section of the people who saw the pictures yesterday at the Embassy Newsreel Theater in Times Square, and a little of what they had to say when they came out.

Max Bien, tailor, 1417 Ave. P, B'klyn: "Everyone should see these pictures, and when they get Hitler, they should take him through those camps and show him what he's done before they hang him. I consider the whole German people responsible. They're no good. I was born in Austria, and I know those Germans. I have two boys in the service, one just back after three years overseas and they won't be satisfied unless Germany is cut up into small states, so tiny and weak they never can do this again."



Bien

Leonard Sakrais, 22, Navy V-12 student at N. Y. U., 2515 Davidson Ave., Bronx: "It's hard to talk.



Sakrais

My heart is still pounding after seeing that. I've studied anatomy and lived with corpses five mornings a week, but I never saw anything that affected me like that. I'm still shivering all over. Every citizen should see those pictures — every citizen of the world. And for every person killed, a German should be killed. They made the innocent suffer—now let some innocent Germans suffer. I have no compassion for them."

T/Sgt. A. P. Lenox, 24, company aid man in the 83d infantry, home Caldwell N. J.: "It was good for people to see those pictures, but there wasn't enough. They should have still pictures on the screen, or stop the camera so people can stare at it and let it sink in. And they should bring the smell back. I was 41



Lenox

Death Camp Films

months in the European theater, and in my opinion every German officer and everyone who had anything to do with the SS should be hanged—that's a little easy on 'em, but it's better than shooting. There shouldn't be any of these long drawn out trials. And the German prisoners back here should be made to realize what they've done. They're on easy street now, and they're going back without suffering a bit. I'm going back over pretty soon. I'd like to be assigned to guard German prisoners."

John M. Svirsky, sales counter-
man, 156 15th St.: "I was stunned
beyond words by these pictures of
what the Nazi
b e a s t s have
done. I was born
in L i t h u a n i a,
and my relatives
o v e r t h e r e I
h a v e n ' t heard
f r o m . Who
k n o w s ? Maybe
t h e y w e r e
a m o n g t h o s e
b o d i e s . We
s h o u l d reduce
G e r m a n y to
d u s t . The Germans can't be trusted,
and we have to watch Argentina
and Spain."



Svirsky

Sam Romanis, chef, 134 Eliot
St., West Bronx: "Those pictures
show the worst thing people have
ever done in this
world. It is bad
for civilization,
what they did.
But it was not
new to me. The
Germans burned
my home town
in Greece and
murdered all the
children. They
murdered my
c o u s i n , the
school teacher,
for trying to protect children. We
should split Germany into nothing."



Romanis

Mrs. Thomas F. Galligan, house-
wife, 67 Ryan St., New Bedford,
Mass.: "Two of my dear friends
were killed in
action in Ger-
many last week,
and I have three
sons in the serv-
ice, so those pic-
tures came pret-
t y c l o s e t o
home. I don't
believe in any
good German
p e o p l e a n y
more. I've seen
pictures of those
German women sneering, after all
the cruelty their men have inflicted.
They are all responsible."



Galligan

(continued)

Death Camp Films

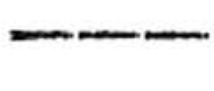
Wyman Osterhout, 15, 2nd year high school, New Salem, N. Y.:

"The way those German civilians looked when they came out, maybe they didn't know what was going on. I don't know if all Germans should be punished the same, but for the guards at the prison camps, nothing could be too bad for



Osterhout

them. I saw a Russian newsreel about that camp in Poland, and at the end it showed them hanging the guards. That's what we should do."



Mrs. Freda Cohen, housewife, 1149 Blake Ave., B'lyn: "It's impossible to express how I feel, with



Cohen

my son overseas, three years fighting in Europe, five years in the army, and all my relatives in Hungary and Romania killed in this war, my two sisters and brother, everyone. Those people responsible, we shouldn't just kill them, we should torture them the way they did us. I hold the whole German people responsible. Very few of them left have a human heart."

PM