

Tuesday, May 1, 1945

Soviets Hoist Victory Flag Over Nazi Capital Ruins

By KEN CLARK

Berlin has fallen to all intents and purposes. Stalin in a May Day order announces that the victory flag of the Red Army flies over the main part of the ruined Nazi capital.

Russian troops have the Reichstag, scene of the famous Nazi phony fire, the Ministry of the Interior, and the main Post Office. Zhukov is right in the center of the city, on the Potsdamerplatz, half a mile south of Unter den Linden. Radio Moscow reports "Soviet troops are fighting in the ruins of Unter den Linden."

Stalin says the Red Army is mowing down death battalions of fanatic women and SS guard remnants, after having killed nearly 1,000,000 Germans in the last four months of World War II.

In his announcement, Stalin referred to districts in Berlin as "liberated."

This falls in with posters put up by occupation troops:

"It is not our object to enslave the German people—We do not and cannot have such foolish aims."

"You will receive orders. They must be carried out."

Reuter reported from Moscow at a late hour that the German High Command, bringing more and more sacrifices to the "blood bath of Berlin," has dropped paratroops into the doomed capital. These fell wide of the mark and were mopped up rapidly. The slaughter reached a new peak as the Red Army drove over its last few hundred yards to make a junction between Zhukov's and Konev's troops in the heart of the city.

The last hours of Nazi power in the metropolis are thus described by Roman Karmen, Soviet war correspondent, writing for the United Press:

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Victory



"Hundreds of Red Army cannon are battering down the city's dying heart. More and more fresh columns of tanks overrun its broad and majestic boulevards, now littered with the wreckage of bulidings.

"All the Germans know that resistance is senseless, but the element of Nazi compulsion exists and that is why they fight on for a hopeless cause.

"Streets already cleared present a strange spectacle. While artillery shells land in neighboring streets and bullets whistle over their heads Berliners are going about their daily business in captured areas.

"They surround every Soviet officer and man, asking thousands of questions. Their main question is:

'Are we permitted to cease our caveman underground existence?' They cannot believe that tonight they can sleep in their own beds and not in bomb shelters."

This dispatch furnishes a strange picture of the hyper-efficient heavily arrogant capital of Hitlerism which grew like a militaristic toadstool in three quarters of a century to 4,500,000, the largest city on the European continent.

There she sat, complacent on her plain, Germany's No. 1 industrial and commercial center, hub of transport lines by air, highway, rail, river, and canal.

The National Geographic news bulletin points out that it grew out of two fishing villages. Later it was the capital of Brandenburg, where the Hohenzollerns stiffly held forth. It sprawled over 341 square miles, 34 miles long from west to east.

Then came Hitler and Goering's air war and the reply of the democracies, the drone of the USAAF and the RAF planes with their loads of death and destruction. Then came the famous Red Army artillery and the street fighters, trained in Stalingrad and Kiev.

Radio Hamburg, the only remaining Nazi transmitter, with what can only be considered dull tears, laments Berlin:

"Now that our glorious, gay Berlin is tumbling into ruins and ashes, let us recall Berlin as we knew and loved her in happier years and as she always will linger in our memory. Let us remember Berlin, shining metropolis with her breathtaking hustle of buses and cars.

"There was Berlin with her theaters, her philharmonic orchestra, her famous museums."