

# ARE PRISONERS PAMPERED?

**Conformance with standards  
of Geneva Convention. Many  
employed in essential work**

Foreign prisoners of war are beginning now to represent a sizable population in the United States. Today, that prisoner population is above 360,000 and is growing at a rate of from 25,000 to 30,000 a month. Of the total, more than 300,000 are from the German Army.

The number of prisoners is large enough to begin to attract attention. There are reports that these prisoners often are pampered, that they are getting cigarettes when American civilians cannot get them, that they are being served in their camps by American soldiers, that they often are not working at a time when war workers are scarce. The general complaint is that the 46,000 American prisoners in Germany are not faring as well as the 300,000 Germans in this country.

Criticism directed at U.S. treatment of prisoners is so general that a committee of Congress has investigated more than 100 prison camps. The picture revealed is the one described below.

**Pampering.** Most reports of U.S. coddling of prisoners turned out to relate to Italian prisoners of war. When Italy was accepted as a co-belligerent, two thirds of the Italians were allowed to work in U.S. Army service units. As members of these units, the men who had been full-fledged prisoners suddenly were permitted to go on sight-seeing trips and to attend civilian entertainments. Protests from various sources arose and stories spread. Liberties for these service workers have been curtailed sharply as a result. German and Japanese prisoners did not share in the liberties accorded the Italians.

There appears to be no basis for reports that American soldiers are being made to do work for prisoners of war in prison camps. It is true, however, that war prisoners are permitted to buy cigarettes from Army supplies, and they can buy 3.2 per cent beer. Their food is standard Army food, as required under the Geneva

**NAZIS AT WORK IN AMERICA****. . . Congress found no coddling**

Convention governing treatment of prisoners of war.

**Work.** Out of 360,000 prisoners, 200,000 are engaged in useful work. The remaining 160,000 are physically incapable of working, are in transit, are at work on prison maintenance or are officers who are not required to work. The Army is using many prisoners in its laundries, warehouses, shoe repair, automobile re-

pair and carpentry shops, as well as in bakeries and kitchens. More than 50,000, many of them Germans, are working on privately owned farms. Their labor is credited with having saved a large portion of the tomato, pea, bean, sugar cane and rice crops in some areas.

Seven thousand prisoners are working in lumber camps to help relieve the pulpwood shortage. Others are in food processing, in construction and in other work. They work from 8 to 11 hours a day. Efficiency varies. Those who hire prisoners must pay the prevailing rate of wages to the Government, but the prisoners get only 80 cents a day, paid in scrip which can be spent in canteens.

**Germans**  are going to make up the bulk of any prisoner population increase, and Germans have been good workers to date. Not more than one third of the prisoners taken in Europe, however, are reaching this country. The others are put to work by the British and American armies in Italy and France and elsewhere. Of the prisoners brought here, about 1,000 have escaped, but in most cases they were unable to get far. Only 11 prisoners remain at large.

**Italians** now make up 51,000 of the total prisoner population. Of these, 35,000 are in the service units, handling military supplies at ordnance and quartermaster depots, arsenals and ports of embarkation.

**Japanese.** Since few Japanese surrender, there still are only 2,400 Japanese prisoners of war in this country. All are confined at Camp McCoy, Wis., and work on nearby farms. They cause little trouble, except for occasional mass attempts at hara-kiri, induced by shame over having allowed themselves to be captured.

All of these prisoners—Germans, Italians and Japanese—get decidedly better treatment than do American prisoners in enemy hands.

**U. S. prisoners.** In general, U. S. officials credit the German Government with trying to approximate Geneva Convention standards. The Germans, however, skimp on food, heat and clothing, perhaps because their own supplies are short. They do co-operate in providing American food and clothing to their 46,000 American prisoners through the Red Cross. The Japanese hold 16,000 American prisoners, or nearly

applying its terms, at least in areas close to Japan, but with modifications and according to the low standards of living in the Orient. Food rations, for example, are the same as those for Japanese soldiers, and better than those of civilians, but still not satisfactory for Americans.

