

Living hell of Nazi camp described

(Marcel Conversy, United Press correspondent at Thonon in the French Alps, returned to France today from 15 months of imprisonment at Buchenwald. He still wore his blue and white prison clothes, but as raiment of honor. From a sheaf of notes furtively penciled under the eyes of brutish Nazi guards he wrote the following dispatch.—Ed.)

By **MARCEL CONVERSY**

PARIS, May 3.—(U.P.)—I have returned to the world of free and decent men from the living hell of Buchenwald.

For 15 months, life for me was gnawing hunger, torture, slow death. Thousands died around me, because they refused to bow either the knee or the spirit to Hitler's reich.

Why didn't I die? Because I was determined to live. And because I learned always to say "yes," while saying "no" in my heart.

But I never expected to live in

the world of free men again.

Sept. 15, 1943, I was arrested by the gestapo for spreading the news in my home town, Thonon, of Italy's capitulation.

I was taken first to an internment camp at Compeigne and on Jan. 17 came the order for my deportation to Germany.

I was one of 120 men packed into a single freight car. We were given a tiny piece of bread, a scrap of sausage and nothing to drink. The doors were locked from the outside and the only sanitation was a single bucket.

We could neither sit nor lie down.

Someone had concealed a knife with which he cut an aperture in the walls of the car for air which enabled all of us to breathe. But it was not enough to save all of us.

The journey endured 48 hours. Men collapsed and died of thirst and suffocation. There were corpses under foot. In one car in our train, from which a prisoner escaped, SS guards stripped the

(Continued on Page 18, Col. 5)

Living hell of Buchenwald described by freed prisoner

(Continued from Page 1)

remaining occupants naked in the freezing cold.

We were dumped out at Weimar where began the long, slow march to Buchenwald. Sick or elderly prisoners who couldn't keep up were attacked by SS police dogs or were clubbed to death by guards. One-fifth of the total number of prisoners died in the freight cars or during the march. Their bodies were left at the roadside.

At the death camp we were made to take a shower. Our heads were shaved and we were medically examined. Then we received a striped prison jacket without buttons, a pair of trousers, a shirt, thin underpants and wooden soled clogs.

We were held one month in quarantine awaiting assignment to the "big camp," where all occupants were subjected to endless hard labor, or to the "small camp" for weak and ailing prisoners, known as the "camp of death" because few ever emerged. I was sent to the latter.

Always a light eater, I traded a piece of bread with a Russian prisoner for an old bag. I made a covering for my loins and an additional undershirt with it.

We slept six together on a bunk measuring 6 feet by 5. Most of the time, however, I slept on the floor or on a wooden table and often had to fight with Polish prisoners for the table.

There were three types of labor: First, in the subterranean factories. They were called "extermination commandos" and we scarcely ever saw anyone return from them. Second, near the camp, building an ultramodern war factory. Third, in the forests where those who simply refused to die were sent to cut and haul wood in the subzero weather.

The Nazis didn't want to kill the prisoners outright. They wanted them to die a slow death by cold, hunger and torture. I have seen them let men with frozen limbs die lingeringly rather than put an end to their misery by shooting them.

We started out for work at 5 a. m. in the winter darkness, with the prisoners trudging in columns of five through the snow and a Nazi band playing lively march tunes.

Batteries of searchlights swept the darkness as snow fell on the shoulders of men wearing nothing but light cloth jackets. They opened up a vision of hell.

As Russian victories compelled the Nazis to evacuate eastern camps, Buchenwald became more and more crowded. Every morning the bodies of those who died during the night were dragged out, stripped, and thrown into the incinerator.

Disease swept whole prison

blocks. More than once hunger-crazed prisoners murdered neighbors for their food. Russian prisoners in particular settled scores with Russians they suspected of collaboration.

Theoretically our daily ration was three pieces of black bread, a tiny piece of margarine, ersatz coffee and two pints of soup. The rations got smaller and smaller and men starved slowly and died.

During the first three months of this year 12,000 men died. Deaths in March reached a record of 5400.

Block 61 was reserved for sufferers from dysentery who already had their death numbers stamped on their legs to save work after they were corpses. They were left all night, naked. In the morning the German guards hosed them with icy water. They died like flies but more and more took their places.

The crematorium had six furnaces which worked continuously, and bodies were carried to them in electric elevators.

There were torture chambers from whose scientifically perfected horrors no one ever returned. And there was block 46, where German surgeons and scientists experimented with prisoners' organs. They used Jews in particular for vivisection.

Last Aug. 24 after nearby factories were bombed and destroyed the prisoners set up their first secret resistance committee, comprised of five Russians, five Germans, three French, three Czechs, three Poles and one representative of other nations.

The committee succeeded in secretly manufacturing arms. On the day the Americans arrived and liberated us there were 800 rifles in the camp. The prisoners themselves captured 60 SS guards who had been left behind when the Nazis fled.

—Buy War Bonds—

'Trusteeship' explained

(Continued from Page 2)

World war II. For without Manchuria as a continental base and bastion, as a source of raw materials, as a wedge with which to outflank both China and maritime Siberia, Japan would have remained only an island nation.

Not only the United States, but China and the Soviet Union, will be concerned about the future of Manchuria. It is truly a problem, at least at the outset, for international cooperation.

This is why the American trusteeship proposals, if fully developed and worked out in at least preliminary form at San Francisco, offer the promise of avoiding future misunderstanding and conflict.

The notion still prevails that