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Authority NW 770123
By LC NARA Date 8/12/78

27 July 1945

MEMORANDUM FOR GENERAL LERCH:

SUBJECT: YMCA Activities

1. Reference is made to your note dated 26 July in which you request the whole story of existing difficulties between this office and War Committee of the YMCA.

2. The officers who have had the most to do with YMCA representatives are General Bryan, Colonel Rogers, Major McKnight, Major Farrand, and Captain Richards. Since General Bryan, Colonel Rogers, and Captain Richards are away, I have talked to Major McKnight and Major Farrand; and I am able to give the following observations and impressions based upon these talks and my own memory:

a. I am of the opinion that there is no "war" going on between our office and the YMCA. Rather the difficulties are caused by the necessity for an adjustment of policies between the two organizations. This adjustment has been made necessary by the establishment of the Army's reorientation program and by the additional restrictions which have been imposed upon prisoners of war since VE-Day.

b. In January or February, 1945, while the reorientation program was still classified as secret the Special Projects people had some difficulty in explaining why they were imposing a censorship on reading materials over and above that of the District Postal Censor. Since some of these reading materials were being furnished by the YMCA, Mr. Colton and Mr. Strong felt they were entitled to some explanation. I believe Colonel Davison told them something of the program without divulging the complete story.

c. The next difficulty occurred when the moving picture circuit was established and the circular provided that only approved pictures would be shown in prisoner of war camps and that an admission charge of fifteen cents would be made to each prisoner. This practically stopped the YMCA business as far as the showing of moving pictures was concerned. As I recall, Major McKnight had some discussions with YMCA representatives at that time (March), and I believe the YMCA people were disappointed because they could no longer show pictures of their own.

d. As the reorientation program became more known to YMCA people, they appear to have felt that their activities would be increased rather than curtailed because they felt the approach should be spiritual rather than by propoganda or censorship. There were several congenial objections made to some of the activities of Special Projects officers in the field by YMCA who was continually opposed to the imposition of any additional restrictions on reading material, classes,

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food privileges, and similar factors. The YMCA was interested mostly in the morale of the prisoners and they regarded themselves as the mechanical means of helping that morale regardless of the political views of the prisoners. Mr. Colton and Major McKnight had many personal discussions on this phase of the problem, Major McKnight insisting that the Army's job was to reorient the prisoners and the YMCA insisting that it was not up to them to destroy any political distinction between the prisoners but to preserve morale of all prisoners. According to Major McKnight these sessions were always extremely friendly.

e. From the Operations Division and the Field Liaison Branch came reports that in a few cases YMCA representatives who visited camps were becoming quite critical of certain camp commanders and administrative measures. I believe General Bryan and Colonel Rogers mentioned to Mr. Colton on more than one occasion that the job of the YMCA was to administer to the spiritual needs of the prisoners and not to criticize or interfere with administrative measures of the camp officials.

f. The State Department, particularly Mr. Herrick, informally conferred with Colonel Rogers on one or two occasions, in which both agreed that the YMCA had done a fine job in the past but that its usefulness was practically at an end after VE-Day. The reasoning behind this joint conclusion was based upon the following factors among others:

- (1) Prisoners of war were now able to pay for the materials they needed for recreation.
- (2) The supply of musical instruments, athletic kits, and reading material was constituting a source of competition with the assistant executive officer in each camp who was attempting to build himself up locally and the prestige of the Army nationally.
- (3) YMCA was obtaining money for its operations from the National War Fund, and it was felt that if the public became informed that they were spending community fund money on German prisoners of war with War Department sanction there would be very serious public relations complications. I am personally aware that General Bryan talked to Mr. Colton about this angle, and I believe he told Mr. Colton that he thought it would be wrong for the YMCA to seek \$2,900,000 in the coming budget year if they plan to spend any of it on German prisoners of war.

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- (4) The YMCA representatives objected to being accompanied by State Department representatives during their visits and wanted to interview prisoners of war alone. The State Department did not approve this and argued that the YMCA should not have any privileges not granted to International Red Cross. This, however, still seems to be a sore point with YMCA.

g. Recently, Andre Vulliet was stated by G-2 to be an undesirable camp visitor. Personnel Security secured a check-up in this office. He was disapproved as a visitor, and a communication was sent out to the YMCA denying him the privilege of visiting further camps.

3. The foregoing constitutes my own understanding of the situation. Pertinent documentary evidence is attached. Reference is made particularly to letter dated 12 May 1945 from the Secretary of State to the Secretary of War in which it is proposed by Mr. Grew that representatives of the International Red Cross and YMCA should be accompanied by a representative of the State Department (TAB A). A letter dated 8 June 1945 from the Secretary of War to the Secretary of State agrees with State Department views in this regard (5th Paragraph, TAB B) and adds the statement the Secretary of War does not see any reason for continuing to permit visits to camps by YMCA representatives because the furnishing of educational and athletic supplies is now being accomplished through prisoner of war funds under War Department supervision. Letter of 9 July from Secretary of State to Secretary of War (TAB C) states that YMCA and National Catholic Welfare Conference and similar organizations may be of some value in procuring suitable reading material and suggests permitting visits for this purpose but insists that representatives should not be permitted to interview prisoners without witnesses and that they be accompanied by State Department men. This letter of the Secretary of State says: "I am in agreement with you that because of the operation of the prisoner of war fund the need for extensive privileges to visit camps by representatives of the WPA of the YMCA is no longer as important as it was when that organization was furnishing large quantities of educational and athletic supplies for use of prisoners of war." The letter of 9 July was not replied to and this was reported in a comment to G-1 (TAB D), which was requested by Major Brown of G-1. As a result of these letters and conferences attended by Mr. Herrick, Colonel Rogers, and Major Brown, G-1, the letter of 24 July (TAB E) was sent to WPA. (I believe it was signed by Colonel Johnson for you.)

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4. For general background and attitudes, there is also attached copy of a report by Captain Richards of a meeting of the YMCA Committee attended by him on 16 June 1945 and a memorandum to Dr. Tracy Strong from Andre Vulliet which was furnished us for information by Mr. Franklin of the State Department.

7 Incls

Incl 1-5: Tabs A-E

Incl 6: Copy rpt by Capt. Richards

Incl 7: Memo frm Mr. Vulliet

WILLIAM B. GEMMILL
Major, CMP
Executive Division
Provost Marshal General's Office

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By LC NARA Date 8/12/88

June '45

C O N F I D E N T I A L

MEMORANDUM TO DR. TRACY STRONG

On various aspects of religious, welfare, and educational work in German PW camps in America, in the light of recent events.

BY: ANDRE VULLIET

In the last few months and particularly during my last visitation of German PW Camps, from which I returned a few days ago, I have given much thought to the post-war aspect of our work in relation to German prisoners and how, as suggested by their present reactions to events and policies, they could or would fit into the future international picture.

I am conscious of the magnitude of the problem and of the fact that events will do more to solve it one way or another than men's plans. I am nevertheless submitting to you for what they are worth some of my thoughts in the matter.

I believe that it is more important than ever for us and for anyone who deals with PWs to be consistent with the Christian, liberal philosophy so often professed, and to know exactly the intended goal and how to get there

The opportunity to do an even more significant job now seems unquestionable. Up to now we have of necessity refrained from discussion in the higher fields of politics and philosophy, confining ourselves to the job on hand which was to help in the field of religion, welfare, and education. We realized that we often were up against deep-rooted philosophies opposed to ours. The attitude now is quite different. With dignity and restraint many prisoners whom I knew before, spokesmen and leaders, have revealed to me their aching hearts and their shaken faiths, hoping I could help.

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Re-education or re-orientation can bear some fruits only if it is less abstract and political and much more practical, in line with normal human reactions on one hand and a consistent doctrine on the other.

Above all it is essential that the whole problem be thought of in its entirety, in the realization that our presence and work in the camps, the PWs' education, their work, the running of the camps, their opinion of America should be viewed in the light of a general, consistent, Christian philosophy. A long range policy can not stem from a passing emotion, and we should realize that we cannot hate and hope to teach understanding at the same time.

WAR PRISONERS' AID

Our work should continue for many reasons.

It is the Christian thing to do.

It must not be said that it was only done for reciprocity's sake.

We must use the contributions received from PW camps.

First of all I think it is of paramount importance that we should continue our work and, if possible, even intensify it.

First, because our belief in the ethical and spiritual righteousness of what we are doing cannot be shaken. Second, because all the value for good will which our work may have created in the past would be laughed at by discouraged or cynical prisoners if it were to stop when it can no longer be reciprocal. Our work and the encouragement it has received from the American authorities would be attributed not to exclusively Christian motives but to fear of retaliation. It is unfortunately only natural for them to think that way as most of the new restrictions imposed upon them regarding food, privileges, censorship, classes, extension of working hours, etc., coincided with the gradual liberation of American prisoners in Germany and V-E day. Neither we nor the War Department, I am sure, want to see that suspicion confirmed.

Third, because thanks to the initiative of the War Department and the generous response of the prisoners we are receiving sizable voluntary contributions from the PW camps to help us continue our work. To stop contributing material at this time would undoubtedly raise in the minds of some prisoners, (And possibly also some American Officers), doubts as to what we do with the money.

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Y.M.C.A. ideals fit in perfectly with international good will we are all aiming at.

Fourth, because the ideals which the Y.M.C.A. stands for and which all its neutral secretaries believe in are based on international understanding and good will among men. Without being drily religious or dogmatic about it, we do try to exemplify and to apply certain Christian standards and I hope that we succeed at times. We are non-political and without hatred. At a time when so many German prisoners are in quest of a new philosophy, in search of a friend to look upon, the meaning of our work, of our presence among them, of the way we look upon things, may be a decisive factor in their lives. This is the time to convince many of them that international organizations which were barred in the Third Reich were not all bad or laden with secret motives. The spirit which lay behind our work can be bared for all its future international value.

In one of the last camps I visited, a Viennese Ph.D., intelligent and bitter, told me how surprised he was to see me, as he thought that they were "now cut off from the rest of the world". When I left he told me "how good it was to see that someone still cared". In the same camp, the spokesman and his assistant, with whom I spent a whole day in the company of the Assistant Executive Officer, both expressed their desire to join the Y.M.C.A. in Germany upon their return.

The fact that many prisoners express a desire to join Y.M.C.A. after the war, can only be to the good

Hundreds of others, perhaps thousands, feel the same way about it. The magnitude of voluntary contributions we are now receiving from the prisoners should be taken at least as a sign of good will towards an international organization, whose Christian, non-bellicose aims are well known. I am not a Y.M.C.A. member myself and my feeling in the matter is not the result of any zeal to push the Y.M.C.A. as an institution. But I think that the development of the Y.M.C.A. in Germany in the years to come can only help in spreading the very ideals which this country stands for.

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In another camp, a PW minister, highly praised for his magnificent character by the American authorities, pointed out to me that "so many Germans had lived in an atmosphere of suspicion for years that one had no idea how good some friendship would seem to most of them".

Y.M.C.A. friendship
can help many.

I often felt in this trip that while so many of the prisoners were trying to pull through the most frightful mental and moral shock of their lives, our help, perhaps, could strengthen some of them in their hope of finding an answer to their riddle.

RELIGION

The church attendance in the camps I visit varies from 5% to 35% of the camp's population for both Catholic and Protestant religions combined.

It is difficult to draw definite conclusions as to the reason for such differences. It seems, however, that men captured in France or in the Rhineland, and more particularly those recently shipped to this country, are more religious than the former type of prisoner. The personality of the spokesman, that of the German or American chaplains serving the prisoners often greatly influence the degree of church attendance in the camps.

An American chaplain, for instance, can hardly preach guilt and repentance, while a German chaplain can do it. But while it is true that the church should know no boundaries it nevertheless must be national in that it must partake in the sufferings of its country and uphold the courage and morale of its nationals. For fear of losing its prestige and its influence it must never let itself become or appear to become a tool in a foreign land.

German church will
be close to the
feelings of the
German people.

If the church is to play a part in the rebuilding of Germany along Christian lines -- and this is one of the few philosophies around which Germans of good will can gather -- I believe that it will be found to be patriotic (not nationalistic), socially minded, close to the forgotten man. It would be a mistake to expect PW chaplains not to be concerned about the greatness of their country, not to

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The Church will play a leading role but cannot be expected to be a tool in the reconstruction of Germany.

Christian doctrine is in itself a consistent philosophy.

exhort their men to pray for it, to cling to all that which, in their national heritage, does not contradict the Christian view of this

Wherever the Church has given the impression of defending foreign interests (namely fascism) it has lost ground (the Catholic church in Spain, Cardinal Baudrillart in Paris, for instance). Whenever it has stood up for national independence it has gained strength and prestige (for example, the clergy in France during the German occupation, the Orthodox church in Russia during the German invasion, etc.).

If a rebirth of Christianity in Germany is desired it seems that one must expect to find the church firmly standing for Christian principles, for justice, for mercy and for understanding not only among nations but also of Germany.

That the church will play a leading part in Germany in the days to come, however, seems unquestionable. It is beginning to do so in some camps. Not because of the quantity of those who are reverting to religion but because of the quality of the feeling of those who do. Many PW chaplains have told me that the numbers of those who attend services has increased but slightly but that those who do come are looking more and more upon religion and upon its pastors for comfort and for guidance.

The Christian doctrine is in itself a consistent philosophy. It provides a way of life, gives hope and comfort and offers the only alternative to totalitarianism and materialistic doctrines.

That a Christian approach is also a good one in running a camp and in winning over whom ever can be won over seems to be upheld by the best camp commanders I know. Maybe it just only happens that they are sincere Christians who live up to their principles. But I am inclined to believe that the results they have achieved in winning the respect of their prisoners, in raising doubts and questions in their minds, in impressing them favorably with certain American qualities, are due to the consistency between the way they act and the ideals they believe in.

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EDUCATION & RE-EDUCATION

It seems that any venture in the field of education or political re-orientation in the camps should take into consideration the following facts which I believe to be proved by experience:

The impossibility and inadvisability either to try to de-nationalize the Germans, to Americanize them or to crush their minds or part of it.

The impossibility of teaching democracy when all the requisits of democratic life are necessarily lacking because of circumstances or regulations. Within possibilities, however, some commanders have succeeded in stressing in their camp's life the notions of responsibility, initiative and self-respect, which are some of the essentials of any liberal philosophy.

The natural tendency now prevailing everywhere to over-emphasize political thoughts at the expense of the more fundamental, permanent pre-occupations to which most ^{men} revert in dire distress: their families, their work, their country. These soft spots through which they can be approached.

The responsibility that rests with the American personnel to live up to the standards which they are supposed to teach or to represent.

The fundamental necessity of approaching every problem, every phase of a prisoner of war camp life, with a consistent attitude, with a philosophy that should always reflect the ideals and the culture which we profess to represent.

I believe that any attempt at de-nationalism or Americanization of the German PWs is bound to fail tragically and to be followed by a drastic and sweeping reaction of German supernationalism.

This may seem obvious. Yet one must guard against such unconscious manifestations of this feeling as the following: "Every language we can teach them that is not German, the better" -- "The educational director is not as good as he could be, he follows the German pattern" -- "Our new music leader plays American music and that is what we want" -- "Why do you send so much Bach and Beethoven and American music" --

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De-nationalization or Americanization of the Pws, if attempted, might result in a rebirth of supernationalism.

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Fortunately, the majority of camp commanders feel differently on the matter. Those whom I admire and respect the most appear to me as trying to win respect for American traditions, achievements and ability in quite another way. They seem to feel how deeply and proudly attached to their own cultures all European peoples are and they make no attempt at stamping out German patriotism or at denying certain forms of German grandeur and the magnitude of its contribution to our western civilization.

Most durable and perhaps only internationalism may be that which is based upon respect for every country's qualities.

With modesty in praising their country, they do not refrain from praising what they deem is praiseworthy in their prisoners' country. They refrain from self-congratulation for an American culture and ways of life which do not necessarily strike foreigners as superior to their own. But they exemplify, in their relations with their prisoners, that unique quality and ease of human relations which one finds in this country alone and which, to us foreigners, is perhaps your most appealing trait. I have heard enough praise of such commanding officers and seen enough desire to find out more about America on the part of their prisoners to be convinced that theirs was the right approach.

Ban on technical classes may prove politically dangerous.

One cannot expect of any nation that it shall give up its national heritage or shed its original qualities and proficiencies. To bar the Germans from the study of technical and scientific subjects, for instance, as seems to be the case now, may in the long run prove practically inoperative and politically very dangerous.

It will not only antagonize those affected but also draw criticism from the intellectuals, the nationalists, the nazis, the communists.

To deprive the engineer, the technician, the mechanics from the possibility of following the line of their choice and developing their natural ability is certain to antagonize them. It will make them question the honesty of a political philosophy in which, so far as they are concerned, they will enjoy less freedom of learning than they did in Germany.

The intellectuals and philosophers and the so-called intelligentsia -- as powerful in any camp as in any country in shaping up the opinion of the masses -- may very likely side up with the technicians and build up a fine case of denial of freedom of learning.

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Something tangible, however, can be tried to develop and direct a certain sense of community life.

The nationalists may join in, easily denouncing the attempt at de-nationalization of the Germans. The Nazis are sure to adopt an "I-told-you-so" attitude and the Communists, who have already found many lines of attack against capitalism and imperialism, may interpret the ban on German technology as an attempt by American economic imperialism to get rid of German industrial competition.

The impending discontinuance of German ~~plans~~ ^{film} and the new emphasis laid on American films which convey an American message, the withdrawal from libraries of all books that are not approved so that they may devote more time to read chosen titles by Wendell Willkie, Benet, Thomas Mann and all the German refugees in this country, appear as more measures meant to serve the same end. On the surface, they may win over defenseless men. I am wondering whether the lasting effect on those who have character, patriotism, and intelligence will not be tragically disappointing.

Impossibility of teaching democracy in PW Camps.

If the French motto of "Liberty - Equality - Fraternity" truly represents democracy, it is obvious that the three of them are lacking in the camps and that the advantages of democracy reach the PWs only through the words of their American officers.

One should realize that the task of teaching democracy in a PW camp or re-orienting the PWs is almost superhuman because it is in direct contradiction with the very surroundings of camp life and often with the regulations on hand.

Working days extending up to 14 hours, gradual centralization in government hands of all welfare, cultural, and educational activities, withdrawal of canteen privileges, limitations imposed upon the prisoners or spokesmen's participation in their own affairs (canteens, PW funds, classes), are the background against which German prisoners must receive the picture of a free and abundant America.

Moreover, all that they see of America does not necessarily conduce to admiration for its political regime. There are many things which Americans have grown use to and take for granted which seem shocking to foreigners. As to the material abundance which they see and benefit from in their physical life, they attribute it more to the wealth of the country than to its regime.

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Something tangible, however, can be tried to develop and direct a certain sense of community life.

In spite of all these difficulties, however, it seems that something tangible can be done --and often has been done--to reorient some of the PWs along lines eventually conducive to better international relations.

If one can look upon a camp as a small German community, it seems that a way could be found to initiate or support a certain amount of community life in which the prisoners and their representatives would really have their say. Within the limits of their possibilities and regulations, many commanding officers have found ways of giving prisoners a sense of responsibility, of equality, of rehabilitation, as the case may be.

The prerequisite of any belief in any form of representative government is to have a well-organized community life. Anything that tends to change the atmosphere of a camp from that of a prisoner of war camp to that of a going (and relatively happy) German community ought to be encouraged.

Canteen and PW fund committees, when functioning, seemed to serve a useful purpose.

Canteen committees and PW fund committees, which at one time were permitted, when properly understood and composed, were very beneficial. Using the prisoners to do the bookkeeping, posting the canteen's accounts in the canteen, publishing monthly reports of the PW fund in the camp's newspaper, with detailed expenditures, having all the expenditures generally agreed upon and decided by a committee on which the prisoners had at least an equal voice, all these measures had the distinct advantage of removing any mistrust that the prisoners might have as to the way their funds were managed. It should not be forgotten that a people's control over their finances is one of the essentials of representative government.

Confidence in American financial strength and honesty should be developed.

Confidence in American financial strength could also be developed by actually building up the individual trust funds of the prisoners regular bank accounts. Depositors' books, faculty of withdrawal for individual purchases (with proper restrictions) and actual handing over of balance in cash at time of departure would do it better than any compulsory deposits

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Confidence can be developed. It cannot be commanded. Genuine confidence in the value of the dollar and in the financial honesty of the U.S. Government should not be underestimated as one of many feelings which can keep individual prisoners interested in this country.

Abstract teaching of democracy will mean nothing if accompanied by a denial of all democratic values.

Very few men can be satisfied with a philosophical, abstract view of things. Teaching them "political thought" and "Americanism" without any practical illustration of these new notions in which they would be the beneficiaries may be viewed by them as a mockery and just another piece of propaganda.

Character is also a factor whose value should not be underestimated.

For the part it plays in the life of any community, character should not be overlooked as one of the essential factors of successful representative government.

It is unfortunately easy to confuse character and personality for nazism or trouble making. Vice versa submission is often taken for loyalty.

I believe that there are cases on record where fine men who, rightly or wrongly, stood up for their ideas or their comrades were shipped out of camps as trouble makers or Nazis. The sheep and the empty-headed that are left behind may make for "fine camps" without any trouble, but the Lord help democracy if these are the ones that are depended upon to build it.

Winning over an intelligent enemy is more fruitful than gaining a stupid or weak friend.

If it is true that an intelligent enemy is often better than a stupid friend, it seems that winning over the strong-minded, determined, intelligent fellow should prove far more useful for future relations between America and Germany than gaining the passive acquiescence of the submissive crowd.

This does not necessarily mean that they should be won over politically. Their respect should be won first, together with a feeling that there must be a common ground of understanding among men of good will. With efficiency, sense of leadership, discipline, and fairness, many camp commanders seem to have done just that. In fact the qualities just mentioned would have commanded the respect of any soldier. I am thinking of one commander whom I know well, who runs his camp in

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conformity with his philosophy and ideals. He encourages character, personality, leadership, and responsibility in his prisoners. He likes to see a man be a man and a German a German. As a result he has more than 1200 non-commissioned officers working, and I have seen no camp where so many Afrika corps leaders show devotion to their commander and manly interest in how to rebuild their country in a peaceful and livable way. I do not believe that anything could be more constructive for the kind of future we have in mind.

In the field of education proper, emphasis should be placed on freedom and usefulness rather than on directing political thought.

In the more specific field of education, great progress has been made in the past in that education has been officially recognized as part of a camp's life and often greatly helped and encouraged by American officers. Much thought was given to extension courses from American universities. Much concern was and is being expressed that they should read and study significant writing and American history.

Liberalism of American educational philosophy and advancement of its methods in practical fields should be made available to prisoners.

With so little time left, however, to show the prisoners the magnificent liberalism of American educational philosophy and the practicality of some of its achievements, it seems that a great effort should be made to give them in practice, honestly, the benefit of true educational freedom in whatever fields suggested by their intellectual or professional curiosity.

Contrary to what so many people believe the intellectual curiosity of those prisoners who have intellectual background is quite alive. Their knowledge is often far more accurate than they are given credit for. It extends to all fields and all controversial subjects.

I have found them open minded and eager to get the benefit of a freedom of reading and learning which, many admit, was unknown in Germany. It would be a pity and probably a mistake to spoil that favorable impression of American liberalism by too much censorship, officially directed education, pressure teaching and the banning of non-political subjects for political reasons.

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Extent of curiosity for American affairs is quite large.

The rapidity with which our German edition of James T. Adams' "Epic of America" was sold out shows the extent of their natural curiosity. I know a PW who has read all the essays on early American history published by Barnes & Noble. I know many who know more about American history, the evolution of liberalism and the deep meaning of democracy than their American officers.

Nearly all my camps have asked me for a choice of about 30 to 40 significant non-political books by leading contemporary American writers.

To quench that curiosity, even to arouse it, is one thing. To expect to find it in every prisoner could lead only to disappointment.

Too many books, perhaps, have been put on display and on sale in PW canteens, obviously meant for Americans only or for advanced students of philosophy or literature. "Freedom Speaks", "Patriotic Anthology of American Writings", Shakespeare, Confucius, Longfellow, Henry Adams, Emerson, Plato, Dostoiensky, Santayana, Bergson, Jefferson, and the like -- all in English -- cannot find much response among the common run of German soldiers. I wonder if they could even sell well in an American canteen..

Too much thought has been given to the political man and not enough to the average man whose fundamental problems are not political.

While much thought has been given to the political man it seems that little if any concern was shown for the mere man, the little man with his personal problems, his fundamental worries through which he can be approached, in the relief of which you can win his friendship.

The thoughts of all prisoners are at present centered around paramount, practical and emotional problems, such as the lack of news from home, the future of their country, their possibility of making a living and of feeding their families. To them, political re-orientation at this time may sound like putting the cart before the horse. It will be years before they can express a political opinion, before they can have a government of their own and, in the meantime, there is mountains of work to do and a country to rebuild.

Camps' population is composed not so much of Nazis or non-nazis but of common men with families and professions.

Perhaps a new slant on the problems could be provided by thinking of the camps as not primarily populated with Nazis or non-Nazis, but essentially with farmers, carpenters, engineers, smiths, lawyers, mechanics, factory workers, students, writers, musicians, traders, bureaucrats, merchants, teachers or men who want to embrace one of these professions. Most of them family men.

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To them education should be useful, preparing them for or improving them in their professions and building up their characters.

USAFI self-teaching trade and business courses should be made available to prisoners.

The USAFI offers a wide variety of self-teaching courses for trade and manual workers. They are remarkably well made and a credit to American teaching methods. Because of their many illustrations and charts and because they do not require correspondence, their being in English is not as much a drawback as it is for regular extension courses.

There is an extremely wide demand for such practical courses. Small groups of 3 or 4 prisoners, one of whom knew English well enough to read it, could get together and improve their knowledge in a manner that would prove useful to them. The fact that the USAFI courses have been approved for use by PWs in the field of history, government and literature makes me hope that the same authorization may eventually be extended to auto-mechanics, building construction, business, advertising, merchandising, drafting and applied art, electricity, engineering and the like.

Technical courses should not be banned.

Again I express the feeling here that technical courses should not be banned, as I feel that, in the end, they could cause admiration for American technology and respect for its strength, rather than they would be a danger for the future.

*But why
the fact is
German courses
show we Americans
1945 yes, but even they
have been banned!*

In fact it seems that men almost always retain a friendly inclination for a country where they found reasons for admiration in the field of their knowledge. We meet such men every day who studied architecture in France, music in Italy, medicine in Germany, reaching those countries' genius through one special field more surely than they would have through political literature. The same could certainly apply to this country in the field of technology and technique.

Some professional interest is shown in the field of magazines.

This craving for practical values and professional interest on the part of the prisoners extends to the field of special magazines. It goes without saying that a farmer will normally be more interested in getting a picture of American agriculture, which may eventually prove of value to him, than in reading a news or political magazine. The same is true of every profession.

DECLASSIFIED

Authority

770123

By

NARA Date

8/12/78

REPRODUCED AT THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

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The field is wide open there, to bring home to every German prisoner in this country the true picture of what is done and achieved in America in any particular field, thus counteracting a lot of false notions created by German propaganda.

It seems that a wider distribution of special American magazines should be encouraged as much as possible. While all the current news and political publications are available in the camps, very few if any farming and agriculture magazines are to be found. The same remark applies to magazines on home decoration, game and fisheries, art, architecture, and the thousand and one professions that compose our civilization.

The success achieved at Indiantown Gap, where hundreds of professional magazines sell like hot cakes, stands to show that there is a great opportunity there.

VISUAL aid educational methods should also be used.

Another field in which much could be done to give prisoners information on all sorts of subjects in a palatable and appealing manner is that of visual aid. With the help of slides that can be rented, lectures could be given almost nightly on the widest variety of subjects (biology, science, traveling, foreign countries, the land and beauties of the United States, etc.). They would help maintain a degree of cultural interest in camps where regular classes are hampered by the lack of teaching ability and/or the work program. For one thing it would be easier to find men willing to talk for one hour on a subject they know, with the help of slides, than it is to find teachers. And there is no doubt that men would attend a lecture on U.S. National Parks, on American dams, on Brazil or on the Rhineland -- with pictures -- more readily than they would study some political subject. This has been tried with great success in some camps where opaque and lantern slide projectors are available and I believe that it could profitably be done on a much wider scale.

Same idea applies to documentary films and shorts.

The same idea applies to documentary films and educational shorts. These have been asked for most unquestionably in every camp, with a definite intention to learn more about the practical visual and business side of America. I feel certain that if the moving picture circuits now about to start in the camps

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By: L.C. NARA Date 8/12/81

REPRODUCED AT THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

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contain such films as were made by Ford, General Motors, U.S. Steel, The Department of Agriculture, etc. They will meet with the wide approval of the prisoners and contribute greatly to give them an interesting, practical picture of this country.

PW newspaper could help in a constructive way.

With the same idea in view, DER RUF, the PW newspaper, could contribute greatly to the camps' life by dwelling more upon the subjects that are close to the prisoners' hearts: their present life and surroundings, their country - their future.

While giving a summary of the news and "re-orienting" as it set out to do, it should dwell upon the qualities of the German people at least as much as upon those of the American so that its ultimate aim would be to encourage, in a constructive way, rather than be "negative and discouraging", as a spokesman told me.

PW newspaper in many ways should be viewed as a professional newspaper.

It seems that a newspaper for PWs, written by PWs, aside from its political aim, should be viewed very much as a professional or trade paper. Being a prisoner although not a profession, becomes a social state with its own rights and regulations, its special interests. A prisoners' newspaper should deal largely with that which is of particular interest to PWs, with what can be useful to them, and what they cannot find in other papers. In other words, it would serve the PWs best by being efficient, practical, constructive and pleasant. And it would thus illustrate indirectly the American way.

All told, it seems that all policies reflecting new philosophy should be consistent.

All told, it seems that a new philosophy, to be convincing, must above all be essentially consistent. Propaganda or any activity devised to impart truth may be a necessary tool but its effects will be short lived if the prisoners come to the conclusion that practise does not conform to the teaching. Superficial inconsistencies however are immaterial if the fundamental principles of a Christian, liberal American way of life are conveyed to the camps. Whether to teach or to practice, there is little time left. The task is enormous, as the philosophy of it should permeate -- and stem from -- the American public, the press, the radio, the church, the authorities, those who guard the prisoners and ourselves.

Choice is between teaching and practicing.

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Authority NN770123
By LC NARA Date 8/12/85

REPRODUCED AT THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

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Re-orientation methods for teaching democracy should be in conformity with democratic principles. The well-known propaganda weapons -- PW newspaper, censorship, directed education, self-congratulation, lectures, war films -- are tools that all the prisoners will recognize as the old familiar conveyors of political ideology. They may put down the whole program as an attempt at selling another "ism".

Democratic approach should be original and totally different from the one they are used to.

Another approach, the democratic one, original and totally different from the one they are reared to might give far better results. For it would be tragic indeed if, instead of finding out by themselves, and growing convinced of, the merits of this country, the prisoners were led to regard "Americanism" as a dogmatic ideology.

"If only the Americans could bring us a culture, a thorough and deep philosophy", a PW priest told me in one of the camps. He felt it was urgent at this very moment to stress and to act according to the tenets of Christianity and liberalism.

Christianity and liberalism cannot flourish in an atmosphere of hatred and contempt.

These, however, cannot flourish in an atmosphere of hatred and contempt. If such feelings were to prevail in the camps -- which, fortunately, so far is not the case -- if they were to last too long in Germany, coupled with chaos, famine and social disintegration, the chances are that the majority of prisoners would be left wondering and uneasy. With their undying crave for thoroughness, for a system of life that answers the questions and lives up to its tenets, they might revert to a totalitarian, communistic philosophy, offering more punishment perhaps but also more promises and more contentment.

To impress the prisoners with the destructive might of U.S. may not be as necessary as some people believe.

The need to impress the prisoners with the destructive might of the United States, as exemplified by war films such as "30 Seconds Over Tokyo" or others, does not seem as great to me as it does to others. I saw "KRIEG in WESTEN", the German pictorial version of the blitzkrieg that crushed Holland, Belgium and France in June 1940. It did not fill me with admiration for National Socialism but rather with hatred for sheer force, with shame that civilized people should be so proud of showing their destructive power. It seems at least questionable that American war pictures will stir up fear rather than hatred and vengeance in the hearts of men whose homes and folks have been destroyed or killed by air bombardment.

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By: J.C. NARA Date: 8/12/85

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German prisoners
fundamentally are
probably not
The prisoners should
be able to bring back
some a picture of friendly
America.

One should not be afraid, anyway, that the German people will not have enough respect for American might. The whole of the German people has that wrought in their flesh. Because of that very fact, it is almost indispensable that the German prisoners in this country, who have seen non-fighting Americans and the peaceful side of America, should carry back to their country a more hopeful outlook. To impress them with American might will not add anything to the overall German picture. It might confirm them in their inborn opinion of the importance of might as such, in the belief that might is right. To impress them with the sunny side of this country may have a bearing on the future relations between the two countries.

sending them back with
rough or questionable
impressions may be a
mistake.

To give these men over here their toughest impression of America just at the time when they are about ready to go home may prove to be a psychological mistake. They have had a good dinner so far and it seems that suddenly the American public might want to poison their dessert. The unfortunate result is likely to be that they will forget their good courses and remember only their last mouthful.

Among captured French and American soldiers, prisonhood developed thoughts which were not receptive to enemy propaganda.

It was my privilege recently to meet in New York the president of the French Federation of Returned Prisoners of War, a man who speaks in the name of more than one million Frenchmen liberated from German camps. In his opinion, the thoughts matured in prisonhood in nearly every man followed this general pattern: a deeper feeling for one's family and a higher sense of one's duty to it; a greater love for one's country and a craving to understand it better and learn more about it; a higher sense of human dignity, as a reaction to prisonhood slavery; a feeling of the dignity of work; a complete disgust of politics and politicians.

Not one American prisoner in a group of 6000 was won over by Germany.

A few days later I met the senior officer of an American Officers' camp in Germany. He said he could endorse every point mentioned above as applying also to the six or seven thousand American Officers of whom he was the spokesman. He added that, although they had learned a lot about Germany and the Germans, every single man in his camp had returned to this country more decidedly and deeply American than ever before in his life. Not one had been won over by Germany.

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Authority: NND 770123
By: L.C. NARA Date: 8/12/88

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German prisoners fundamentally are probably not more receptive.

Can anybody reasonably expect that German patriotism will be fundamentally different from that of a Frenchman or an American? That the German prisoners will be more receptive to political schooling imposed by a foreign power.

In the end, they can probably be favorably impressed by facts and ways and by certain individuals.

In the end, if all of us who work with or for German prisoners, succeed even partially in winning their respect for American efficiency, their admiration for American abundance and their appreciation of the ease and quality of human relations in this country, I believe we will have done as much to promote understanding in the years to come as can possibly be done.

Political conditions will depend upon world events and inner feelings.

As to their political convictions at the time of their return to their homeland, they will depend, not on what they have been taught or forbidden while here, but upon conditions then prevailing in Germany and upon the general opinion they have formed in their own minds about this country.

Andre Vulliet - June 1945

"Activities of Y.M.C.A.
during
Box 1
ww II" Folder
S

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This report was prepared in February 1946, for the United States War Department. All data regarding finances and materials are provisional pending the receipt of final reports from different countries.

War Prisoners Aid of Y.M.C.A.
347 Madison Avenue
New York 17, New York

March 1st, 1946

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INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

In anticipation of the coming war, the Executive Committee of the World's Committee, at its meeting in Geneva on July 15, 1914, immediately upon the outbreak of hostilities, the World's Committee of the Y.M.C.A., with headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland, offered its services, known as the War Prisoners Aid of the Y.M.C.A., to all the belligerent countries holding or likely to hold prisoners of war and interned civilians.

This action was based on article 78 of the Geneva Convention of July 1929, stating that "relief societies for prisoners of war, which are properly constituted in accordance with the laws of their country and with the object of serving as the channel for charitable effort, shall receive from the belligerents, for themselves and their duly accredited agents, every facility for the efficient performance of their humane task within the bounds imposed by military necessities..."

Although not a relief agency in the usual sense of the word, the World's Committee of the Y.M.C.A. was motivated and justified in undertaking this type of activity by its previous experience with prisoners in former wars.

In the first World War its secretaries initiated a service which covered all the belligerent countries and extended well into 1922, until the last prisoners were exchanged between Russia and the Central Powers. Even this was based on experience gained in Y.M.C.A. aid to fighting men during the Civil War, the Austro-Prussian War and the Franco-Prussian War. Throughout World War I, the Y.M.C.A. conducted a vast and varied service to prisoners, tracing lost men, building huts for recreation or religious services, distributing books, musical instruments, writing material, games, moving picture machines and phonographs to some 6,000,000 prisoners of war.

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In anticipation of the coming war, the Executive Committee of the World's Committee, at its meeting in Geneva on July 15 - 18, 1939, and after consultation with a number of National Committees, decided that, within the framework of the Y.M.C.A., "service of an international character such as work for prisoners of war should be the responsibility of the World's Committee of the Y.M.C.A."

At the same time, officers of the International Committee of the Y.M.C.A. in the United States were making approaches to officers of the American Red Cross, the War Department and the State Department to arrive at a clear understanding regarding the eventual role of the Y.M.C.A. in case of a world conflict.

The service offered was approved and accepted by the British, French and German governments between the dates of September 29 and October 15, 1939. These acceptances were followed by many others and, on March 31, 1942, Major General Allen W. Gullion, the U.S. Provost Marshal General, informed the War Prisoners Aid, on behalf of the War Department that "after careful consideration, it has been decided to accept your offer to have your War Prisoners Aid conduct recreational and welfare activities in the internment camps in continental United States, including the furnishing of libraries and special books, the providing of equipment for trades, the furnishing of materials for athletics, sports and physical education, and the stimulation of cultural and artistic interests such as art, dramatics and music".

All told, permission to visit PW camps and supply material was granted to the War Prisoners Aid in 33 different countries, while twenty more, of less importance or because of local difficulties, received only shipments of supplies. The most notable exceptions were Soviet Russia, where no work or relief were per-

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mitted, and Italy where visits were not allowed. As regards the Far East, our services, though more restricted than in most other areas, were gradually liberalized to include visits to camps in certain areas such as Japan proper, Manchuria, Hong Kong, Shanghai, Thailand and Free China.

In the United States, the nature of War Prisoners Aid work was further stated in Art. 99 of PW circular No. 1 of the War Department, dated September 24, 1943, stating that the Y.M.C.A. "may be called upon to supplement and extend such work of the International Red Cross when the latter is unable to furnish recreational and welfare services to the extent necessary".

Although this wording was meant to anticipate duplication of services between the International Red Cross and the War Prisoners Aid, such duplication never materialized in the field. At the beginning of the war friendly relations were established in Geneva between the respective headquarters of the two organizations and, although no agreement was ever concluded restricting the program of work of either organization, it has been felt all along that the International Red Cross was chiefly responsible for collecting all information regarding prisoners and organizing the central agency, in Geneva, through which such information is transmitted to the PWs and their relatives, for carrying the PW mail, for distributing all material sent in by national Red Cross Societies to their respective nationals held prisoners in enemy countries, for making certain that material, physical and sanitary conditions in PW camps currently conformed with the provisions of the Geneva Convention.

War Prisoners Aid of the Y.M.C.A. is not and never tried to be an inspecting semi-official body. As it was authorized to work with prisoners of war by courtesy of the governments concerned and for a specific purpose, it directed all its means to helping the

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millions behind barbed wire in keeping mentally and spiritually as fit as conditions permitted. Through its visiting secretaries throughout the world it found itself dealing chiefly in morale matters, ascertaining and meeting the needs of the prisoners along religious, educational and recreational lines.

As the number of prisoners increased, and their time in captivity grew longer with the passing of years, the necessity to fight the danger of mental and spiritual disintegration among them became more and more imperative. The work of the World's Committee of the Y.M.C.A. in prison camps expanded and improved to reach its highest level in the spring and summer of 1945.

For lack of comprehensive statistical data and reporting from the various fields, it is still too early to give a complete, factual picture of the War Prisoners Aid activity during the past six years. This can only be done when adequate research in the files can be undertaken. However, in an effort to give a total, even though sketchy, account of War Prisoners Aid work throughout the world during World War II, it seems best to present currently the nature of its accomplishments in all fields, the material contributions involved, the scope of such activity, both geographically and in terms of nationalities and numbers of men served, how it was financed and carried out administratively, how it fitted in with other bodies and how it was evaluated by its beneficiaries.

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A : VISITATION AND PROGRAM

Visits

The friendly contacts with prisoners of war and civilian internees by visiting Y.M.C.A. secretaries held first place in the great variety of activities performed or sponsored by War Prisoners Aid. They were, so to speak, the basic element of this extensive service.

As civilians, mostly neutrals, completely detached from official responsibilities, these men could gain the confidence

PART I : SERVICE IN THE FIELD

of the prisoners more readily than anybody else. They listened to tales of hardship, they were apprised of morale problems,

By far the most edifying part of War Prisoners Aid work was that which took place in or around the barbed wire enclosures, with men of all races and nationalities, in the far corners of the world. It required human kindness, imagination and diplomacy on the part of those who visited the camps, it implied a lot of material help and it called for constant expansion to new fields to serve more prisoners or internees.

the number of visiting secretaries grew from 13 in 1940 to 33 in 1941, 52 in 1942, 74 in 1943, 110 in 1944 and from 150 to 176 at the time of this writing.

Incidentally, it may seem surprising that such extensive personal contact could be possible considering the comparatively small number of Y.M.C.A. representatives at work. For the hundreds of camps in Germany, for instance, there were only eight full-time and two part-time visitors. Yet more than 3000 visits were made to camps in Germany during the war. The figures are

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A : VISITATION AND PROGRAM

Visits

The friendly contacts with prisoners of war and civilian internees by visiting Y.M.C.A. secretaries held first place in the great variety of activities performed or sponsored by War Prisoners Aid. They were, so to speak, the basic element of this extensive service.

As civilians, mostly neutrals, completely detached from official responsibilities, these men could gain the confidence of the prisoners more readily than anybody else. They listened to tales of hardship, they were apprised of morale problems, they received requests and ascertained camps needs in the field of welfare, they suggested solutions or new activities, they helped chaplains, visited the wounded and sick and they tried to cooperate fully both with camp spokesmen and detaining authorities.

Such visits, as can easily be understood, came to be more and more eagerly awaited by the prisoners. Their frequency had to be increased and, to meet the growing need all over the world, the number of visiting secretaries grew from 13 in 1940 to 35 in 1941, 52 in 1942, 74 in 1943, 110 in 1944 and from 150 to 175 at the time of this writing.

Incidentally, it may seem surprising that such extensive personal contact could be possible considering the comparatively small number of Y.M.C.A. representatives at work. For the hundreds of camps in Germany, for instance, there were only eight full-time and two part-time visitors. Yet more than 2500 visits were made to camps in Germany during the war. The figures are

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approximately the same in the United States with seven full-time secretaries, 1 part-time visitor and two pastors visiting jointly for the War Prisoners Aid and the Ecumenical Commission for Chaplaincy service to prisoners of war. Altogether approximately 40,000 such visits were made to PW base and branch camps or civilian internee detention stations throughout the world by War Prisoners Aid secretaries from the beginning of the war till the end of the year 1945.

The degree of freedom granted by the authorities to Y.M.C.A. secretaries for their work and contacts inside the compounds varied greatly, as can be expected, from one country to the other. In the United States, the "Y" visitor most generally - though not always - enjoyed complete freedom and could spend long hours and evenings alone with PW spokesmen and activity leaders. In Germany, he was generally - but not always - accompanied by a German officer. In China, the War Prisoners Aid representatives lived in PW camps for a month at a time.

Whichever way they were permitted to work, however, Y.M.C.A. visitors were certain to be concerned with a program covering the following lines:

- Spiritual and religious activity
- Education and intellectual diversion
- Musical activity
- Art and handicraft
- Sports and athletics
- Indoor games
- Theatricals and movies
- Gardening and landscaping
- Camp newspapers and radios
- Special and individual requests

Spiritual and Religious Life

Paramount among the War Prisoners Aid duties was to aid in the promotion or development of religious life in PW and civilian internment camps.

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Where PW chaplains were available, they received moral and material support to help them minister more fully to their comrades. In some cases, permissions were obtained for them to visit branch camps or work detachments, particularly in Germany, with the Y.M.C.A. providing bicycles to make such visits possible. Where camps had to go without religious services for lack of a chaplain, suggestions were offered to the authorities, often with success, for a transfer from some camp where surplus PW chaplains were available or for bringing in a civilian pastor or priest from the outside. When this proved impossible, religious leaders from among the camps' laymen were encouraged to organize Bible classes, prayer meetings and personal workers' groups.

To stimulate the prisoners' interest in their camps' spiritual life materials of all sorts were generously provided in addition to the religious literature, prayer books, Bibles, hymnals and devotionals that were freely distributed, often in collaboration with the Ecumenical Commission for Chaplaincy Service to Prisoners of War and the American Bible Society as donors. Furnishings and decorative materials for chapels and quiet rooms, chandeliers, crosses, altar cloths, communion sets, vestments, religious paintings, calendars, post cards, Christmas and Easter greetings, sacred music, gramophone records and other aids to worship found their way into camps all over the world directly from the War Prisoners Aid, or through its warehousing and purchasing facilities put at the disposal of the Chaplaincy Commission.

Special attention was always given to chapels or rooms that could afford the seclusion and environment conducive to spiritual communion and study. In many instances, lumber shipped from Sweden by the Y.M.C.A. - and even pre-fabricated barracks -

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made it possible to erect the necessary church building in such PW camps in Germany as lacked a chapel. In the United States camps, where chapels or church buildings were not always or could not be made available, suggestions were often offered by the "Y" visitor to build a steeple alongside an ordinary barrack and to fit it with an old engine bell. This was done in some cases and those camps, with their improvised church bell appeals, somehow had more life than the others.

Efforts were also made personally to help PW pastors and theological students both in their inner problems and in the pursuit of their work. This proved to be one of the most constructive and natural contributions of the "Y" visitors to this phase of the program, as many of them were ordained ministers. Substantial collections of theological and philosophical works, especially selected for that purpose, were procured or reprinted and contributed to individuals. The War Prisoners Aid also endeavored to obtain from the authorities permission for theological students to be assembled in special camps to set up real seminaries. While these proposals were rejected in the United States and most other countries, they were accepted in England and North Africa, much to the benefit of hundreds of future German church leaders who are at this time completing their religious education in one English PW camp.

To meet the needs of millions of men in so many languages, religious literature had to be prepared or reprinted to fit all nationalities. The New York office of the War Prisoners Aid alone, for instance, in cooperation with the Ecumenical Commission, reprinted 40,000 copies of 15 books in German, of a theological or philosophical nature. In addition, 557,000 copies of prayer books, "Losungen" and devotionals, some of which had been edited

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in PW camps by German chaplains, were printed by the Ecumenical Commission and distributed by the War Prisoners Aid in United States camps.

Partial statistics available from Geneva indicate that, for the year 1944 alone, 46,888 religious books were sent from that office to Germany for Allied and American prisoners and that 19,602 were for American prisoners alone. All figures received are indeed suggestive of the range of that service.

Education and Intellectual Diversion

It was no accident that the first shipment to a PW camp from the War Prisoners Aid in Geneva consisted of books. Books are the first and most important requirement in helping fight boredom, in occupying and often improving one's mind, and they immediately come to the mind of anyone who wants to help men in confinement.

Following that first shipment, an ever increasing, yet ever inadequate, flow of books went to the camps from every War Prisoners Aid office throughout the world. In six years, the Geneva office alone sent to prison camps in continental Europe more than 2,400,000 books in 23 languages. The New York office, in three years of existence, shipped out to Europe (including Geneva), the Far East, North Africa and camps in the United States 2,389,726 books and pamphlets, about 350,000 of which went to German, Italian and Japanese prisoners in the United States.

Yet, for the millions of men interned, there were not enough millions of books, despite the efforts of the International and National Red Crosses, of the War Prisoners Aid of the Y.M.C.A. and of other relief agencies. Some camps had to do with one book

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for every ten men. Others, more fortunate, had as many as three to five books per prisoner, with general libraries aggregating up to 15,000 volumes, as in Stalag Luft I in Germany. The average for PW camps in the United States was 0.55 book per man.

Libraries, as would be expected, were always the busiest center of any PW camp. "It must be understood that our entire library changes hands every ten days, due to the enormous interest in reading", a letter from an American airmen's camp in Germany stated. One prisoner librarian reported that he was issuing 876 volumes per day. Another one, that, of 800 books in his library, "all gifts of the Y.M.C.A.", almost every one was read each week.

The books sent had to cover all fields. A typical library of 1,050 volumes, prepared for a unit of 200 American prisoners in Germany, would contain, for instance, 600 fiction and general reading books, 150 textbooks, 25 biographies, 50 books on history and travel, 100 on vocations, professions and trades, 50 on science and medicine, 50 on religion, 25 on poetry and art. Similarly units of 1000 German or Italian prisoners in the United States would receive approximately 300 to 400 books ranging from German or Italian classics to detective stories, and including 20 or 25 good English or American novels.

In general reading alone, Americans interned in Germany received from Geneva 41,030 books in 1944 and 96,945 in the first six months of 1945. It is fitting here to emphasize the generosity of the Infantry Journal which provided the War Prisoners Aid with tens of thousands of volumes reprinted for the U.S. Armed Forces, all of which proved of immense value on the shelves of American PW camp libraries.

Where books could neither be collected nor purchased, they were printed or reprinted. Over one million books, of 63 titles,

initiative of a philanthropic American woman.

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in eight languages, were thus published by the Geneva office and distributed, more than half of which were books of general reading in Polish, Serbian and Russian.

Much of the reading done in PW camps, however, was not meant only to while away the time. To thousands and thousands of prisoners it was the most constructive use they could make of their leisure time, fighting mental deterioration, improving their cultural background, studying a profession or vocation, building for the future. Gradually taking shape, those scattered educational activities were bound to be organized and developed into full fledged educational programs. It is a matter of particular pride to the War Prisoners Aid that it was called upon unreservedly to contribute to those activities with suggestions, books and school material.

While the German prisoner was greatly helped in this field by the "Soldatenbriefe" prepared by the German High Command and by technical books sent by the German Red Cross, and while the American captive was aided by the correspondence courses and self-teachers of the U.S.A.F.I., so generously put at the Y.M.C.A.'s disposal for wide distribution in PW camps, the call was constant for more books, answering other needs, for special works to help individual prisoners.

To meet adequately this rising flow of special book requests a Consultative Committee on Books for Prisoners was set up in Geneva to coordinate the efforts of the various international organizations working in that field. At about the same time in New York, in 1942, the War Prisoners Aid, in cooperation with the World Student Relief, took steps to organize an "Individual Book Service" for prisoners of war of all nationalities, a direct outgrowth of "Men of Science", a previous organization due to the initiative of a philanthropic American woman.

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This development made possible for many men in the liberal professions projects of research and even of creative writing which had been interrupted by the war. It helped the scientist as well as the student, of any nationality, and gradually broadened its basis to cater not only to the erudite prisoner but to all those who wished to study. One typical day might produce requests for books on reinforced concrete, higher mathematics, history of art, music, composition, pharmacology, fertilizers, beer brewing, carpet weaving and the like. Patiently, but almost unerringly, the strangest requests were filled with the help of consultants in every walk of life. In New York alone, during the years 1944/1945 this service contributed 9,277 books of higher learning to German PW students and teachers in United States camps.

In addition to contributing higher educational textbooks to prisoners on the five continents, Individual Book Service also acted as a general clearing and information center about books, giving data on publications, quoting prices, arranging for subscriptions, procuring books and bibliographies.

The following letter received from a German First Lieutenant interned in this country shows the type of international fellowship that such a service can develop:

"I received recently your shipment #3654-1. I am very much obliged to you for the valuable and long expected Cambridge Mediaeval History, which I especially enjoyed: firstly, because it came as a gift, and, secondly, because, finally, my own scientific work and my teaching activity at the camp school have arrived at an active basis.

"I can only express my thanks insufficiently here in this country, however, if you would let me have the corresponding address of the Y.M.C.A. - Individual Book Service Men of Science in Germany, I would ask my wife to put some of my books at their disposal."

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Where the call was so widespread as to indicate a general need the Y.M.C.A. went into reprinting. An "ABC of the German Language" in six different languages was prepared and distributed to provide Allied and American prisoners in Germany the minimum knowledge of German needed in everyday contacts. So were school books for primary schools to serve Polish internees in Switzerland. So was a "small English grammar for Germans" of which the Y.M.C.A. had to print 110,000 copies for prisoners in the United States and Canada. So were a hundred or more textbooks in many languages, distributed to camps by the hundreds of thousands.

These educational procedures were not merely ways of passing time. They were definitely directed towards the future. This was shown in a paragraph from a typed report on Education in a Stalag: "We are constantly bearing in mind that someday in the future these many men will be returning to their home, there to don civilian clothes, and either to return to jobs kept open for them, or seek (with many others) work to support themselves and their families. Hence most of our classes aim at keeping men up to standard, or improving their knowledge in their profession, or teaching them a new kind of job. As a general rule, progress can only be shown by passing examinations, and, since most educational institutions permit of examinations being held in P.O.W. Camps, a second aim (none the less important) is that of preparing men for these examinations".

Thus one camp of eight thousand British prisoners in Germany reported: "the school is full to capacity from morning to night. Two hundred and five candidates have passed technical or professional examinations and 400 more are preparing". From England came this note: "of 350 illiterates in this camp, 210 can now

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read and write". What must have been the surprise of a wife in Italy to receive from her forty-year old husband the first letter he had ever written! By special arrangement certain countries, including Great Britain and Germany, had made it possible for prisoners of war to pass examinations in camp and receive credit in universities at home, a fact which offered great incentive to systematic study in camps. One camp of seamen reported that many men had already passed building trade tests and government clerks' examinations, a fact which illustrated how many of the men behind barbed wire were and are preparing to make a new start in life when they return home. One camp in Germany reported forty courses with 1100 participants. At Stalag Luft 3, in Germany, a real camp university patterned after American universities was created through the initiative of a capable pedagogue prisoner, with the help of a number of former university professors who were captured during the war. About sixty teachers were thus lecturing at this remarkable educational institution. During the three years of its existence 7570 courses were given and 644 diplomas delivered.

Axis prisoners were no less keen about educational activities, particularly the Germans, and some of their camps in the United States, in Canada, in Great Britain, could also claim remarkable educational achievements. Some, mostly among the officers' camps, reached for the higher levels of University Teaching, of scientific research and intellectual refinement in the fields of art, music, lectures and literary production. Names like those of Camps Crossville, Trinidad, Dermott, Opelika can be mentioned in passing. Other camps majored in some particular field, like that camp in Kentucky which offered almost as many trade and vocational evening courses as a regular trade school

units of different units.

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and, in addition, went in for experimental horticulture and American agriculture with a class of 180 and an American instructor. A "Y" secretary reported having found in that camp a "trial garden" where 12 different kinds of grass, 6 kinds of corn, 4 kinds of cotton, 8 kinds of tobacco, and so on, were tried to find out which grew better in the soil of that particular camp, while at the same time a botanical garden was being laid out in an open space with winding walks, benches and fountains, where the school faculty intended to grow every flower that blooms in Kentucky, with its name in Latin, in German and in English.

As an example of the magnitude of War Prisoners Aid contribution to the educational life of the camps let it be said that, for the year 1944 alone, the Geneva office distributed 96,447 dictionaries and grammars and books on science, technology, agriculture and general educational subjects. Of these, 20,245 went to American prisoners in Germany. The New York Office, for its part, in its three years of activity reprinted 337,000 copies of 23 German textbooks on languages, history, literature, philosophy and law, 275,000 copies of which were sold at cost to the German prisoners in this country. In addition it distributed, partly at cost and partly as contribution, 71,000 dictionaries, mostly German-English and vice-versa.

Help in the form of educational material and school equipment was no less impressive nor less indispensable. Notebooks, composition books, pencils, pens and pen nibs, ink, rulers, chalk, compasses, drafting sets, slide rules, protractors, mimeograph machine, tracing, mimeograph and writing paper in all its forms went to the camps by the tons and actually in hundreds of thousands of different units.

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Camps in the U.S.

Serving the 420,000 German, Italian and Japanese prisoners of war scattered all over the country in 160 base camps and more than 400 branch camps, who constituted the peak of the U.S. prisoner population, called for the services of seven full-time and one part-time visitors traveling mostly by car, and one full-time and one part-time pastor working jointly for the War Prisoners Aid and the Ecumenical Commission for Chaplaincy Service to Prisoners of war.

The familiar pattern of PW camp activities was followed without any defeative obstacle, reaching perhaps, as a rule, the highest level of efficiency and elaboration found in any country. This was due to many factors.

Because of the high living standards in the United States, the physical set up of most U.S. camps was better than that of any other country, affording more facilities, more room and better barracks thus making it easier to plan and carry out any phase of the program.

Because the United States market, despite war-time restrictions, remained the most abundant in the world during the whole war, the money earned by the prisoners' daily labor at the rate of 80 cents a day constituted a potential purchasing power of approximately \$250,000 a day. A substantial portion of it at least could be used, either through PW canteens or PW Welfare Funds, to buy educational or welfare material benefitting individual prisoners or the camp communities.

The understanding attitude of the Office of the Provost Marshal General of the United States War Department and of the courses offered by certain American universities was permitted.

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camp authorities generally was an encouraging factor in the spiritual, educational and recreational life of the camps. Under these conditions the service to the camps was not only satisfying but it yielded results perhaps unequalled elsewhere.

Among the features of the service in this country was the fact, not duplicated anywhere on such a large scale, that PW camps were often invited to pay for the materials they requested, thus releasing funds for service in less fortunate parts of the world. In the years 1944 and 1945, for instance, \$441,000 worth of merchandise was shipped to U.S. PW camps in this manner by War Prisoners Aid over and above materials contributed. During the same period \$438,000 were received in payment.

Another feature, reflecting both the unusual financial position of the PWs and a fine spirit of gratitude on their part, is the large amount of voluntary and unsolicited contributions received from individual prisoners in the U.S. by the War Prisoners Aid for the promotion of its service throughout the world. At the time of this writing they aggregated more than \$250,000.

Educational activities, reflecting a wide spread eagerness to learn and study, reached levels no less remarkable than in any other country. Certain camp schools could boast of attendances reaching 60% of the number of prisoners. Classes were held in nearly every academic subject, with particular interest shown for technology, until new regulations and strict censorship limited classes to courses devised to re-educate the prisoners, namely, American history, American geography, English and civics. At the same time, enrollment in the correspondence courses offered by certain American universities was permitted.

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It proved popular with quite a few prisoners, despite the great drawback that correspondence had to be in English in most cases. A typical educational set-up devised by German enlisted men and non-commissioned officers interned in the United States is given in Appendix #2.

As stated before, the German prisoner was helped in his educational pursuits by the "Soldatenbriefe", published in Germany for the German armed forces and distributed by the German Red Cross through the International Red Cross. These, however, were generally of medium high school level or lower, and partial to technological and vocational subjects. They included no books on languages and only a few on intellectual subjects. The German Red Cross, on the other hand, furnished the German prisoners with highly technical or specialized books, with the result that a need was felt for books of high school or college level in many fields.

With a view partly to filling that gap and partly to giving the German prisoners held in the United States a fair idea of American educational books, the War Prisoners Aid, early in 1944, with the help of competent American educators, assembled an educational kit which was contributed to every one of the 75 or 80 PW base camps in the United States at that time. That kit contained 76 books, 72 of which were standards used in American schools. Their titles appear on Appendix #3.

Moreover, to obviate the scarcity of German textbooks, many of which, sent from Germany, could not pass the U.S. censor, the War Prisoners Aid reprinted 23 German textbooks on languages, history, literature, philosophy, science and law. Altogether 337,000 copies were printed, more than 275,000 of which were

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distributed to camps almost entirely as payable items. (See Appendix #4).

To help German PW Chaplains and theological students, the War Prisoners Aid, in cooperation with the Ecumenical Commission for Chaplaincy Service to Prisoners of War, reprinted 15 books and booklets of theology or religious philosophy, 21,000 copies of which were contributed to PWs in the United States. (See Appendix #4).

To promote musical and theatrical activities suffering from the acute lack of German choir music and German short plays in the United States, 17,000 copies of song books and plays written in the camps were reprinted and distributed. Two books on chess and one book of cartoons, 15,000 copies of which were distributed as gifts and much appreciated, complete the list of reprints published in this country by the War Prisoners Aid, details of which appear on Appendix #4.

Among the features of the service in the United States was a concert service of recorded music circulated weekly to most camps. It consisted of strong wood boxes containing approximately 20 phonograph records, divided as per the following sample:

Beethoven	- Fifth Symphony	- 5 records	1,500
Brahms	- First Symphony	- 4 records	25,000
Debussy	- La Mer	- 2 records	4,000
Gershwin	- Rhapsody in Blue	- 2 records	275,000
German Folk			700
music	- (songs & dances)	- 6 records	7,000
			17,280

For the Italian camps, symphonic works were often replaced by a complete Italian opera. This service was one of the most appreciated War Prisoners Aid contributions and its success was wide spread.

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Motion pictures were also among the items made available to PW camps in this country through the Motion Picture Bureau of the Y.M.C.A. It was pointed out earlier in this report that, through the generosity of the American motion picture industry, more than 250 American 16 mm. sound films were permitted by the German authorities to be shown in their PW camps. By reciprocity, the War Prisoners Aid undertook to circulate in German PW camps in the U.S. approximately 75 German sound films that passed U.S. censorship. This reciprocal agreement proved, of course, highly successful until it was discontinued when the U.S. Army, after V-E Day, included motion pictures in the re-orientation program of German prisoners in the U.S. and banned German films from their shows.

Though final statistics are not yet available, a few estimates give an idea of the amounts of supplies sent to German, Italian and Japanese camps during the years 1943, 1944 and 1945:

	<u>Sent free by Y.M.C.A.</u>	<u>Sent by Y.M.C.A. and paid for by prisoners</u>
Boccia sets (Italian bowling)	150	-
Boxing gloves (pairs)	1,100	-
Chess sets	10,000	1,500
Ping pong balls	48,000	25,000
Soccer balls	6,000	4,000
Books & pamphlets	310,000	275,000
Wigs	2,000	700
Various theatrical items	3,600	7,000
Composition books	81,000	17,280
Slide rules	100	600
Accordions	300	25
Drum sets	115	50
Guitars	800	100
Violins	1,200	160
Woodcarving sets and other tools	36,000	5,000
Motion picture projectors	-	20

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A : ADMINISTRATIVE SET UP

All national movements of the Y.M.C.A.'s of which there were approximately fifty before the war, are federated in an organization known as the World's Alliance of Young Men's Christian Associations, with headquarters in Switzerland. The World's Committee of the Y.M.C.A. is the interim administrative body incorporated under the laws of Switzerland. Its status, therefore, internationally, is essentially the same as that of the International Red Cross which is also a neutral Swiss organization. The World's Committee, because of its location and neutral character, was able to set up literally a world-wide organization to serve prisoners of war. The personnel of the World's Committee maintained close working relations with the leaders of the World Council of Churches and the International Red Cross.

Because of the isolated situation of Switzerland during the war, however, it was found necessary to open two sub-offices in Stockholm and in New York from where the work could more easily be carried out and financed throughout the world.

Gradually the services spread with the war and, in four years, extended to the thirty-three countries previously mentioned.

With a relatively small staff of some 150 secretaries and approximately 350 clerical and other workers, scattered all over the world, wherever there are or were prisoners, it may seem amazing that it could administer and perform such a vast undertaking. It has been made possible, however, only through the fact that for each paid member of the organization, literally hundreds of volunteers in the prison camps assumed the responsibility of translating suggestions from "Y" secretaries into actual program.

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C : RELATIONS WITH OTHERS

So vast and complex an undertaking as War Prisoners Aid of the Y.M.C.A., reaching into so many fields, quite naturally could not have functioned as it did had it not been for the valuable advice, the active help and the splendid cooperation of many.

First, of course, among those to be cited, are the official authorities in the countries where work was and still is carried on. Without their understanding in granting the World's Committee of the Y.M.C.A. authorization to operate in the PW camps, without their continued collaboration with the various War Prisoners Aid headquarters and visitors, it is obvious that nothing could have been done.

This gratitude should also go to the Swiss government, which recognized the World's Committee of the Y.M.C.A. as fulfilling the requirements of Article 78 of the Geneva Convention and instructed its Legations wherever they were acting as High Protecting Power to render any possible help to War Prisoners Aid. The Swedish government, on its part, was exceedingly helpful with reference to the work in Germany and particularly in the Far East.

In the United States, relations with the War Department and other official bodies developed in such a friendly atmosphere that they reached the point of active collaboration and joint undertakings.

War Prisoners Aid of the Y.M.C.A. was in constant touch with the various divisions of the Provost Marshal General's

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Office where it found good counsel and willingness to meet its requests more than half way whenever possible.

When the Special Projects Division of the PMG, with its representatives in the camps, the Assistant Executive Officers, was established to supervise the whole field of education and re-orientation among prisoners, the War Prisoners Aid found in that Division a genuine desire to help and a keen understanding of the problems involved. Relations were always good and often fruitful. The distribution in the camps of some textbooks reprinted by the War Prisoners Aid was widely encouraged by the Division while in other cases titles were suggested that were eventually reprinted.

The Information and Education Division of the United States War Department was generous both in counsel and sustained cooperation in educational activities for the American prisoners, in donating 100,000 USAFI textbooks and manuals and in facilitating accreditation to returned men in American colleges and universities.

The Special Services Division of the United States War Department was helpful in providing large quantities of athletic and musical equipment and, in conjunction with the Council of Books in Wartime Inc. generous supplies of the uniquely valuable Armed Services Editions.

Relations with the International Red Cross were no less cooperative. At the beginning of the hostilities, Dr. Max Huber, President of the International Red Cross, wrote to Dr. John R. Mott, Chairman of the World's Committee of the Y.M.C.A., welcoming the opportunity "to commend the achievements of the Y.M.C.A.

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in connection with recreational, intellectual and spiritual welfare of prisoners of war of every nationality and creed, and to reaffirm that these functions are in no way conflicting with the work of the International Red Cross". He further added that "this work is highly appreciated as a necessary complement to the various aspects of relief which are carried out or supervised by the protecting powers and the International Red Cross Committee".

Without loyal cooperation between these two organizations, both in the Geneva offices and on the field, much of the vast service rendered would have been greatly hindered. The ships of the International Red Cross transported War Prisoners Aid supplies across the ocean. Much transport by land was done by the International Red Cross, the War Prisoners Aid of the Y.M.C.A. naturally paying its full share of all transportation charges. The local representatives of the two organizations shared with each other their information and their plans, to the great benefit of all, particularly the prisoners themselves.

In the United States a panel was organized, meeting each month between the International Red Cross representatives, the National Catholic Welfare Conference and the War Prisoners Aid of the Y.M.C.A. Ideas were exchanged, plans were discussed and excellent relations maintained throughout.

As to the American Red Cross there was no cause for duplication, as that organization specialized in relief work which it performed most efficiently. Early in the war an exchange of letters between the President of the American Red Cross and the Chairman of the International Committee of the