The Night Train Lilli

[illegible] Stalin, [illegible] carefully studied [illegible] Hitler's speech. With a sou[illegible] I read it before sen[illegible] it on scraps of [illegible] and, after admiring [illegible] the resolutions, and left [illegible] that would be found [illegible] during the next rou[illegible] of my cell. I knew that [illegible] the other, that the [illegible] would add them to [illegible]. Occasionally I received [illegible] from one of my brothers; I [illegible] to have them for [illegible] before they were taken [illegible], also to be filled with my [illegible]. In these two hours I scrib[illegible] of disillusionment be[illegible] the Nazis. "It is true," [illegible] Hitler is Germany, and Ger[illegible] Hitler." And: "Communi[illegible] is heinous lie. One cannot [illegible] Communist and not be a trai[illegible] the Fatherland." The letters [illegible] my inscriptions, I hoped, [illegible] find their way to the Gesta[illegible]. They would be noticed, per[illegible] perused, and the Gestapo [illegible] drew its conclusions—in one [illegible] another, I worked patient[illegible] cautiously, week after week, [illegible] my goal.

[illegible] days before Christmas, [illegible] the majority of communist pri[illegible] launched a secret campaign [illegible] church strike on Christmas [illegible]. "Refuse to attend church! [illegible] the Nazi pastor talk to empty [illegible]!" were the main slogans of [illegible] drive. Deliberately I launched [illegible] counter-drive under the cry: [illegible] with the church boycott! [illegible], return to be terrorized [illegible] godless!" This caused some [illegible] in the ranks of the [illegible] convicts. I induced my [illegible] neighbor, a reliable comrade [illegible], I had drawn into my confi[illegible], to write a violent epistle [illegible] me, condemning me as a [illegible], a counter-revolutionary, [illegible] a violator of Party discipline. [illegible] he did, under the headline: [illegible] with the Trotskyist! Down [illegible] lackey of the Church!" He [illegible] it with the exhortation: [illegible]—And Pass On. During the [illegible] fourteen hour I dropped the [illegible] made against myself in the [illegible]. A guard picked it up. Before [illegible] returned to my cell, I could [illegible] the guard striding toward the [illegible] administration offices, the paper in [illegible] hand.

[illegible] mustered the grim comedy all [illegible] January. I avoided all [illegible] with other prisoners. When [illegible] knew that a guard was listening [illegible] my cell, I hummed the Nazi [illegible]. I had come to the point [illegible] I resembled a man who [illegible] with his head braced against [illegible] wall, determined to break [illegible] or to crush his skull. And then [illegible] wall gave way. One day a [illegible] came into my cell and told [illegible] to pack my things.

"Shall I say I going?" I asked.

"The Hamburg Gestapo wants to [illegible] you," the guard replied, glanc[illegible] the printed transport-order [illegible] hand.

[illegible] Elite Guard led me through [illegible] corridors of the Hamburg Ges[illegible]headquarters. We entered a [illegible] of the building in which I [illegible] been before. We passed [illegible] door which bore the [illegible] Judenabteilung.

[illegible] armed sentries stood aside. [illegible] were in the offices of the Por[illegible] Division of the Gestapo. The [illegible] took off my handcuffs and [illegible] me into a thickly-carpeted [illegible] room.

[illegible] short, rather grim-faced man [illegible] through one of the side doors. [illegible] eyes were deep in their caves. [illegible] the Soviets, and its chief as a [illegible]. "Stalin," he said briskly. "Glad [illegible] see you. You don't look as pro[illegible] as you did when we first [illegible] each other."

"No," I said.

"Do you recognize me by any [illegible]?"

"You are Inspector Kraus," I said.

[illegible] led me into a small office [illegible] adjoined the reception room. [illegible] dominant to the latter, it was [illegible] with studied simplicity. A [illegible] by the window, two hard [illegible], several steel lamps, a book[illegible] and a portrait of Hitler. On [illegible] side of the room a general staff [illegible] of Germany was fastened [illegible] the wall, on the other a [illegible] of Europe which reached from [illegible] to ceiling.

[illegible] down, Inspector Kraus said. [illegible] I sat. Facing me, he pushed a [illegible] cigarette case across the desk. "Smoke?"

I took a gold-tipped cigarette. He [illegible] a match and I thanked him. [illegible] thought that this was the man [illegible] had made me beaten within an [illegible] and, I never left my con[illegible]. From a drawer he took [illegible] letters containing my repudia[illegible] of communism and my appli[illegible] for Mein Kampf.

"What," he inquired softly, "in[illegible] you to write this declara[illegible]?"

I talked haltingly at first, and [illegible] in a continuous flow. At three [illegible] Inspector Kraus ordered a lunch [illegible] a nearby restaurant and Her[illegible] Jens joined us during the meal. [illegible] talked until five. Many of the [illegible] conclusions I had arrived at [illegible] the self-searching and digging [illegible] many thousand lonely hours [illegible]. I used them now be[illegible] they seemed to fit into my [illegible]. I was fully aware that [illegible] slightest slip of my tongue, a [illegible] word or gesture under the [illegible] eyes and eyes of In[illegible] Kraus, would plunge me to [illegible] destruction. Inspector [illegible] held the power of life and [illegible]. He could make life easy for [illegible] could free men, could keep [illegible] incarcerated for life, could [illegible] them die fast, or die very [illegible]. A few times he interrupted [illegible] to ask a question, but mod[illegible] he listened, his eyes following [illegible] and spirals of tobacco [illegible]. The more I saw the ex[illegible] of a trained curiosity and [illegible] triumph spread over his face, [illegible] my confidence became [illegible]. "Why wouldn't you join the Mus[illegible] in the first place?" Inspec[illegible] Kraus asked, interrupting the [illegible] of the friend that I was pour[illegible]. "Didn't it strike [illegible] they speak an alien lan[illegible] that they are like pick[illegible] parroting a scientific ver[illegible] the Number the language of [illegible] and 'resolutions' is [illegible] I submitted. "But it [illegible] in the years following [illegible] they seemed to [illegible] solution for a dis[illegible] and betrayed Germany. Our so-called democracy was a humbug manacled from the start. I joined the Communist Party as a boy out of the same motives which brought other youths into the ranks of the Hitler movement. Germany was broken then, life had become intolerable, and a radical course away from the shame of Versailles became law to every German who longed for national freedom. I became a communist because I believed the revolutionary workers could build a better Germany. I fought the National Socialists in later years because I believed what my leaders—Thaelmann, Neumann, Wollweber—had told me: that the Nazi movement was neither 'national' nor 'social.' But a mercenary brigade organized by industrialists and bankers for the protection of their stranglehold on the German nation."

Kraus nodded. "Quite right," he said. "What is it that changed your opinion of the character of the Hitler movement? Prison is not likely to produce a cheerful state of mind toward us—or is it?"

I had studied the psychology of the Nazi movement and of the Gestapo too long and too thoroughly to stumble over this snag. There was but one effective answer.

"Hitler's achievements changed my opinion of the Nazi movement," I said, and proceeded to give Inspector Kraus all the stereotyped explanations which the Nazi propaganda machine had been circulating for foreign consumption: "The new realization did not come overnight. I struggled against it for years, tooth and claw. But I am not foolish enough to persist in calling a square after all the world has seen that it is a circle. Since 1933, there have been no wage cuts for the German workers. When Hitler came to power we had eight million jobless—and now we have almost none. No other government on earth has accomplished that. The workers have vacations with pay. They can make ocean trips to Norway and Madeira for very little money. Employers who paid less than the decreed minimum wage are sent to jail. Germany was weak and despised—now it is strong and respected. The roads which Hitler built—the Autobahnen—are the best in existence. Fellow prisoners have told me that the Hamburg slums have been torn down; new, modern houses with gardens were built in their place. Boys and girls who before were condemned to grow up in overcrowded hells and the gutter, are now in the Hitler Youth—they learn wood craft, they go camping, they have all that children should have to be happy. Before 1933 each winter hundreds froze and starved to death; today everyone knows that the Nazi Welfare's slogan, 'No one shall be cold or hungry,' has been translated into reality. Well, neither I nor my comrades expected that Hitler would do so much for the workers. I came to the conclusion that I had been mistaken. I came to the conclusion that the Hitler movement was national and socialist in the best sense. I came to the conclusion that I had made a ghastly mistake."

I went on, for a long time, uninterruptedly, afraid to let Inspector Kraus listening brain slip from my grasp! Of course, by 1933 I had lost my brotherhood-of-man illusions; I recognized the Comintern as a mere instrument for the promotion of the imperialist aims of the Soviets, and its chiefs as a band of shyster lawyers and brigands. Yet I remained in the communist movement, a serf of Moscow, because I valued loyalty to a once chosen cause above all, because I despised the deserter; because I considered myself a soldier who fights with his army without asking whether his side is right or wrong. The decisive break developed during the years which followed my arrest by the Gestapo, which were years of painful inner struggle toward light. I heard what Hitler was doing for the German people. I recognized as falsehood everything the Jewish-Communist press printed about the New Germany. My own life, my home, my family had been wrecked, not by the Nazis, but by the communist leaders and their inhuman intrigues. I saw how I had been fooled. I had come to hate the leaders who had wrecked my chances for a decent existence. Allegiance to the Comintern was allegiance to the Kremlin, and equal to the crime of high treason. I had, at last, discovered that I was a German, that I belonged to Germany, that there was only one way in which I could atone for the crimes I had committed: to serve Germany by fighting its enemies, the communists, the overfed democracies, the emissaries of Judah. I hated the Jews. All this had created in me the overwhelming urge to openly reject the communist creed. I wanted a clear break. I wanted all my former comrades to know that I was a communist no more. That is why I had written the declaration. I wanted it to be the tombstone of my ill-spent and futile past.

"Why, then, did you organize the communist centers in the Hamburg and Berlin prisons? It doesn't seem to make sense!"

"I helped to set up the training centers in an attempt to kill the growing doubts in my own mind," I explained. "I faced communism with hostility, but I was afraid to admit this to myself. I was afraid of going mad. That's why I started this—to keep myself from thinking. Besides, in a prison cell of communists, any comrade who does not do what is expected of him is likely to get hurt."

Strange as it may seem under the circumstances—I had spoken the truth. Though it was not fear of my comrades that had made me organize Stalinist courses in prison.

Pacing me he added slowly: "I am glad that you have written a renunciation of communism. Are you willing to see it published?"

"Yes," I replied steadily.

"I don't think we shall publish it," Inspector Kraus observed. "You still have a good name in the Party. Why spoil a useful reputation?"

He gathered up a supply of cigarettes and handed them to me. "Take them," he said. "I see you like to smoke. I'll phone the Kommandant to let you smoke."

I had broken through the first barrier. From now on I was moving in enemy country. "I must pretend that my friends are my friends," I said that my foes are really my brothers," I thought. I loathed to take cigarettes from the man at whose hands thousands of my comrades had been tortured and degraded, at whose behest many of the best had been slaughtered in cold blood.

I took the cigarettes.

That night in Camp Fuhlsbuettel I was not handcuffed. I could move my arms as I liked to move them. I felt as free as a bird! During my absence someone had put a table into my cell. On the table were two books. One was a treatise on modern power politics by Professor Haushofer, the other was a brand new edition of Mein Kampf—a token from Inspector Kraus.

I did not read. I stretched out on my cot, intending to analyze the events of the day. But I was exhausted. Almost instantly I fell asleep.

An eventless day passed. The following morning a smooth-faced Gestapo man shouldered into my cell.

"My chief thought you would draw for him a schematic chart of the ISH network. The continents and harbors are traced on these papers. If you feel like it, Kraus thinks you can draw in the International Clubs, the names of the Red waterfront organizations, lines of communications and whatever else you know about the Moscow's grand admiralty for other countries' ships. We know most of the details. Your good friend Albert Walter gave them to us." He gave a crafty smile. "What the chief wants," he continued, "is a general outline, a picture of how these things hang together. Do you know anything about that?"

At once I went to work. Midnight passed before the job was completed. The maze of lines and dots and tiny flags, and the array of foreign organization names with which I had covered the sheets looked complicated and impressive. I added membership figures, and across the top of each sheet I wrote: Organization Plan of the International of Seamen and Harbor Workers in 1933. I did not state, however, that this International had ceased to function as an "independent" organization; nor that Moscow had decided early in 1934 to replace the ISH with a subtler and more secret form of maritime organization.

Two days I waited. Again I felt that my fate hung by a thread. If the Gestapo's appraisal of the plans I had drawn was negative—the thread would part, once and for all.

On the third day another Gestapo agent called for me. He escorted me to a sleek gray motorcar. An instant later we were racing toward Gestapo headquarters. Again I was led to the office of Inspector Kraus. Kraus, munching cake, looked at me for a long while.

"Would you consider working for us?" he asked easily.

I pretended to deliberate. It would not do to accept the offer quickly; that would make them suspicious. With a tremendous effort of will I hypnotized myself into the role of a man who fights a hard inner struggle.

"We force no man." Inspector Kraus spoke in a placating manner. "We are simply logical. If you wish to reject my proposal, don't hesitate to do so. Nothing will happen to you. You will merely serve out the remaining ten years of your sentence."

"I will think it over," I said finally. "For me it is a monumental decision."

"Remember," Kraus said precisely, "working with us, you work with the winning side. No force on earth can keep Germany in the position of a second-rate power. As I have told you—times have changed."

"I shall give you my answer tomorrow," I replied.

Leaving the headquarters of the Foreign Division, I ran into Rudolf Heitman. He passed me in the corridor. As he shambled by, his eyes struck my face—and glanced over it as if I had not been there.

Tomorrow came.

Between eight and nine in the morning the sleek gray car whisked me to the Gestapo center. A few minutes later I faced Inspector Kraus across his cluttered desk.

"Well," he cried cheerfully, "have you decided?"

"Yes. I will work with you—under two conditions."

"We, too, have our conditions," the Gestapo chieftain observed. "We will come to them later. What are yours?"

"First," I said, "the release of my wife. Second, I will not do any sabotage work, nothing in factories or city blocks. I have no grudge against the communist rank and file, against the poor suckers who do not even know whose wagon they are pulling. But when it comes to bringing the top conspirators to justice, the ones who scheme from neutral soil and send others to die in the trenches, the real wirepullers—I am at your service!"

Aluminum Collection Drive Planned in Catawba

REPORTS and plans were announced here today for a county-wide campaign to collect aluminum for the national defense program. The drive is to be sponsored in Newton, Conover, Maiden, Claremont, and the surrounding area by the American Legion, the Legion Auxiliary, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, and possibly other organizations from July 21 to July 29.

Preliminary plans have been announced by John D. Miller, chairman of the local Red Cross branch and Legionnaire elected as chairman of the committee. One day, yet to be designated, will be given over to a house-to-house canvass, conducted by the local Auxiliary Unit with the aid of Boy and Girl Scouts. All aluminum collected will be deposited in central bins, and the supply is expected to be augmented by an aluminum matinee to be given by K. P. Drace, local theater manager.

—Say, "I saw it in The News." Thank you.

BLONDIE — P. S. The Mosquito Surrendered — By CHIC YOUNG

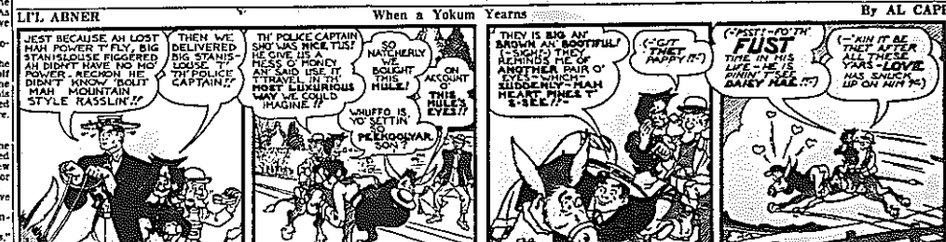
GASOLINE ALLEY — There Is No Justice — By FRANK KING

RED RYDER — A Fool and His Money — By FRED HARMAN

THIMBLE THEATER — Through Rose-Colored Glasses — STARRING POPEYE

BOOTS AND HER BUDDIES — Just a Country Boy — By MARTIN

LI'L ABNER — When a Yokum Yearns — By AL CAPP



WASH TUBBS — What?!! — By ROY CRANE

SUPERMAN — "Lippy" at Work — By JERRY SIEGEL and Joe SHUSTER