



Ready for a dash across the border near Helmstedt

'Hide-and-Seek' City Serves As Point for Border-Crossers

By PAUL R. BLOCK
(AP Newfeature)

Helmstedt, March 7.—This is the "hide-and-seek" city of Germany.

While the world watches the movement of legal road and rail freight traffic through Helmstedt to Berlin, illegal business between east and west goes on much as it has since 1945.

Hundreds of Germans from the east and west illegally cross the border near here daily. The great majority of these are eastern Germans, readily recognizable by their shabby appearance. They come to visit friends and relatives in the west. Others come to buy food which is severely rationed in the Russian zone. With the exception of sugar, no food is rationed in Western Germany.

The forests surrounding Helmstedt make ideal cover for the border crossers. Innumerable little paths meander through the woods and across the border. Silent people carrying knapsacks or suitcases hurry across the few clearings.

On the "other side" they play hide and seek with communist border guards and Russian sentries. Western German customs officials who patrol the border estimate that 70 to 80 per cent of the people are caught by Soviet zone guards. Usually they are arrested and sent home after a day's detention.

Unless somebody is obviously smuggling goods, Western border guards take little notice of the border crossers.

Usually the Eastern Germans bring along textiles or stockings which they exchange for food. Medicines are also in high demand being almost unobtainable in the east.

In most places the border is not marked. Before you know it you have entered the Soviet zone.

The western checkpoint on the autobahn (super highway) to Berlin teems with activity 24 hours a day. This was the scene of the lifting of the Berlin blockade in May 1949. Two "little blockades" were enforced by the Russians here since then. Strong blue arc lamps light the checkpoint. On a normal day a vehicle passes through the checkpoint every two minutes in each direction. During rush hours, this sometimes rises to a vehicle a minute. From 1,000 to 2,000 tons of goods for Berlin pass through here daily.

About 200 yards from the zonal border, just behind the western checkpoint, a small German boom town has sprung up. Loudspeakers blare marches, dance music and opera day and night. Five restaurants do a land office business. German truck drivers, illegal border crossers and an occasional cus-

tomers official are the main customers.

For many Eastern Germans these are the first West German restaurants they enter. Truck drivers, hungry and tired after a drive from Berlin, take a quick lunch before hurrying on to their destinations in Western Germany. For eastbound drivers it's the last chance to eat well before entering the Soviet zone.

The 28,000 (pre war 18,000) inhabitants of Helmstedt do not appreciate the attention their city is getting. With the exception of shopowners they don't care.

This former university city is a border town on an Eastern frontier for the second time since it was founded. The first time was 1,100 years ago. Helmstedt historians claim that about 800 A.D. Charlemagne started a campaign against the Wenden tribe from this eastern outpost of his empire.

Helmstedt's famous university, founded in 1576, was closed in 1810. The university building, a masterpiece of German renaissance architecture, is still popular with sightseers. Two mighty oaks, where students used to duel, still stand in the woods near the zonal border.

Before the second world war, Helmstedt was a well visited spa. Today, the old customers who live in the Soviet zone no longer fill the "kurhaus". Refugees and customs officials now occupy the building. The city came out of the war almost unscathed.

Cohen's Henchman Held for Murder

Los Angeles, March 7 (U.P.)—James Robert Iannone, former henchman of gangster Mickey Cohen, was held today on suspicion of murdering the government's chief informer against a \$1,000,000 narcotics ring.

Iannone, 36, was seized as a federal grand jury opened an investigation today into California's illicit narcotics trade. The inquiry may be the first step of a government crackdown on national and international underworlds.

Federal authorities and police at Fresno, Calif., planned to question Iannone about the killing of Abe Davidian last Tuesday.

Brannan Says Eggs Too High

Denver, March 7 (U.P.)—Farm price supporters are pricing eggs and milk out of the reach of many Americans, Secretary of Agriculture said last night.

"We must get eggs to market at a fair price or tell American farmers to quit producing them," he told the National Farmers Union convention.

The Farmers Union presented Brannan its 1949 award for outstanding service to American agriculture for his farm program. It would substitute direct payments to farmers for price supports.

The per capita consumption of milk is not far from its depression level, Brannan said, while the government has the equivalent of two to two and a half billion pounds of whole milk it bought to keep prices high.

Americans ate 11 eggs less per capita last year than in 1948, he said, yet the government has about 210 million dozen eggs stored in caves.

Urge Marines Be Given Direct Voice

Washington, March 7 (U.P.)—Chairman Vinson (D Ga.) of the house armed services committee introduced legislation yesterday that would give the marines a direct voice in the nation's top military planning body.

This action is an outcome of the committee's investigation last October into the "navy revolt" against present administration of the national defense act.

Under the Vinson proposal the commandant of the marine corps would become a voting member of the joint chiefs of staff along with the military heads of the army, navy and air force.

Marine and navy witnesses told the committee during its inquiry last fall into the inter-service row that they feared the army and air force were out to destroy the marine corps eventually.

Sheriff Shrank Turns Down \$20,000 Bribe

Portland, Ore., March 7 (U.P.)—Multnomah County Sheriff Terry D. Schrank today said he had turned down several bribes offered to ward off his interference in gambling operations.

Schrank did not say who offered the bribes. The largest offer he said was \$20,000.

Willie WATT

In winter folks still rise by night but they don't dress by candlelight.

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WHILE WAITING FOR JURY

Gubitchev Finds Comics Not Good for a Laugh

(Editor's Note: After Valentin Gubitchev disappeared for a long time from the federal courtroom early today, United Press correspondent Leo Turner found him pacing the inner corridor of a suite of government offices. Turner began pacing the opposite side of the corridor and the following conversation ensued.)

By LEO TURNER

New York, March 7 (U.P.)—Valentine Gubitchev looked straight through the reporter pacing the opposite side of the hall. "Why don't you pick up that telephone and dictate my story for me?"

"I don't speak English," Gubitchev said.

"Dictate it in Russian."

"You think it would be a good story?" Gubitchev asked.

"It would be unbiased wouldn't it?"

Gubitchev grinned.

"What are you going to do when the trial is over?"

"Dot depends on the jury."

"What are you going to do if you're acquitted?"

"I'll write a story."

"You going to be newspaper man all your life?" Gubitchev asked.

"Oh, maybe I'll go into business for myself sometime. But what are you going to do?"

"I think I will keep working for the government. I won't go into business for myself," he said with a grin.

Gubitchev walked up and



Raised in Rank—George A. Garrett (above), Minister to Ireland, has been named Ambassador by President Truman who elevated U. S. Legation in Dublin to an Embassy.

"good luck" people always say "thank you."

"Don't they do that in Russia?"

"No. Now I try to get into courtroom."

"Good luck."

"In Russia it is bad luck to say 'thank you' when someone says 'good luck.'"

"What do they say in Russia?"

"They say 'go to the devil.'"

Gill and Shelby Vie for Post

Albany, March 7.—Assurance of a contest for the Linn county state senatorship came Monday with the filing of his candidacy by Warren Gill, Lebanon, and with the announcement of his prospective filing by Walter Shelby, Albany RFD 2, prominent Linn county farmer and dairyman, in the democratic primary.

Each will aspire to succeed Orval Thompson, who revealed Saturday his resolution not to seek re-election.

Another candidacy announced Monday is that of Democratic Central Committee Chairman Earl G. Mason, also of RFD 2, Albany, who aspires to the democratic nomination to the office of Linn county representative in the state legislature.

Thus far no filing for that office in the republican primary has developed but District Attorney Melvin Goode is reported considering entry into this field, left open by Max Landon's decision not to seek re-election and by Gill's filing for the upper house.

The value of Oregon's forest and lumber products is estimated to be in excess of 700 million dollars annually.

Coogan Loses Third
Hollywood, March 7 (U.P.)—Jackie Coogan's third wife says she will file for a divorce soon. "Things reached a climax after Jackie's recent trip to Germany," said Mrs. Coogan, the former Ann McCormick. "The baby and I are staying temporarily with Donald and Gwen O'Connor." The baby, Joanne, is 2.

RONALD COLMAN

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9:30 P.M.
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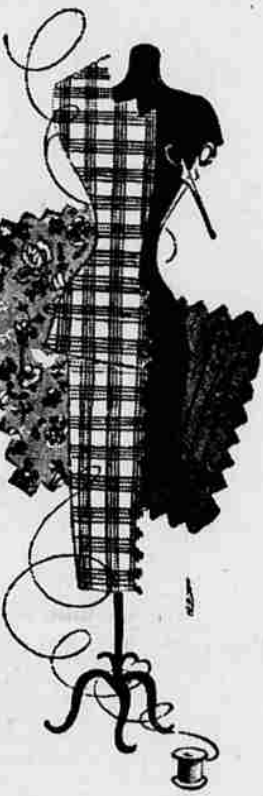
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