

## BANDEFØRER (GANGLERADER)

Let me first "skim off" somebody that really does not belong to the regular gang. They differ from the others, first of all because they will not reveal why they were sent to prison. We know it is "175", as it is called here, in accordance with the paragraph in German criminal law. It is rules for punishment for homosexuality. These prisoners are quiet, nice and clean people but the "real" criminals will have nothing to do with them. They are absolutely without any contact here. I am not able to serve up any bizarre stories about these people's conduct which are often told in stories from prisons. Never did I observe any unusual behavior in spite of close living conditions. It is as if the drab grey paper we are working with drains all lust for sex out of people.

When asked why they are in prison, they as a rule, tell a white lie! The law and the propaganda has imprinted on them a greater feeling of shame over their sex feelings than they would have felt over a regular criminal act.

To lock these people up in regular prison is total nonsense. Should it be necessary to change nature? If so, I do not know what remedy is needed. This I do know, to put them in prison with regular criminals is ridiculous. It is shameful for a society to place these people behind bars for homosexual behavior. If these people are in need of treatment they need help, not punishment in prison.

Another group that differs from the gang are "the prison lawless"! Even the prison society has its own criminals, the ones that steal from fellow prisoners, butter, bread or whatever they are able to get their hands on. It is not a large group. I only met a few of them. They are looked down upon, despised and hounded. I have been interested in this group and attempted to talk to them but it is almost impossible. They appear to be unable to keep up a simple conversation.

Being hated and despised by fellow prisoners has made them suspicious of all people. But it really goes deeper than that. Being ostracized by all they have no natural need to associate and confide with other human beings. Their life in prison is an eternal march between arrests and prison terms. One had been arrested fifty times in the period of three years, all together about one year. Every time sobbing and moaning to get out of being sentenced, promising it will never happen again.

Nature has not treated them well, neither from the inside nor from the outside! They seem to be void of any judgment. They steal even though they know they will be arrested. They have no feeling of responsibility towards society and have no desire to be with other people. It is evident that such people have to be taken care of and prevented from doing harm to society. To sentence them to prison is hardly the correct solution to aid these mentally retarded people.

Then it is my normal working gang! Next in command is the vice foreman Hans. He is forty-five years old and well acquainted with life inside the walls. Just the same he is a first time criminal. He has been here the last twenty years. Twelve years in solitary confinement. He is a greenhorn compared to the oldest inmates who have thirty-seven years in prison behind them.

Hans is a butcher by profession, or rather he was twenty years ago. He had a star role in a love drama and murder of his wife, it shook up all of Germany. It was murder with the technique of killing for pleasure. Hans had performed as a skilled butcher. He had returned from a trip earlier than expected and surprised his wife with a man.

"I killed her because I loved her," says Hans. "She cheated on me. I would rather live in prison all my life than see her with another man."

Hans has been a prolific reader during these twenty years, especially philosophy, history and classical literature. He has a "klistler brain", "glue brain"...(probably photographic mind) and he is able to quote long passages from complicated philosophical dissertations. He loves to use "foreign" words. It does not matter if they are the proper words. At times he bombards me with questions, as for instance: "Who was the most prominent, Goethe or Schiller?"

I ignore the problem and answer:

"They were both prominent in their ways."

"That is not a bad DEDUCTION," says Hans with emphasis on the last word!

Hans is greatly worried about one thing in life. He has been in a cell while the radio was developed. He has never seen, never heard a radio. Right in the heart of a metropolitan city with millions of people!

With my limited technical knowledge I attempt to tell him over and over again how a radio works. He must have had better definitions hundreds of times, but he must hear it over again.

Gandhi has his work place next to Hans. He has not read as much, but has a "better head"! He is however of less peaceful behavior than his prominent Indian name-brother. In the First World War he was at the front four years and went through hell at Verdun. For this he received the Iron Cross.

After the war he continued in the same vocation and was a member of the "Red Front Fighter Association"! Then came the Nazis! Gandhi landed in the SS. During a big fight he shot an innkeeper and his wife.

He traded the Iron Cross for twelve years in prison.

Once I was together with Gandhi while the bombing was especially heavy. He smiled when the thunder was at its worst. I believe he was thinking of Verdun.

Frantz is another character in between wars. He has lived through the whole circle. Crisis, unemployment, hopelessness, break-ins, stealing, robbery, drinking and fighting. He was able to keep his little home together during the stormy, hectic years of World War One but he could not handle the strain and "blessings" that the peace brought! The last twelve years Frantz has been in

and out of prisons. He is now in for eight years and longer if necessary. Frantz is the average German prisoner.

At this work station we have no problem talking to each other as long as the quota of work is met. The conversations are very lively. The subjects are varied. It may be an episode from the war or an old prison memory. Every so often we get into a hectic discussion. The noisier it gets, the less significant and important is the subject of contention. One will insist that we received 1/4 liter of sauce for dinner, another one vehemently arguing that we received 1/3 liter. Another definitely knows that it is two weeks since we received clean underwear. This is contested with disdain by others, they steadfastly maintain that it was three weeks ago!

I often have the feeling I am in a kindergarten, and not in company with dangerous criminals. In their minds they are still boys. One or another can be full of mischief. But as the group foreman I have no problem of control. They are all loyal.

I have learned to appreciate many good features among these people. We are in spite of all, friends in difficult times. They have given me a course in humanity that probably cannot be found in a book!

The worst part is that all of them have promised to visit me in Norway when the war eventually is over!

At that time I would probably pray to God to save me from my friends!

### "THE PROFESSOR"

In the old traditional prisons there is always a "professor". His duties are to teach the prisoners a few hours in the subjects they select themselves. It is not kept up very well nowadays. It is also the responsibility of the professor to have a talk with the prisoners every half a year. He shall inquire about the prisoner's crime, how he reacts towards society, is he remorseful, et cetera...et cetera.....

I was also called to see the professor one day. I have to explain to him why I was sent to prison. All of my papers are in front of him on the table! He asks me a few uncomfortable questions.

"What will you do if you are released from prison? Will you continue to fight against Germany?"

I have to explain that I was arrested in Norway and I have never participated in any attacks on Germany.

It is a performance that has no meaning in any way you look at it. One cannot buy freedom with positive statements, nor get increased punishment for giving a negative answer. It is only a part of the prison routine.

The performance ends with a lecture on political questions. The professor assures me it was never the intention of Germany to attack Norway. For my part I was able to inform him that Norway also never intended to attack Germany! He finished his talk by saying that he never considered Norwegians to be criminals!

It reminded me of a press conference April 10, 1940. The German officer apologized profusely that while "sailing" (innseilingen) into Bergen firing had been exchanged and loss of lives on both sides. "But," he said, "You Norwegians must always remember it was your cannons that fired first!!!"

For that reason it was we that attacked Germany!!

My gang is very interested in what took place with the professor.

"What did he say?"

"That the Norwegians are not considered criminals!"

Gandhi gives out with a dry laugh, he is the only one that understood the irony!

A very serious minded fellow reported to work one day. He is in transit on his way to the peat bog at Schülpe. I started to talk with him. He speaks Swedish and is well oriented in the Nordic situation. I classified him as a school teacher and dared to ask a question rarely asked here.

"What is your profession outside?"

"I am a priest in the Catholic church!"

He was sentenced because he preached a "revolting" sermon and has already been inside one year. At the moment he is conversing with Frantz, apparently on even terms....

There is a great psychological mistake placing the political prisoners with criminals. The idea is to be spiteful. It really boomeranged and stands as a statue of shame for the German Vermacht!

## A VISIT

It sounds unbelievable. We get visitors! The Norwegian Seamen's pastor has worked hard to be recognized as the representative of our families. We would then be able to have visits like the other prisoners get according to prison regulations, every fourth month. We line up in front of the visitors' room. Two and two or three and three at a time get into the room for a twenty minute talk.

I come in with Christian and Fredrik.

It is a treat just to see people in normal civilian clothes!

No guard, only a young woman supposed to represent the police.

She introduces herself - Hiltgunt Zassenhaus. The name we have seen before....on our letters. We have no idea who she is. It is best to be careful. We quietly converse in low voices about this and that from home. The pastor selects his words carefully, but it is inspiring to hear him talk, a voice from home!

The time flies....the visit is over...

The minister gives us a handshake. She who is supposed to be the watch dog, also extends her hand in farewell, the only movement she made during the visit. Fredrik stands in front of me, and I hear him say in a low voice:

"I also want to thank you for the visit".

When my turn came to say good-bye, I repeated instinctively Fredrik's words, "I also thank you!"

## LOVE AND BOMBS

I met Per the first time at the chief inspector's place. I was to be the interpreter for him. A woman in Hamburg had requested permission to visit him. She had written several letters to him. The Chief Inspector presents the case in a straight and clear manner.

"When did you get to know this woman?"

"We were engaged when I visited Hamburg as a sailor before the war." The Chief Inspector leafs through the papers and is unable to verify the fact that Per was ever a sailor.

Per admits it did not happen that way. A bit embarrassed he tells about meeting her while he was a patient at a hospital in Hamburg. He had diphtheria and the prison hospital had no facilities for epidemics and he was transferred to a civilian hospital.

"But the men are separated from the women," said the inspector.

"We became engaged one evening in the bomb shelter!"

The serious inspector smiles, but denies the visit!

"It is against the rules to have a love affair with a prisoner," he says sternly.

This was not the only love affair of our charming friend! At the hospital he had been promoted to a helper in the kitchen. He gained many kilos and managed to extend his hospital stay long after he had recovered. Numerous tests were taken of him. He persuaded the nurses to mark his card "positive" although the test showed "negative"! One must also remember that there were not many available males in Germany during the war!

Our Per had "hot blood" and it ran a little faster through the veins than for most of us! One day he simply had enough of prison. He simply walked away with another adventurous friend. They were assigned to work outside the prison and simply ran away!

They wandered around for a few days and pretended to be Danes, "free workers"! They were, of course, arrested. For stealing potatoes and work clothes they were given two additional years in prison and four weeks in the "arrest" with Papa Kraps.

It was not the first time Per escaped. When he sat in the local jail in his hometown he scaled the wall one Sunday morning and walked quietly home. The police looked for him and he had a hard time hiding himself. After two weeks of "freedom" he decided to give himself up. He certainly couldn't be given a long sentence, he had only stolen a couple of bottles of brandy from a German warehouse.

He walked quietly into the police station and asked permission to see the chief. That was not easy. He sat there and waited for more than half an hour before he got in.

"If I had known it was that difficult to GET IN, I would never have given myself up. You have been looking for me for fourteen days!"

"Oh, it is you. Thank you for coming!"

They sentenced him to five years in prison!

One day we learned that three prisoners were killed and two severely wounded in the detonation squad. We are very depressed. It is as if we had lost members of our own family.

But outside our work area stand five men all of them very happy. They will trade their wooden clogs for work shoes.... and replace the other five. One of the new ones is my assistant foreman, Hans. After twenty years he will again see the world outside the walls. Even if it will be from a distance.

I hope that his big dream will be real ----- that he will be able to see a radio!

## THE JEWS

Among the many prisoners passing our work stations on the way to the showers are the prisoners from the Jewish section. Their prison uniforms are decorated with the Star of David and the logo "JEW"! They are otherwise strictly isolated in solitary confinement.

We are also, of course, terrible criminals, without honor and sentenced to many years in prison. But the Jews never get permission to participate in work assignments with us. Our "Aryan blood" could be polluted. That is pure and has to be protected. Among the Jews are many former doctors, attorneys and merchants. Most of them are convicted because of "raskjensel". That is to say that they have been friends with or have married women of Aryan background. All of them are smiling and happy. They have the advantage of having received a jail sentence. In prison they are able to feel safer than in concentration camps, facing sure death and barbarian treatment.

In spite of all, the prisons are governed by a certain tradition. It is founded on strict discipline and punishment. The Chief Inspector that comes on inspection from time to time is a living symbol of this tradition.

He hasn't even modernized his moustache!

He trims his adornment in the old Hohenzoller - manner, moustache turned up and twisted to a sharp point! For us the moustache is a symbol of discipline and punishment, but also a little sign of fair treatment. That is more than can be said for the little black one that is in style today! (Hitler's moustache)

## SUNDAY

My little bird friend is sitting on his usual place on the bars of the window. He is singing his happy morning song. My cot is directly under the window and we have become real good friends. Ole Tobias and I! Occasionally he gets a few small bread crumbs for this concert, but I dare not reveal this to my cell mates. It is Sunday and a day free from work. We can remain in bed one hour longer than usual. Summer is in the air. At last the sun is victorious! My little friend on the bars is singing his praise to summer.

After a plain but well-tasting breakfast - "surrogate" coffee and dry bread - we begin the hour of reading. We have Ibsen's BRAND in the cell and select it to be read aloud.

The backdrop scenery is perfect for this mighty drama, cold concrete walls and a "naked" almost bare cell. Neither one of us three are very good readers. But the scenery, at any rate, well designed for a performance just as dramatic as the most professional theater scenery.

IT IS THE WILL POWER THAT COUNTS  
THE WILL LIBERATES OR DESTROYS



It is a demand or appeal to us.

We are many Norwegians in this wing. We notice this when the hour of singing starts. There is no prearranged time or plan for the singing. We hear through the walls that one voice begins. It goes like electricity from cell to cell. It is of course against all rules. But on Sunday mornings we feel quite safe. We have smuggled in two Norwegian song books. Seip's book of folk songs and Sven Moren's song book. THEY ARE USED!

Nobody can stop our singing! It is spring and it is Sunday Morning!

After the singing a complete silence. I cannot imagine anything so peaceful as a morning half an hour before "middag" (dinner at noon). A quiet "husandakt" (somewhat like prayer and Bible reading) comes over the cells before the highlight of the day. Suddenly the bells are ringing in all sections and noise of moving utensils. We surely can stand that noise. (It means food is served!) Afterwards we break one of the most severe rules in German prisons. We set up the cot and take a little nap!

Norwegians, get ready for church service! It is a call we have not heard for three months. We had resigned ourselves to the fact that the service had been discontinued. In a mysterious way Pastor Huseby has been called home and the Assistant Pastor Arne Berger has taken over.

It is not our friend Berger that stands before the altar, but a new and unknown man. We become suspicious. If this is the "new one", we have no interest in the service.

The new minister, Conrad Vogt Svendsen, introduces himself. He tells us that Berger suddenly is called to Berlin and he himself reads the letter of his official appointment. It is doubtful if a pastor was ever installed this way in a Norwegian Church.

He talks about the forefathers at Eidsvold, about standing united and steadfast in our belief. Forceful and explicit. There is no doubt. He is one of us.

The prison church is filled with song:

"NO LIVNAR DET IN LUNDAR, NO LAUVAST DET I LI" (New life comes to glen, New leaves are coming out!) The church is filled with Norwegian Spring!

It was to be our last church service in Hamburg. The administration reacted unfavorably. Perhaps the official realized that this had been more than the usual church service. Perhaps they noticed that something special had united this wooden clog congregation!

For us the church service was a contact with our homeland. This was the feeling we received from the wonderful men that served as our pastors. Later they followed us. They visited us as often as it was permitted and provided us with whatever "material goodies" they were able to get us. I have

no way of knowing what the pastors feelings were towards this most unusual congregation. But I dare say that never has a minister been loved as much by his congregation, regardless of the prisoner's religious belief!

We had one more service which was rather peculiar. A German pastor volunteered to serve. He went to the Norwegian Seamen's Church and learned the entire Norwegian Ritual and had his sermon translated into Norwegian. The language was almost perfect, only a small error at the end. He was supposed to say "...and give us peace". He got in trouble when he said "...and give us freedom"!

It was easy to forgive that one!

### TRADING AND SWINDLE

Trading inside the prison walls has existed as far back as anyone of our oldest prisoners can remember. During the war it blossomed with hectic intensity, thanks to rationing and a shortage of necessities.

Margarine was a superb item for trading, even outside the walls. We receive so little of this item that many are of the opinion that we can be without it, even on Wednesdays. From a work station with fifty men, thirty rations of margarine go to the "trader".

Several participate in the trading: the last one to be outside the walls. At times this person is in a guard's uniform! The most extensive trading is between the "status prisoner" and the guards. At times regular citizens enter the yard where prisoners are working on wrecked cars from one of the fronts. A situation of that kind is ripe for a trade! One day while standing in the corridor Gunnar sneaked a piece of chewing tobacco into my hand. He had traded a car engine for one loaf of bread and four packages of chewing tobacco. The engine was simply tied under the truck, and the driver happily rolled out through the gate!

A few of the guards will not trade in foodstuff, but make it up in many other ways. The tailor shop makes slippers and billfolds from leather that previously had been used on calvary pants. The book bindery makes folders for ration cards. The "outside gang" steals the material for chicken coops and rabbit cages that the guards want.

Everything is paid for with chewing tobacco.

From the "wholesale" dealers the items go to the regular traders. The first "store" that caught my attention was operated by a "kalfaktor" at the doctor's office. Thursday morning, when all the prisoners have received their weekly ration of margarine, a line up of "sick" prisoners is formed outside the doctors office! They have the margarine in their pockets. All of them leave the office in good health! In their pockets they have tobacco, but no margarine!

One day the "store" went bankrupt. The prisoner that ran the business with tobacco was in cahoots with a first aid person. He received seven days of punishment and the first aid man was fired. That was the time Alexander took a chance and worked himself up to be the biggest businessman of the prison. No wonder, Alexander had the ability and the qualifications. He was sentenced for operating on the "black market"!

He speculated in "hausse and baisse" (boom and fall) in the finest stock market fashion! Thursday the margarine market is strong, that is the time he sells tobacco. He buys on Mondays when the demand is at its low point. He buys tobacco that comes in a roll and sells it cut off in lengths of a centimeter. Every piece is stretched out to twice the original length! From each piece of margarine he scrapes off a thin layer before it is sold. This he uses for himself. The bread is sold to prisoners on a liquid diet!

Alexander manipulates his capital with skillful finesse! Somehow he manages to get gold rings as payment!

Alexander has been cheated, but only on rare occasions. Once he received a package with "shoefat" instead of margarine, another time a black piece of cable instead of tobacco. The prisoners that cheated him were the ones to suffer. They were immediately excluded from the trading group. They had to return on their knees, pay a handsome fine and beg for mercy.

Alexander took over my job as labor foreman in "sentralen". He has managed to include more work and responsibility. This includes the production of "blendingsgardiner", dark curtains to keep the lights out, especially during bombing attacks. He has the liberty to roam all over the prison. On Sundays he goes from cell to cell to "control" use of the dark curtains. Actually he goes around as a door to door salesman! He buys, sells and makes money! He always carries a large supply, it has never been discovered! He has an artificial arm. Alexander turns and twists his hand and the door to the supply room is open!

### TO THE CHAIN FACTORY

One day the guard comes around with a list of names. I am one of the ones called. There are one hundred sixty prisoners on this list, many of the Norwegians sentenced to many years in prison. Where are we headed?

It is a new "Commando Group" to go outside the walls. We are going to work at "The Chain Factory", a factory near Langenhorn, several kilometers from Fuhlsbüttel. We will be working in twelve hour shifts, day and night. Every morning we are transported by bus to the Fuhlsbüttel Station, then by train to Langenhorn. It takes about one hour each way by the time we line up to be accounted for and so forth. In other words fourteen hours work and travel, the rest of the time in the cell. Every Monday there is a change of shift to give all prisoners only six hours work on Sundays and free time for all night before Monday. Every day we receive a dinner at noon at the factory in addition to the meals in prison. We need this food, the hours are long and the work heavy.

The prison administration "must have scraped the bottom" to be able to recruit that many prisoners. To qualify for outside work the limits were upped from eight to fifteen years. Practically the only prisoners left in the big house are the "repeater" criminals and the prisoners in for life.

We have come into a different milieu with a new type of people. Instead of a prison, a factory, instead of criminals mostly political prisoners, Germans and foreigners.

The bus drives through suburbia. We are on our way to the first night shift at the Chain Factory. Eyes of anticipation stare out of the bus windows. We get a short glimpse of the world we at one time belonged to. Streetcars, cars, bicycles. Girls enjoying walks in their light colored summer dresses. Men sitting on the porch sipping beer. It is a long, long time since we have seen this. The flowers and the colors make the greatest impression. We notice the signs of summer. In our world everything is grey all year around. It brings wonderful memories of summers long ago. We must keep these thoughts under control. Our soul's protective system sounds the alarm! Patience!

The world of lights and colors is not yours - yet----it will be....Enjoy what you see, but do not despair over something you are not able to get.

It has the same effect as a film of the South Seas in the coldest part of winter....it gives more enjoyment than a longing to go.

The bus enters a huge gate. Inside is an area that reminds you of a garden city subdivision - designed and planned as a fine residential area. At the site the camouflage is easily discovered. What we can see are long, low factory "workhalls" and barracks for the workers. About five thousand people are employed here. Most of them are so called "foreign volunteer workers" and live in the barracks within the factory area.

The name of the factory is part of the camouflage. It has been operating for six years and never has produced a single chain link!

Here shells are produced! (It is an ammunition factory!)

In the yard area outside the barracks is a multitude of people. Most of them in rags in strong colors. From old women to babies. Many of them have been taken from the slums of Europe. One is reminded of a cosmopolitan market place in a southern harbor city. Some of them were kidnapped, but many are Europe's lower class contributing to "the Culture of Europe"!

### HALL 10

We are divided into work squads. Together with twenty other prisoners I am assigned to Hall 10. The majority are Norwegians. The Germans are mostly political prisoners. We are among the few lucky ones; we get four civilian workers as labor foremen. Old Union men and Social Democrats and Spartans that have not embraced the new propaganda. They are too old to serve in the military

and have been assigned here. The conditions are much worse in other work areas where slave drivers are squeezing the last drop of sweat from the bodies of our comrades. Many Norwegian fingertips were left hanging in the machines!

Viggo and I have been assigned to a large smelting oven. Every seventh minute two cases with shells are pushed into the oven. During regular working hours eight to ten tons pass through our hands at each shift.

It is very hard work, happily for us there is a lack of organization and consequently irregular production. Long periods when raw material is lacking, other times when we are flooded. The civilian workers, responsible for the work tempo and quantity, do not take interest in our work. On the night shift, when there is a small chance of being surprised by the factory officers, they take a nap behind one of the ovens. A police guard is stationed at the entrance. He is watching that we do not escape. Otherwise the night shift is pretty much left alone.

We do not want to misuse the advantages and confidence of our civilian foremen. On the other hand we do not want to work too hard either! We have to keep a written record of our production quotas. Fortunately this is the only record they look at. Nobody knows if the paper record checks with the actual production count! Whenever a factory official is nearby, we are of course, totally involved in our work. Otherwise we have more sensible things to do than making shells! We bring reading material from the prison. It becomes a habit to carry a book "on the stomach"!

One day is like all the others. Before we know it fall is here. I shall never forget the clear starlight nights in the prison yard. The huge prison walls and the massive brick prison buildings with a church spire and watch tower - we get a glimpse of their contours. It is a reminder of the Middle Ages. In the myriad of stars above we recognize old friends, Orion, Big Bear, Little Bear and the glorious Sirius! We understand what Fridtjof Nansen meant when he said that the stars of heaven were the truest and the best friend in the world.

We return to our cells in high spirits. Here we also meet a part of the Middle Ages! We have had inspection! The cell is turned upside down, blankets pulled off the cots, tooth powder spread all over. Pails of water emptied all over the floor. An uplifting sight after a day of hard work!

It is the night before Monday and the Tommies have paid us a most forceful visit during the night.

We are a little delayed in the morning and notice that there is a lot of confusion among the guards. But we do leave for work. At the factory we discover that two of the "workhalls" are in ruins. One of them is ours. We are participants in a game of chance...The attack had been planned for the one night when the prisoners were not working. Only one civilian worker was in the hall....he was killed.

The civilian workers and the guards are very excited. Will they return again tonight?

The administration is using a well-known patent medicine that is always used in Germany when

danger is expected: we are given an extra ration of food! We eat pea soup as long as we are able to force it down! We feel brave with a full stomach! But, the Tommies did not return the next night, the extra ration could have been saved!

We become a part of the "cleanup gang". During the day we strip to the waist. There is still plenty of heat in the fall sun. During the night we work, our only source of light an old paraffin lamp from the cow shed. It is almost a pathetic picture of the German munitions industry in the fall of 1942. It does not, however, take very long before the production is returned to normal. We get tarpaulins instead of roofs and walls! The ovens are fired again!

Olsen has just arrived from Norway and has brought with him a sparkling Oslo humor - and a bit spicy! He performs the entire Chat Noir - review, with skits, songs and tableaux!!

Olsen had been one of the fortunate, or rather unfortunate, to be assigned to a German supply depot. It started with a couple of packages of cigarettes and a few pieces of meat. After a while it developed into a considerable business. Olsen drank champagne in the evening and invited twenty of his friends to Chat Noir, eight evenings in a row he proudly tells us. Olsen was a big man!

Now, Olsen has lost everything! Only the memories of a hectic life! He sings about the lights that someday again will be lit in Oslo! We were almost touched!

### CONTACT

While our work barracks is without walls and roof we make contact with the Russians that are working in the hall next to us. Of all the prisoners that are working in the German munitions industry nobody has as sad a fate as they have. They are "volunteers", forced labor, for the most part farmers from Ukraine. Their first experience was to see their homeland trampled down with the modern German mighty military machine and afterwards being deported thousands of kilometers from their homeland. Complete farm communities pulled up by the roots and transferred to a foreign milieu. They live in barracks adjacent to the factory. Old women and men, youth and babies, married and singles are packed in together as sexless items...Their food ration is much below minimum and without hardly any nutritional value, barely enough to keep the body functioning. It is horrendous to watch them deteriorate from day to day. Absolutely no way of getting any clothes, all of them in terrible rags!

Their "volunteerism" is noted by the presence of uniformed police with guns and "rubbersticks"... The guards are posted outside the barracks and escort the "volunteers" to and from work. Anyone that dares to complain gets a taste of the rubberstick!

For twelve hours the so-called volunteers from Russia are stamping out shells that will be used against their countrymen and homeland! By the door stand the police to keep watch.

One day a boy was born in the factory. Mother and child were found in the toilet room. The little

Ivan was legitimate all right, the parents had been married for many years. The guard that informed us of the event was visibly shaken over "Russian Moral"! What a barbaric way of bringing a child to this world!!!!

The daily sight of trees, flowers, women and children does have an affect on our personal feelings...A part of life that was about to "dry out" in prison comes slowly to life again! Our impulsive little Frenchman has a problem with "other feelings"! Through secret channels comes the word that a little French gal is doing "volunteer work" in a hall nearby.

One evening he managed to be alone with her. Unfortunately the tryst came to an abrupt end. The guard that knows more about punishment than love surprised them. The girl was fined and her lover got fourteen days in dark solitary confinement. Our friend thought it was well worth fourteen days alone to get a little "taste of the fruit from the tree of knowledge"!

### "LIKROVEREN" (ROBBER OF THE GRAVE!)

A new fellow has moved into our cell. Since we are working on different shifts we have not been able to meet him in person. But his personal record card has been posted on the wall. It says he was sentenced for "robbing a grave"! We are indeed anxious to meet him next Sunday. Then at last we will be in contact with our new comrade, the "Robber of the Grave"!

We meet a shy little (Norwegian) fisherman with a weather beaten, friendly face. He comes from one of the lonely islands, far from the mainland and beyond the Arctic Circle in our homeland. His story illustrates the mentality of the Nazis....

Together with other fishermen he had found a wrecked German airplane. With some German soldiers the fishermen went out to the airplane to assist the soldiers in transporting the dead and valuables that the Germans thought worth while saving. The wreck of the plane, what was left of it, became a focal point of interest for the little local community. Everyone had to get out to see it. Most of them picked up a small souvenir of little value. One day a notice was posted. All people that had removed anything from the wreck were urged to return it to the local sheriff. They were assured that no charges would be filed against them when the items were returned. These people were.....used to honesty and trust in every way of life, and returned all of the small things they had. All of them....All of them...were arrested and transported to Tromsø and later sentenced as "Grave Robbers"!!! Six of them were sentenced to death, but it was reduced from six to ten years in prison.

THANKS FOR HELPING THE GERMAN SOLDIERS SALVAGE THEIR DEAD FRIENDS!!!!

The "Grave Robber" did not remain very long with us. The change in the diet from "Finmarkfare" with fresh fish and liver to our menu of grass and water was too hard on his system. He became steadily worse. He was sent home skeleton thin and infected with tuberculosis. "Lungpest" the Germans called it!