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SS Always Listened As Wife Visited Niemoeller In Prison

By Cpl. KLAUS MANN
Staff Correspondent

MUNICH, May 15 (Delayed)—Without doubt, one of the happiest postwar reunions anywhere will take place when the famed anti-Nazi clergyman, Martin Niemoeller, comes home to Elsie, his wife.

When another American correspondent and I called on Frau Niemoeller today, she knew only that the pastor is free again, after eight years' imprisonment by the Hitlerites. She was expecting him hourly. The last time she saw the pastor was April 20, at the Dachau concentration camp. He knew then that he was to be taken south, as one of a selected group of prominent hostages destined for a special camp somewhere in upper Bavaria.

There followed days of almost unbearable suspense for the pastor's wife and two children with whom she occupies a modest country home south of Munich. Would the liberators come in time? Was Niemoeller still alive, or had the Nazis already murdered him? Not even the armistice brought any certainty. Hundreds of released prisoners from Dachau came through the village where the Niemoellers live — a ghostly parade of haggard, ragged figures — but none had any information about the missing pastor.

Finally word came over the radio: The pastor was free and safe! He had been liberated with other prominent prisoners at Lago Di Braies, in the Alps.

Frau Niemoeller looked at once pathetic and impressive — dressed in black, her noble face framed by white hair, her figure erect but in a state of constant nervous tension and agitation. How much she must have suffered during the past ten years!

The conflict between her courageous husband and the Nazi regime began soon after the establishment of the Third Reich. Niemoeller was indicted for anti-Nazi activities in 1937, and sentenced to prison. From jail he was taken to concentration camps — first to Sachsenhausen, then to notorious Dachau.

At that time Frau Niemoeller was still living in the pastor's church at Dahlem, a Berlin suburb. Later she moved to southern Germany, where she could visit her husband more regularly in a camp near Munich. For more than eight years, she had no chance to talk with him, except in the presence of Nazi guards.

While their conversation was being overheard by SS men, she had to tell him about the death of their two children — one of Niemoeller's sons was killed on the eastern front just a few months ago, and one daughter of 16 died shortly afterwards, of diphtheria.

There are three more sons — one missing in battle, one seriously wounded in a hospital and one who is now with his mother, together with the youngest remaining girl.

Winnie Knows Not Where Himmler Is

LONDON, May 17—Prime Minister Churchill was asked in the House of Commons yesterday if he had any inkling as to the whereabouts of Heinrich Himmler. He replied:

"No, sir! I have a great deal of work to do. I suppose he will turn up somewhere in this world or the next, and will be dealt with by the appropriate local authorities."

The Prime Minister, smiling broadly, added: "The latter would be more convenient for His Majesty's Government."

Another daughter lives in Hamburg. "It has been a hard time," Frau Niemoeller said. "My husband is today a very sad man. But he is not a broken man — not at all! The Nazis have not got him down."

"All he needs is a rest. I am sure it would not be a good idea for him to return to Germany right away. People would be after him all day long, with all kinds of requests. He may not be in a physical and mental state right now to play any role in public life. But wherever he wants me to go, and whatever he wants to do, I want to be with him."

"Everything will be easier to bear, and the future will look brighter once we are together again."

24 U-Boats Are Scuttled In Wilhelmshaven Port

WILHELMSHAVEN, May 17 (UP)—The Germans have scuttled 24 submarines at this former headquarters of the German North Sea fleet, but all but one of them can be recovered because they were sunk in a lock where the pumping machinery is still functioning.

Fifteen submarines were afloat in the main basin today, having arrived two days ago. Some were equipped with "Schnorkel" apparatus, enabling them to recharge their batteries while submerged.