

May 28, 1944



# LOCAL ITEMS

A woman we know was in Ohrbach's, at the bag counter, looking at zipper envelope bags. Another woman came up to her and said, "Do you like these envelope type bags?" Our friend said she did. "Do you like the ones with zippers?" asked the woman. Our friend said yes. "Do you like the ones with the three colors?" asked the woman. Our friend said yes, she did. The woman drew back indignantly. "I don't care what you say," she snapped. "I bought a pouch type bag and I like it and am going to keep it."

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## Rex Stout & the hairpin treatment

LAST WEDNESDAY WE DISCOVERED that we were fed up to the eyebrows with vague, indirect quotations from Rex Stout on the question of *What To Do With Germany*.

We wanted to hear from Rex Stout himself just exactly what the hell he and his new outfit (Society for the Prevention of World War 3) wanted done with Germany after the war.

Bearded Mr. Stout was busy as a beaver when we got to his office at Writers War Board headquarters on East 42d Street, but he dropped everything for a few minutes, leaned back in his chair and shot the quotes to us as follows:

### *Make the record known*

"We have chosen what we consider to be the most important factor in preventing a third world war. That is, to make the German record known. We believe that if a considerable section of the American people understand the problem, and what the German principles are like, it may be safely left to them to determine what to do with Germany after this war. We're not drawing up any blueprint—hell, no!"





"Nobody knows until the German armies have been defeated who are going to be the real democratic leaders in Germany. If they exist, they are probably now in the concentration camps. Many of the Germans who escaped over here are speaking for no one but in the interests of Pan-Germanism. There are professors in American universities, some American citizens, some not, who constantly teach not pro-Nazi theories—they know better than that—but the old Pan-German idea. They concentrate so strongly on the menace of Hitler that—perhaps unconsciously—they neglect to mention the underlying menace that existed long before Hitler. Pan-Germanism, the will for a German domination over Europe, flourished under the Kaiser and under Bismarck, with its corollaries of the master race theory."

### The minimum for peace

"The first [minimum requirement for peace] is the most crushing defeat of Germany by force, manifested by Russian and British and American occupation of every square foot of the country. They always insisted after the last war, you know, that they hadn't really lost the war, that they had been cheated out of it.

"The second is that America and Britain and Russia—and the other countries, too—demonstrate that none of the old German wiles are going to work this time. Last time, they sold us perfectly incredible gold bricks—that the war guilt wasn't theirs, for instance."

[But, we interrupted, what should be done about Germany's productive power? Wouldn't the Germans need some way to rehabilitate their country?]

"I wouldn't worry about Germany's productive power. I'd take all the machinery out of Germany—give it

Rex Stout, creator of Nero Wolfe, has ideas about postwar Germany (story left).

to the countries that Germany has denuded of its machinery."

[Wouldn't that leave a starving Germany, we asked, fallow ground for more seeds of hate?]

"I wouldn't worry about a starving Germany! This country is too humanitarian to let Germany starve. Germany won't starve. We must not let ourselves be fooled by the old spoiled child attitude. We shouldn't act like distraught mothers—'If I don't give him what he wants, he'll break his chair or chew the rug.' Let him break his damned chair! We must force the Germans to realize this time that they just can't get away with it!"

[Did he think there was any possibility, we asked, of a peaceful, democratic Germany to come into being?]

"I'm absolutely sure it can happen. But how long it takes depends on us. If we act soft, it may take another century. If we act tough and show them that their way can't win, it will come much sooner. Fundamentally, Germany is a case of hysteria. If you appease hysteria, put cold compresses on its brow, fan it, the outburst goes right on. If you take a hatpin and stick it in three inches, the outburst will probably never happen again."

Then he added:

"And it's not easy to stick the hatpin in. It takes courage."

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Sign over the tomatoes in a fruit store on Carmine Street:

Please, madame, do not squeeze me until I am yours.

