

55/82GERMAN PRISONERS RETURN:

To Friedland Camp, Lower Saxeony, a remnant of Hitler's army comes home - ten years after their Fuehrer's defeat. Held by the Russians for war crimes committed on Soviet soil, their return was the price Adenauer demanded for normal relations between Western Germany and Russia. The price is paid; they come home from a country which cannot forget their crimes, to a country which cannot forgive their captivity.

Wer Kennt ihn? Who knows him? Who has seen my son, my husband? Ten years after, they still hope that the half-forgotten face will be among the returning soldiers, or that one of them will have news of the proud soldier last heard of at Smolensk, at Stalingrad in the Pripet Marshes. For some, the waiting is over; for others, it will never end. Such is the human cost of aggression and war; the cost borne equally by those who wage it, and those who acquiesce.

The returned prisoners gather for an official welcome from Vice-Chancellor Dr. Blumberg, deputizing for Chancellor Adenauer. A frontier is crossed, and nine thousand war criminals become nine thousand heroes. Strange things, frontiers.

Wer Kennt ihn? Who has seen my son? By their return, one cause of bitterness has been settled; the world hopes now seeds of bitterness have not been sown. The price is paid - but is the lesson learned?