



Promotional Trips to Hell

I am holding in my hand a document which transcends and seals all the shame of this age and would in itself suffice to assign the currency stew that calls itself mankind a place of honor in a cosmic carrion pit. Even though any clipping from a newspaper has signified a clipping of Creation, in this instance one faces the dead certainty that a generation deemed capable of this sort of thing no longer has any nobler possessions to damage. After the monstrous collapse of the fiction of culture and after the nations, by their actions, gave striking proof that their relationship to anything that ever was of the spirit is a most shameless trickery, perhaps good enough for the promotion of tourism but never adequate to raise the moral level of this mankind — after all this it has nothing left but the naked truth of its condition, so that it has almost reached the point where it is no longer capable of lying. There is no portrait in which it could recognize itself so clearly as this one:

Battlefield Round Trips by Automobile

organized by the *Basel News*

Promotional Trips from Sept. 25 to Oct. 25 at the Reduced Rate of 117 Francs

Unforgettable Impressions

No Passport Formalities!

To Register

simply fill out a questionnaire

Especially recommended
as an autumn trip!

"... A trip to the battlefield area of Verdun conveys to the visitor the quintessence of the horrors of modern warfare. Not only to the French mind is it the battlefield *par excellence* on which the enormous struggle between France and Germany was finally decided. No one who has seen this sector, with Fort Vaux and Fort Douaumont as its center, will be as profoundly impressed on any other battlefield of the West. If the entire war cost France 1,400,000 dead, almost one third of these fell in the sector of Verdun, which comprises but a few square kilometers. The Germans suffered more than twice the number of casualties there. In this small area, where more than a million men — perhaps a million and a half — bled to death, there is not a square centimeter of soil that was not torn up by grenades. Afterwards the traveler should cover the battle areas of the Argonne Forest and the river Somme, wander through the ruins of Reims, and return via St. Mihiel and the Priest Forest: everything is merely the petty repetition of details which at Verdun combine into an unprecedentedly phenomenal panorama of horror and dread..."

A 600-kilometer railway trip (second-class carriage). An entire day over the battlefields in a comfortable automobile. An overnight stay with excellent accommodations. Wine, coffee, gratuities, passport formalities and visas from Basel to Basel. Everything included in the price of 117 francs, Swiss currency.

Thanks to very careful organization, travelers will have no additional expenses whatsoever from their departure from Basel to their return to Basel.

The *Basel News* is organizing this round trip in order to afford every Swiss, for the price of 117 francs, the opportunity of visiting the battlefields — and in such a way that the participants are spared all the formalities and inconveniences of traveling.

Upon payment of 117 Fr. into postal account V-50 (marked Battlefield Trips of the *Basel News*), participants will receive a ticket which offers them the following at no extra charge:

- You leave from Basel on the evening express in second-class carriages.
- You are picked up at the Metz railway station and taken to the hotel by car.
- You stay overnight in a luxury hotel — service and gratuities included.
- You enjoy an ample breakfast.
- You leave Metz in a comfortable automobile and are taken through the battlefield area of 1870-71 (Gravelotte).
- You are taken on a guided tour of the very interesting blockhouse at Etain (quarters of the Crown Prince and site of an important German command post).
- You ride through destroyed villages to the fortress area of Vaux with its enormous cemeteries containing hundreds of thousands of fallen men.
- You view with a guide the subterranean casemates of Fort Vaux.
- You visit the Ossuary (charnel house) of Thiaumont, the continual depository of the remains of fallen men.
- You get free admission to Fort Douaumont.

Send for a printed guide with a detailed itinerary and all necessary instructions. Groups leave daily. Every participant is guaranteed a comfortable seating arrangement.

- You visit the Tranchée des Baionettes or des Enselvelis.
 - You ride along the Ravin de la Mort, past the Carrières d'Haudromont and the Train Sauveur, at the Côte du Poivre to Verdun.
 - You receive in the best hotel in Verdun a luncheon with wine and coffee, gratuities included.
 - You have time after lunch to view battered Verdun, the Ville-Martyre.
 - You travel back in the afternoon through the horribly devastated area of Haudiaumont, and after passing through the battle areas of 1870-71 (Mars-la-Tour, Vionville, etc.) you return to Gravelotte and Metz.
 - You receive in your hotel at Metz a dinner with wine and coffee, gratuities included.
 - You are taken to the station by automobile after dinner.
 - You travel back to Basel on the night express, second-class carriage.
- Everything included in the price of 117 francs, with generous accommodation and meals in first-class hotels.

Numerous letters of appreciation and thanks from participants in earlier tours are on file in our office.

But on the other hand, what is that panorama of horror and dread revealed by a day in Verdun, what is the most horrible scene of the bloody delirium into which the nations let themselves be rushed for no reason at all, when compared to the sight of this advertisement? Isn't the mission of the press — to lead first mankind and then the survivors to the battlefields — accomplished here in exemplary fashion?

You receive your newspaper in the morning.

You read how comfortable survival has been made for you.

You learn that 1½ millions had to bleed to death in the very place where wine and coffee and everything else are included.

You have the decided advantage over those martyrs and dead men of first-rate accommodations and food in the Ville-Martyre and at the Ravin de la Mort.

You ride to the battlefield in a comfortable automobile, while those men got there in cattle cars.

You hear about all that is offered you by way of compensation for the sufferings of those men and for an experience whose purpose, meaning, and cause you have not been able to discover to this day.

You understand that it was organized so that some day, when nothing is left of the glory but bankruptcy, there might at least be a battlefield *par excellence*.

You learn that there is something new at the front after all, and that today one can live better there than one once could in the hinterland.

You realize that what can be offered by the competition, which has only the dead of the Argonne and Somme battles as well as the charnel houses of Reims and St. Mihiel at its disposal, is a bagatelle compared to the first-rate offerings of the *Basel News*, which will undoubtedly succeed in using the casualties of Verdun to augment its subscription list.

You understand that the destination has made the promotional trip worthwhile, and that the promotional trip was worth the world war.

You receive, even if Russia starves to death, an ample breakfast as soon as you decide to take in the battlefields of 1870-71 as well; it's all one package.

You have time after lunch to watch the remains of the unidentified dead being delivered, and after you have checked off this number on the program, you feel like having dinner.

You learn that the states whose victim you are in wartime and in peacetime will even save you the passport formalities — which is quite a bit — if you take a trip to the battlefields and obtain a ticket from the newspaper before the deadline.

You realize that these states have criminal laws which expressly protect the lives and even the honor of press pirates who make a mockery of death,

make money on a catastrophe, and especially recommend an excursion to hell as an autumn trip.

You will have trouble not violating these laws, but afterwards you will send the *Basel News* a letter of appreciation and thanks.

You receive unforgettable impressions of a world in which there is not a square centimeter of soil that has not been torn up by grenades and advertisements.

And if then you still have not realized that your birth has taken you to a den of cutthroats and that a mankind which desecrates even the blood it has spilled is composed of knavery from top to bottom and that there is no escape from it or remedy against it — then the Devil take you to a battlefield *par excellence*!

“Reklamefahrten zur Hölle” (1921)