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## Italy

### Italian Socialist Party. Information for the Press

A new aspect of the political situation in Italy is revealed by some recent happenings.

These events are by no means unrelated to the mood of the Italian people; and a fairly deep feeling of unrest has of late become apparent in the ranks of the fascists. They are also influenced by the deep sense of general depression provoked by Hitler's latest speech - which was extensively quoted in the fascist press of Italy, especially the passages which indicated that the war would be of long duration. Further, these events are also affected by the campaign which the fascist government has started for the collection of wool for army clothes for another winter of war.

The will to fight of the Italian soldiers as well as the spirit of discipline amongst the fascists themselves is considerably shaken.

A considerable number of those fascists who were in favour of and supported armed intervention are realising that the war is going to take quite a different course from what was solemnly promised by Mussolini on the 10th of June 1940.

Mussolini, in order to be able to continue the war effort and to squeeze the last resources out of the nation, has not only tried to keep a firm grip on that part of the fascist party which was beginning to slip away from him, but, besides using his favourite method of violent repression, has had to resort to the so-called policy of "National Unity". He has tried to reestablish an alliance from the extreme right to the extreme left of the Italian bourgeoisie - including the adherents of the "Rivendicazioni Nazionali". In spite of this there is evidence of a growing feeling of dissatisfaction amongst some high officials who so far had supported Mussolini's policy. This dissatisfaction is expressed in criticism of the unlimited concessions made to Germany in the political and economic sphere.

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The attitude of criticism of Mussolini and his supporters, the Cianos, the Farinaccis [1] etc., finds support to-day amongst the petty-bourgeoisie who have been ruined by the war, the intellectuals, the dissenters, the followers of Federzoni [2], Rossoni [3], etc.

Mussolini's policy elevated to the highest positions in the State the most aggressive and most reactionary groups of the Italian finance bourgeoisie. They thus acquired a dominating position in the State machine and wholeheartedly supported Mussolini's "line".

The reaction to all this has been the abortive attempt to organise a "Putsch" in the

capital which was crushed by the "loyal friends of Mussolini", with the help of the Gestapo. It seems that there were spectacular arrests in Rome. Round about two thousand persons are said to have been arrested, following the attempted uprising, amongst them well-known fascists and journalists. The aim of the abortive "Putsch" is said to have been the arrest of Mussolini and Ciano in order to force them to revise their policy. The "Putsch" therefore was not directed against the whole of the fascist regime, but only against part of Mussolini's policy.

This incident was not mentioned in the press. The whole affair took place behind closed doors - a palace revolution. The only outer sign, which came like a bolt from the blue, was the order to carry out a purge within the Fascist Party. The announcement was couched in the usual demagogic phrases - "the expulsion from the Party of all who had not proved themselves worthy". The Duce is made to appear incorruptible and implacable even against "highly placed fascist officials who have abused their power". In reality, Mussolini and his supporters intended the purge to secure amongst other things the strengthening of the home front which is weakening.

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An examination of the results of the campaign against war and fascism initiated by the Socialist Party of Italy with the slogans: "Down with war, down with fascism!" has shown that:

a) The leaders of the Party were able to express the deepest aspirations of the Italian people against the war and against fascism;

b) the war policy of Mussolini, Ciano, Farinacci and their like has aroused strong opposition not only amongst certain circles of the capitalist bourgeoisie but also amongst the fascists themselves;

c) the fascist authorities in their attempt to brand as inventions of British propaganda the manifestations of hostility to war and hatred of fascism have only succeeded in demonstrating the truth of these statements;

d) the repression and the arrests which have mainly affected elements outside the Socialist Party organisation, have not caused any depression, but

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have strengthened the spirit of opposition.

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There are established in Italy to-day about four thousand Nazi police officers, and about fifteen thousand SS are said to be ready to intervene in support of Mussolini. The other German officials who dominate, direct and control the various branches of the State apparatus in the political, economic and administrative field, and the war industries, are not included in those four thousand Gestapo officials. Hatred of the German people and the German army, is more common than ever; it is deeper in the occupied regions: in the Campagna, in the coastal zone of Calabria and in Sicily. Although the behaviour of the German troops is outwardly correct in some cities of Sicily, this is not the case in the smaller towns and villages and in the interior of the island. Their arrogant and supercilious airs and their behaviour towards the Sicilian

women are revolting and brutal. It has more than once happened that German soldiers have treated women as if they were prostitutes. In Northern Italy, bitterness against the Germans has not yet developed into hatred because the people of these regions have not experienced the brutality of the German troops. In North Italy, there is no army of occupation, but only a few soldiers are there temporarily, convalescent or on leave. The occupation is south of Rome. In Sicily, this hatred may lead to violent uprisings.

June 1942.

## Germany

The following judgments on the German broadcasts by the B.B.C. have been sent to us by workers who are engaged in underground political activities in Hitler Germany:

### Radio

"Listening in to broadcasts from London is very widespread in opposition circles. Special attention is paid to the broadcasts to workers ("Arbeiter-Programm"). It would be good to answer questions which come to German opposition circles in the worker's broadcasts.

It is important to show again and again by convincing examples that the British left-wing movement is taking an active part in the war, and that it is looking after the interests of the workers.

The key-note of the Goebbels[4] propaganda is: 'Should we lose the war, you, German workers, would become enslaved; therefore you must help to achieve victory'. In view of this propaganda it is especially important to

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outline constructive peace plans for a future Europe, and wherever possible to point out what concrete steps have been already taken in this direction.

In order to support this gloomy prophecy, German propaganda very often quotes etc. from speeches of British politicians, or from the B.B.C. Vansittart's[5] "Black Record" is also used for this purpose. Such quotations are displayed on big posters in the streets. A very clear distinction between the German people and the Nazis should be made in the broadcast from London. And of course any hint, however vague, about Germany being carved up after the war is but grist to the mill of German propaganda.

It is especially important to note carefully the points we have mentioned about anti-Nazi propaganda just now because the opposition of the German people has been growing recently."

Here is an extract from a letter written by a member of a socialist organisation active in the Rhineland:

"We listen in to the broadcasts from England, but we do not find them of much value at present because recently these broadcasts have become too antagonistic to the whole of the German people and thereby serve as propaganda for the Nazis."

A woman from Southern Germany, belonging to the anti-Nazi intelligentsia, writes:

"We have organised a system of listening in to broadcasts and reporting about them.

We are satisfied with the contents of the broadcasts."

The following is an extract from a report of another group:

"In yesterday's worker's broadcast we were especially pleased with the speech of the West Indian Negro who is now President of the Students Union in Oxford. He spoke very well. But we were also very glad to hear that a Negro had become the President of this important students group."

## **Bombing**

From a letter of a Jewish woman who left the Third Reich at the end of 1941:

"The mood of the people in Germany is anything but happy. The effect of the bombings is undeniable. Especially in Berlin a critical mood prevails. I often heard very derogatory remarks about the Nazis, and I was surprised how little fear of the Gestapo terror was shown by those who made these remarks.

In Hanover the following places had been destroyed through air bombardment up to the end of 1941: The goods station at the Weidendamm, the Technical High School, the Koenig and Ebhardt factory [6]. The Continental [7] (rubber works) suffered only slight damage. The Hanomag [8] was quite undamaged. I was especially surprised about this as it is one of the largest German tank-production works.

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In Misburg, near Hanover, the Oil refineries were hit; and the flames lit the skies for days."

From a letter written in the Rhineland at the end of May, it appears that the destruction caused by the bombing at that time was fairly large and that the continuous air-raid alerts had made the population very nervous.

In Munich, the Nazis sent cars with loud-speakers up and down the streets to counteract the English "Atrocity Propaganda" about the effect of the air-attacks on Cologne. But since - according to the German propaganda - only "a few traitors to their Fatherland" listen in to this English "Atrocity Propaganda" this big demonstration caused a certain amount of amusement.

The Hamburg dock workers are not exactly pleased by the special concert for their welfare shown by the Nazis. Specially good air-raid shelters have been built for them near the places where they work and they are also obliged to remain there during the night when air attacks are expected. Obviously, the Nazis want to preserve the lives of these valuable workers as far as possible. But this arrangement means that the workers are separated from their families and are much more anxious because they do not know what is happening at home.

## **Resistance**

The following reports come from various sources in Germany.

"It's a fact that before Himmler took charge of the A.R.P. in Germany - which coincided with the dismissal of very many A.R.P. wardens whose posts were filled by S.S. men - slogans against the Nazis were very often chalked up in public places during air raids."

"Amongst the fourteen anti-fascists who were sentenced to death in Mannheim ten were Social Democrats and four were Communists. They were sentenced for the following offences among others: distribution of leaflets, chalking up of anti-Nazi slogans, acts of sabotage in the factories, and the organisation of deliberate inaccuracies in precision work."

## **Anti-Semitism**

The following incident shows how little anti-Semitism has taken root in the German people:

"An elderly Jewish couple were sitting in the tram-car which runs from Cannstatt to Stuttgart. The car was already overcrowded when a soldier entered accompanied by a young woman. This woman demanded that the two old Jews should stand up so that she and her companion could sit. This insolent behaviour aroused great indignation among the other passengers. An argument started which lasted for half an hour (till the terminus was reached). During this discussion someone spoke about the heroism of the German soldiers on

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the Eastern Front. To this the comment was made that:

'Nowadays more heroism is needed to wear the yellow star of the Jews than to be a soldier on the Eastern Front.'

No objection was taken to this remark."

## **Communist Propaganda**

"The Communists in Germany are systematically carrying out a whispering campaign criticising the British war effort as being too slack. They declare emphatically that the Russians alone will determine the outcome of the war."

"Special rewards are given to soldiers at the front who capture pill-boxes. These premiums vary from 200 to 1,000 Marks, they are, however, not paid direct to the soldiers but credited to them as savings by the government."

## **Lack of Discipline**

Below we give extracts from "Mitteilungen fuer die Truppe" **[9]** (Information for the troops) issued by the O.K.W.:

"When a soldier has had a hard time at the front and returns home - it may be on leave, for home duty, or to recover from illness or wounds - his desire for freedom is especially strong. Any reasonable person can sympathise with this feeling. But there are very definite limits to the extent to which a man in uniform can give expression to this urge for freedom - limits which must be more rigid for a soldier than for a civilian. A man who wears uniform in war-time Germany, in the street, in a public place, the cinema or the theatre must always live up to the honour of this uniform. For example it is bad enough if a civilian is seen in a state of drunkenness, but such a lack of discipline is quite unthinkable in the case of a soldier. ... The German people are so accustomed to irreproachable conduct on the part of the soldiers that any exception arouses disgust.

It would moreover be unheard of for a soldier to come into conflict with the police. In wartime the duties of the police are in any case very strenuous. A feeling of comradeship should exist between the soldier in uniform and the policeman on duty. Our soldiers are indeed fighting for the future well-being of the German people. A soldier who made difficulties for the official responsible for discipline on the home front would commit a great crime."

## Equality of Sacrifice

It is well-known that in spite of severe rationing no German in the Third Reich who has money and influential connections need go hungry or cold. What is probably less well-known is the fact that there exists an official German organisation ("The German Colony in Switzerland") which is engaged in making propaganda for the sending of parcels to Greater Germany ("Versand von Liebesgaben nach Gross-Deutschland"). The official advertisement

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states that:

"Parcels can be sent to friends and relatives through our agency as below:

1 lb Coffee	1½ lbs Coffee
1½ lbs Chocolate Powder	1½ lbs Chocolate Powder
1 tin of Sardines in Oil 200 gr. Net.	½ lb Tea
Price: 28 Fr.	2 tins of Sardines in oil 200 gr. Net.
	Price 47,50 Fr.

The goods are sent duty free by permission of the German authorities."

By these means the Nazis try to replenish their currency reserve and at the same time they give people with plenty of money the opportunity to evade the German rationing system. Needless to say it is not the German workers who benefit from this officially authorised black market.

(W.G. Eichler)

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## *Editorische Anmerkungen*

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1 - *Roberto Farinacci (1892-1945), führendes Mitglied der italienischen faschistischen Partei, Bürgermeister von Cremona (ab 1922), Teilnahme am italienisch-äthiopischen (1935) und am spanischen Bürgerkrieg (1937), bedrängte Mussolini zur Allianz mit Hitler, nach Mussolinis Fall Flucht in das von Deutschen besetzte Norditalien, von antifaschistischen Partisanen erschossen (1945).*

2 - *Luigi Federzoni (1878-1967), italienischer Politiker, Präsident des Senats (1929-*

1939).

- 3 - *Edmondo Rossoni (1884-1965), Mitglied der italienischen faschistischen Partei (ab 1921), Minister für Land- und Forstwirtschaft (1935-1939), nach seinem Nein zur Vertrauensfrage Mussolinis (1943) in Abwesenheit zum Tode verurteilt, Flucht nach Kanada, Rückkehr nach Italien (1947).*
- 4 - *Paul Joseph Goebbels (1897-1945), NS-Politiker, Reichsminister für Propaganda und Volksaufklärung (1933-1945) und „Generalbevollmächtigter für den totalen Kriegseinsatz“ (1944-1945), federführende Beteiligung an der nationalsozialistischen Gewaltherrschaft, Selbstmord (1945).*
- 5 - *Lord Robert Vansittart (1881-1957), britischer Politiker und Regierungsberater, Veröffentlichung der deutschfeindlichen Broschüre „Black record: Germans past and present“ (1941).*
- 6 - *„König & Ebhardt“ = „J.C. König und Ebhardt, Großdruckerei in Hannover, die laut „Europe speaks“ Ende 1941 bei alliierten Luftangriffen bombardiert wurde.*
- 7 - *„Continental“, 1871 in Hannover gegründetes Unternehmen der Gummiindustrie, Reifenproduktion.*
- 8 - *„Hanomag“, Hannoversche Maschinenbau AG, 1871 in Hannover gegründetes Unternehmen der Maschinenbauindustrie, 1952 von der Rhein Stahl AG übernommen.*
- 9 - *„Mitteilungen für die Truppe“, vom Oberkommando der Wehrmacht (OKW) herausgegebenes Mitteilungsblatt für die deutschen Soldaten an der Front.*