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## EUROPE speaks

[Heft 14,]  
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### Italy

#### The Purge

We have already published reports concerning the internal situation in Italy. As a consequence of an attempted plot against Mussolini and Ciano a number of people were arrested who had formerly been close collaborators of Mussolini. Amongst these were Ex-minister Tassinari[2]; Ex-minister Rossoni; the former secretary of the Fascist party, Serena[3].

A further purge of the Fascist Party is now planned by which still more of the Duce's one-time intimate friends are to be thrown overboard. The German ambassador von Mackensen[4] seems to have had an important say in this matter. The story goes that he told Ciano: "Germany will not stand by and watch the war being lost as a result of Italy's internal weaknesses."

The support given by Hitler's agents to Mussolini, Ciano, Farinacci and their accomplices has resulted in their penetration into every branch of state machinery. They have even established themselves in some leading positions where they enact laws.

The corruption and greed of the fascist officials has increased the popular discontent and has led to the transformation of certain political institutions of the party into police institutions.

The practice of consulting leading officials of the Fascist party whenever any political or administrative appointments were made had already been established. According to the new order of the day by the Duce himself: "Those who occupy official positions cannot be appointed to any additional administrative post without the sanction of the executive of the party."

The reason for this new regulation is fairly obvious: The Fascist party machine shows signs of internal disruption. Several old fascist leaders, including very well-known personalities, no longer follow Mussolini's political leadership, and carry on a political struggle against him.

#### Food

In spite of the optimistic communiqué concerning agricultural production the truth is that there is evidence of deterioration in all spheres of agriculture both as regards quantity and quality.

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The consumption of food amongst the civilian population has been considerably

reduced, and even the soldiers have had their rations cut; for example the bread ration for each soldier is only 350 gr. daily.

The decrease in agricultural production is due to various causes; reduction of male labour as a result of calling up; scarcity and inferior quality of agricultural machinery; lack of manure; the continuous requisitioning and slaughtering of cattle. Besides this, there is a certain amount of passive resistance on the part of the farmers who for example bury large quantities of corn in the ground in order to prevent it being requisitioned.

The food situation in Italy is very bad. The decrees issued by "the co-ordinated Committee for Supply" presided over by Mussolini, regulating distribution and fixing prices and wages in agriculture and industry, have not improved the position.

The food shortage in Italy has deepened the hatred for the Germans. It is said for example that large amounts of foodstuffs have been sent to the Lybian Front, not to the Italian troops, but to the Germans. Even if this is only a rumour it shows the feelings which exist between the Italians and their "Allies".

From the same source (from a teacher) we hear that in his school it happened more and more frequently that children fainted during the lessons from lack of nourishment.

## **The workers**

The industrial working-class presents a similar picture of discontent. Although the war industry is working at full speed, the fascist industrial magnates still carry on their particularly shameless exploitation of the workers of all categories.

The labour agreements sanction this unspeakable exploitation. They are drawn up by the fascist trade unions on the basis of proposals presented to them by the employers associations, and are concluded without the workers concerned being so much as informed.

Clashes between the police and the people are a daily occurrence. On the threshold of the fourth year of war with the prospect of an even severer winter than the last, the belief in a fascist victory has become still fainter than before.

Anti-war demonstrations are reported from Como, Torre del Greco (near Naples), Bari, Alessandria and Gorizia.

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## **Germany**

### **Radio**

A German journalist reports:

"It is often practically impossible to hear the English broadcasts in Germany. The German radio intervenes so loudly that every time one tunes in to the English station one hears the German interruptions. It is therefore important to drop more leaflets again and small informative pamphlets."

### **Food Shortage**

He reports also the following on the food situation:

"A number of foodstuffs including potatoes and bread are extremely scarce."

Then he says, "it is practically impossible for the civilian population to get anything repaired when metal is required for it. What is broken must remain broken. This cannot be remedied because of the need for economy in raw materials, and because the mechanics are occupied in the armament industries. This shortage of labour and raw materials is making itself increasingly felt amongst the people. Watches, baby carriages, kitchen utensils, and a thousand other small objects cannot be repaired; these taken singly are not so important, but together they represent the necessities of daily life. Recently a man brought back to Germany as a present for his wife some elastic, a floor cloth, a scrubbing brush, some pepper and some chocolate.

## Foreign Workers

The foreign worker produces about a third as much as a skilled German worker. The working capacity of Jews is higher than that of the foreign workers, though it does not equal that of a skilled worker. For this reason Jewish workers are at the moment very much in demand by the employers.

## Victory?

The German people have to a large extent given up believing in a German victory. On the other hand this belief is still firmly held (apart from higher Nazi circles) in military circles and by official journalists. The military are absolutely convinced that neither America nor England are preparing any serious attack in the West, so that Germany can concentrate her whole military strength against Russia. It is hoped that in 1½ or 2 years Russia will be defeated."

## Frau Hess [5]

We hear from reliable sources that:

"Frau Hess and her child are well looked after in Germany. They are still living in their large villa and her husband's salary is paid out to her as previously. This leads many people to draw the conclusion that Hess had Hitler consent in flying to England. For it is very unlikely that the Nazis would continue to pay out the salary of an official who had escaped from Germany. Besides in such a case wife and child would have been held as hostages." - It is of course also possible that they wish to keep his wife under their control and keep her in favour in order to try to obtain information from her.

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## Feats of Endurance

A Swiss chauffeur who was paid by the Germans to drive on the Eastern front said that it was unbelievable what tremendous feats the German chauffeurs were capable of. It was nothing out of the ordinary for them to drive for 24 hours on end and then only take three hours sleep before sitting at the wheel again for another 24 hours. He had never thought such things were possible, and it was certainly beyond his capacity. These people had undergone a terribly rigorous training in order to enable them to perform such feats. When asked whether they took stimulants he replied that the German soldiers were now refusing to do so, as they had learnt from experience that in the long run such drugs were of no avail. But as these chemicals were now simply mixed

in their food already the soldiers who had no choice but to eat what they were given, were forced to take stimulants in this manner. He added that the moment they were discharged from duty and were brought into the hospital or rest homes, their nerves were absolutely at breaking point. Their first reaction was to sleep continuously, and when at last they woke up their nerves were so on edge that they frequently kicked the nurses simply in an uncontrollable fit of irritation.

## Comforts Provided

The soldiers, he thought, were very well looked after; they received meat, beer, wine etc. He had the impression that the soldiers were treated with special care and that every effort was made to provide them with every possible and imaginable comfort. The kitchens were fitted out with every device that could be thought of, the washkitchens which were attached had the most modern and largest washing machines, even big bathrooms were included to give the soldiers the possibility of taking a bath whenever there was an opportunity.

Of course all this paraphernalia could not be brought to the front line, but as soon as the soldiers were moved a little further back everything was done to make life as comfortable as possible for them.

## Health Resort Switzerland

The Germans are buying up more and more sanatoria in Switzerland. An arrogant German is said to have remarked to an acquaintance of his: "Switzerland will become our health resort in the New Europe. We will then deport the Swiss people to the East."

## France

### "Le Populaire" [6]

The former daily paper of the French Socialists has been published once more from May 15th, 1942, illegally of course. The main article runs as follows:

"The Populaire Reappears."

The last number of the 'Populaire', chief organ of the Socialist Party (S.F.I.O.), to appear openly was dated the 18th June, 1940. It announced the resignation of the ministry of P. Reynaud, and the members of the Pétain Cabinet; it published the famous appeal of the new head of the government: 'We must give up the struggle'. We repeat, this was the last number which

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appeared openly. It is true that after the Germans entered Clermond-Ferrand - half a million people conquered by 1,500 soldiers of the Third Reich - the socialist daily was supposed to cease publication. But on the 8th of July a number was printed which was to have been forbidden by Laval. It contained an article by Marx Dormoy [7] who wrote:

'In the midst of this ghastly tragedy through which our country is living, the Populaire once again takes its place. It remains as it was yesterday, the rallying ground of the working-class, of the socialists and republicans.'

Since then nothing more - no, there was something; with courage, optimism and

patience in face of everything men struggled to reconstitute a socialist movement in the country. You have before your eyes one of the first results of these efforts. The Populaire reappears. To-day, a monthly, to-morrow a bi-monthly, then a weekly. The already large number of copies distributed will increase still more. Soon, to-morrow perhaps, it will become the great daily paper of the Fourth Republic."

We have also received the second and third issues of the "Populaire", which is now printed instead of duplicated and consists of four pages instead of two. The following is the editorial, from the second number of the "Populaire":

### **"To our Friends"**

"The first number of the new 'Populaire' has enjoyed a brilliant success. We were besieged for copies. Still more were required. Nowhere were there enough to go round. And yet it was only a small duplicated sheet, of poor appearance, in faint type which together with certain technical difficulties and unavoidable errors of transmission made parts of it nearly unreadable and unintelligible.

However our militants have been inspired with renewed hope, those who up till now we had not been able to contact: the 'Populaire' is appearing; these people then have not remained idle; the party has come to life again! Thus the 'official truth' is faced with Truth itself which is emerging slowly at first, confused perhaps, then more insistent, more definite, coming forth at last to the full light of day.

To-day already you can see the difference in the appearance - between the first and second numbers. And the number of copies have been almost doubled. We hope to do better still in the future. It will certainly not be without difficulties, without efforts, without repression.

But it will be with wise audacity, with prudent courage. Militants of to-day, cadres of the regime of to-morrow."

### **Illegal Leaflets**

Besides their illegal papers the opposition groups are issuing leaflets for mass distribution. We reproduce the text of two leaflets published by "Libération":

"Workers! Sabotage production for the German war machine. Though Hitler has worked the German people for eight years to the limit of their strength for his war machine, he has still not produced enough cars to secure victory.

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He now has to rely on the work of the oppressed peoples of Europe to bring relief to his people and save him from defeat.

Every act of sabotage, every minute's work lost saves a human life.

Follow the example of the occupied zone, of Belgium and Holland, of all free men. In your factory whose products Vichy allows to be sent to Germany, carry out acts of sabotage, go slow.

A defective machine tool, a loose screw, a pin prick in the preserving tin, will hasten the German defeat."

"Workers of France!

Go and take work in Germany!

There you will forget the chains to fetter France;

You will leave your family alone at the mercy of Vichy;

You will not be able to send them anything, living is expensive in Germany;

You will not send them so much as a sou;

You will run the risk of death for the acts of sabotage which will be carried out in your workshop;

You will have to face the bombs of the Allies in place of the Nazis - Twenty thousand killed in Cologne during a single night;

You will be a useful hostage for Hitler.

In the meanwhile Laval, no longer haunted by the fear of the workers' barricades, has your family at his mercy:

With the aid of famine and his police he will drag France and her children into wholesale slavery for the benefit of his Nazi paymaster.

Workers of France! Go and take work in Germany."

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## *Editorische Anmerkungen*

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- 1 - *Wilhelm Heidorn, nach der Rückkehr nach Deutschland Werner Hansen (1905-1972), ISK-Mitglied (seit 1926), Mitarbeit an den ISK-Publikationen „isk“ und „Der Funke“, ab 1933 für die illegale Arbeit im Raum Köln zuständig, Exil: Frankreich (1937), Großbritannien (1939), nach der Internierung (1940) in Australien (bis September 1941), Mitarbeit an ISK-Zeitschriften und zeitweise Herausgeber von "Europe speaks", Rückkehr nach Deutschland (mit OSS) im März 1945, danach am Aufbau der Gewerkschaften beteiligt, Mitglied des DGB-Bundesvorstands (1956-1969), SPD-MdB und Mitglied des SPD-Parteipräsidiums (1953-1957).*
- 2 - *Giuseppe Tassinari (1891-1944), italienischer Agrarökonom und Politiker (Partito Nazionale Fascista, PNF), Parlamentsabgeordneter (ab 1929), Unterstaatssekretär (1935-1939) und Minister (1939-1941) im Ministerium für Landwirtschaft und Forsten der faschistischen Regierung Italiens, erneute Übernahme des Agrarministeriums in der italienischen „Sozialrepublik“, die auf das deutsche Besatzungsgebiet beschränkt war (nach 1943), Opfer eines Luftangriffs (Dezember 1944).*
- 3 - *Adelchi Serena (1895-1970), italienischer Rechtsanwalt und Politiker, Partito Nazionale Fascista (PNF; seit 1921), verschiedene Funktionen in seiner Partei (1922-1941), darunter auch stellv. Vorsitzender (1933-1939) und Vorsitzender (Oktober 1940 bis Dezember 1941), Parlamentsabgeordneter (1924-1939) und Minister für öffentliche Arbeit (1939-1940).*
- 4 - *Hans Georg von Mackensen (1883-1947), deutscher Diplomat, Gesandter in Budapest (1933-1937), Botschafter in Rom (1938-1943).*

- 5 - *Ilse Heß, geb Pröhl (gest. 1995), Ehefrau von Rudolf Heß (seit 1927), Verhaftung (1947).*
- 6 - *„Le Populaire“, Hauptorgan der Sozialistischen Partei Frankreichs (bis 1940), erschien ab Mai 1942 illegal.*
- 7 - *Marx Dormoy (1888-1941), französischer Politiker, Innenminister in der Volksfrontregierung von Léon Blum (1936-1938), Gegner des Regimes von Marschall Pétain, Verhaftung (1940), Hausarrest in Montélimar (1941), Ermordung (1941).*