
E U R O P E s p e a k s

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Germany

The following report comes from a high official employed in the economic administration of the Third Reich:

Man-Power

"The main bottleneck in the German war-industry was, and still is, the shortage of man-power. In spite of the fact that Sauckel was relatively successful there is still a shortage of about 500,000 workers in the armaments industry, 300,000 agricultural workers and 60,000 miners; in the civil administration there is a shortage of about 150,000 persons. The reserves of female workers are exhausted, and even Sauckel's methods of combing out cannot materially alter the situation. It has become obvious that the foreign workers, prisoners of war as well as civilians, do not live up to the expectations placed upon the results of their labour.

Food

On the food front, again, the war has not taken the course which the authorities of the Third Reich had anticipated in their blue-prints. Three grim winters stultified all calculations, and in order to keep up the present low level of food supply the authorities have been forced to draw prematurely upon the reserves destined for the fourth winter of war. The shortage of feeding stuffs has become so acute that the peasants have been forced drastically to reduce their live stock. This is the reason why it has become possible to increase the meat rations a little. I want, however, to stress the point - in order to prevent people coming to wrong conclusions - that the food situation is still better now than it was during the 'turnip winters' of the last year.

Coal

The present coal production which has increased since the outbreak of the war by 2 %, although 60,000 miners were called up, can be maintained at this level only by overtime and Sunday work. But all experts agree that the present pace of work cannot be kept up for long. Industry working for civilian consumption will receive only 27 % of its coal allocation; the amount of coal exported will also lag far behind the figure fixed by the Plan. The general public is obviously not clear as to how far the consumption of coal has been increased by the production of substitutes. The annual production of synthetic oils and of synthetic rubber requires an amount of 32 million tons of bituminous coal and 41 million other coal.

The Plan

To satisfy the war requirements of the armament industry. German coal production

would have to increase by 170 % as compared with pre-war production; the production of magnesium would have to be increased by 200 %; an increase of 250 % would be required in the production of leather substitutes and of 1,200 % in the production of Buna. These, however, are all figures whose attainment not even the most optimistic Nazi planners dare to expect.

Civilian Consumption

Although further rationalisation is still in process and although the main efforts are concentrated upon improving the production of fuel and machines, it is becoming increasingly obvious that German war industry has reached the limits of its productive capacity. It is hardly possible further to cut down the allocation of raw materials and man power for

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the needs of the civilian population. In the textile industry, for instance, the following schedule is operated: 30 % of the production goes to the armed forces; 30 % to civilian needs, 40 % to technical and administrative purposes. - Production of shoes is restricted to such a degree that hardly half the amount needed by the civilian population is produced.

Transport

The transport system is heading towards inevitable catastrophe. It is estimated that there is a shortage of 15,000 engines. Quality and quantity of rolling stock is becoming completely inadequate. 100,000 trucks are used in territories outside Germany, whereas only 20,000 foreign trucks are used in Germany. Only 2 to 4 % of the rolling stock are available for the transport of food. As long as the transport crisis is not solved, raw materials and food from the East cannot be made available in quantity for the German war economy. The German propaganda about the economic exploitation of the East is practically nothing but bluff. Just recently I read the report of an expert who expressed the opinion that it will take another two years before the Russian industrial centres in the conquered territories will be in a position to attain even 10 % of their normal production."

The following are statements of a German banker:

Industrialists and Bankers

"Recently I spoke to three German big industrialists. Three of them were convinced that Germany had lost the war. The fourth thought that perhaps there was still a possibility of coming to a compromise with Russia."

The banker himself shared this pessimism; in his opinion it was mainly the shortage of raw materials in the Third Reich which had become an insoluble problem for the prosecution of the war.

From another source the following remark of a German industrialist is reported to us:

"I no longer believe in a German victory. The battle of raw materials is already lost for us."

These are extracts from a report from Central Germany:

Workers and Soldiers

"The workers who travel to the Leuna **[1]** works are generally undernourished and thin. They give an impression of being indifferent, even apathetic; they only get more lively when somebody starts talking about the bombing raids. As they all know one another they sometimes talk rather frankly when this subject arises. The attitude of mind generally prevailing amongst the chemical workers can be summed up in the following way: `Germany lost the last war and will lose this war. If contrary to all our expectations the Nazis should win the war, we would still be mere slaves. We shall never forget what the Nazis did to the German labour movement in 1933. We shall take our revenge on our oppressors and on the traitors. Our time is coming!'

Sometimes workmen's trains have to stop to let troop trains pass. On such occasions a short conversation sometimes takes place between workers and soldiers, and often one hears the opinion expressed: `Again we have won nearly all the battles, but we have already lost the war.'"

Why the soldiers still remain "loyal" is partly explained by the following report:

"Recently I met an old friend of mine who had just left a military hospital where he had been down with typhoid fever. I could hardly recognise him, he had completely lost his former liveliness; his hands trembled so much that he could hardly hold a glass. His fiancée said naively he should show this to his superiors, he could not possibly go back to the front in this state of nerves. He got quite desperate about so

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much well-meaning naivety and he burst out: `With people like them one cannot talk at all about such things. Even in the Hospital I was constantly being told: Hurry up and get well, you lout, or else die and make room for somebody else!'"

The following report illustrates the generally prevailing mood:

The Bogey of Winter

"The thought of having to spend another winter in Russia drives the soldiers to desperation. Among the working class population the fear of another winter of war is also very great. Warm clothing and underwear are lacking. Unless extra fat rations are granted an extraordinary increase in illness and nervous breakdowns will be inevitable. The catering in factory canteens is now relatively generous, but the food is lacking in fat. The main items on the menu are carrots, peas and `Blue Harry', which is a thin rice soup. There is also bread, but many people find that it is hardly fit for human consumption.

Go Slow

In spite of the vitamin tablets regularly issued to the workers their energy is going down rapidly. No stopclock and no method of controlling the workers can alter this fact. The workers are spending more and more time in the factory lavatories. They all shirk work wherever possible, and take time off as often as they can. The Leuna works employ special inspectors who have to visit the workers as soon as they report sick. But in the industrial districts there are still reasonable doctors who sympathise with the working class and refuse to let the Nazis and the factory managements interfere in their practice."

The following report shows the effect of the war upon the nerves of the German people:

American Bombers

"Apart from the difficulties of the food situation the air-raids are an important factor contributing to the low morals of the people. People have become even more sceptical than before since they learned, by carefully reading the newspapers, that American bombers are taking an ever increasing share in the raids.

Casualties

The growing number of casualties help to undermine morale. When heavy battles are taking place, people who have somebody at the front go every day to their letter boxes full of anxiety because they fear bad news. Cases like the following have already happened: In a house inhabited by three families one woman lost her husband and three sons, the other families two sons each.

If somebody expresses too loudly his grief about the loss of a relative, the Gestapo intervenes ruthlessly, in order to crush even the slightest sign of opposition against the war. The following incident is typical: A woman recently lost a son at the front. It was a heavy loss for her, but she bore it calmly. Shortly afterwards she got the news that her second son had also fallen. Her nerves broke down, she screamed, tore a Hitler picture from the wall and smashed it. The next day the Gestapo came for her. What happened to her, her neighbours do not know. They assume that she was taken to a concentration camp, or simply shot."

The following report, which deals mainly with the situation in Southern Germany, is evidence of the despair to which many people are driven by the great number of casualties:

"Recently I spoke to a German whose son had been fighting on the Eastern front; for a time he was reported missing, but suddenly he turned up at home. This soldier said that his regiment was reduced to 36 men.

In Wuerttemberg it is estimated that on the average every family mourns a fallen soldier. In many families there is a terrible atmosphere because the women express their grief and depression again and again by unrestrained weeping. A woman from a neutral country who intended to stay for a while in Germany hastened to leave the Third Reich because she could

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not bear any longer to witness this open grief. Another foreign woman who was generally very communicative became very silent after her return from X. Her experiences in Germany had affected her deeply. She stayed a few days in a large town where all the hotels were occupied by wounded or sick German soldiers.

We have received the first definitely pessimistic report about the spirit of the Nazi supporters:

"Even in Nazi circles enthusiasm is dying down. I had a long conversation with a customs official who told me that among his Nazi colleagues confidence in victory is rapidly dwindling. I have talked to a doctor who moves in middle class circles who were

- to say the least - sympathetic to the Nazis. His conclusion was: Former sympathies have changed into hatred. Admittedly, nobody in these circles does anything against the Nazi regime, but these middle class people are convinced that the regime will break down. 'Their turn will also come', is now the prevalent opinion. The utmost of which they are capable in the way of anti-Nazi behaviour is occasionally to listen in to foreign wireless stations.

Lidice

Again and again I was surprised to find how many Germans are still living behind the Great Wall of Goebbels' propaganda. On one occasion a friend of mine took me to his back room to tell me that he had heard from a foreign wireless station of a village in Czechoslovakia having been destroyed by the Nazis. He asked me whether this was known abroad or whether it was only a piece of lying propaganda. When I told him that it was true he was terribly upset and he expressed his great fear of the hatred which the Nazis with their crimes arouse against Germany. 'How on earth can there ever again be decent relations between Germany and the other nations?' he exclaimed desperately.

Ignorance

You come across sheer ignorance, too. This is shown by the following experience: I talked with a German woman about the persecution of the Jews in occupied countries and told her that the Nazis ruthlessly separate children from their mothers. The woman did not express any indignation or sorrow at this; she could not see anything wrong in it but took it as a sign of the Nazis' concern for the children. I was deeply shocked."

Luxembourg

We have received the following report, sent at the end of August, direct from the courageous little country of Luxembourg; the smallest but not the least important of the occupied countries:

"When I sent off my last letter we were all convinced that the opening of the Second Front would soon take place. The unexpected fall of Tobruk aroused deep anxiety amongst a large part of the population. The day of liberation seemed to be farther away than ever and German propaganda immediately took advantage of the state of mind of the people, 'Give up your resistance and co-operate in the new order', they were urged; 'you will be the first to profit from it'.

But although we were undoubtedly disturbed by this disastrous news, we never for one moment gave up hope. The resistance of the population is greater than ever. The Gauleiter and his bodyguard are in a fury and their terroristic oppression increases from day to day. Not a day, not a week passes by without some officials or workers being forced to go to Germany. One has the impression that they are trying by this means to break down the resistance of this tiny country, all other methods having so far failed. Tens of thousands of Germans are at present in the Grand Duchy and it is a fact that in the streets of Luxembourg there are more Germans than Luxembourgers to be seen.

Nobody sent to Germany on compulsory service is now allowed to see his family.

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The food situation is getting worse every day. I do not know how we shall manage to

survive if the war continues for another year. Steps have been taken to take away from the peasants what little still remains of their potato crop. The state has already requisitioned for milling into flour the barley which will be reaped this Autumn.

Nazi Tricks

The indomitable spirit of resistance of the Luxembourgers is shown by the following strange statement made by Dr. Ley **[2]** who 'honoured us with a visit': 'The Jews and the Egyptians believe that Hitler will be victorious, but this people refuse to believe it!' You will not find any mention of this in a newspaper because they are censored. When you receive newspapers like the 'Nationalblatt' **[3]**, do not believe anything in them about the political situation in our country. These newspapers are not meant for us Luxembourgers whom they cannot deceive, but for foreigners (Germans and others).

The Nazis wish to create the impression that the people of Luxembourg are heart and soul on the side of Germany. They try to do this by forcing every official to wear the "Heim ins Reich" badge, and by making it obligatory for children to join the Hitler youth and wear their uniforms. On the day when the local assembly meets they order the police to hoist the Hitler flag on the houses of those people who had refused to do so of their own accord and demanded 25 R.M. from them for the loan and hire of these flags. This 'beautiful' sight is then photographed and filmed and reproduced in the newspapers and cinemas; and those who are ignorant of the real state of affairs are taken in by this trick.

What is most exasperating for us is to see the inhabitants of friendly nations duped by this stagecraft; so that we find ourselves forced to struggle even to destroy these false impressions. Then it is that we come up against the terrible power of the Gestapo. Adaptability, the only weapon a small and weak people has against a huge people gone mad, no longer seems effective and this is probably what Dr. Bech **[4]** (the Foreign Minister of Luxembourg) wished to express in his radio speech: 'Only strong and hardy peoples can survive this ghastly struggle. We realise how difficult is your task and we are willing to help you as long as it does not spell suicide for our little people.'

In this merciless struggle we feel a little isolated - physically isolated by the cordon of German soldiers and customs officials around us who do everything in their power to prevent us communicating with France and Belgium, and spiritually isolated because, as all French newspapers are banned here, we get no moral or spiritual support from our neighbours.

I do not know how many Luxembourgers, who wanted to join you in England and had escaped over the French frontier, had to retrace their steps because food was only obtainable by ration cards and they thus either found themselves without food or fell into the hands of the Germans.

Opposition

In spite of all these hardships we hold on and endure because you have need of us, because we have confidence in you and above all in our wonderful Grand Duchess for whom the people feel a great affection and deep gratitude.

On the occasion of Dr. Ley's visit, German soldiers were stationed all along the railway track between Wasserbillig and Luxembourg at intervals of 100 metres. The Gauleiter and Dr. Ley went together to visit a factory at Esch. Dr. Ley noticed one of the workers there wearing a 'Charlotte' **[5]** brooch on his neckcloth. 'What is that you are

wearing?', Dr. Ley asked him. 'A neckcloth', answered the worker. 'No, but that medal, isn't it a Charlotte?' 'Yes!' 'Do you love her?' 'Yes, I do love her', was the answer. 'Take it off immediately; this time nothing will happen to you, but remember, Charlotte will never come back again.'

In many houses in Luxembourg the portrait of the Grand Duchess Charlotte can always be seen: but one has to be continually on one's guard

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against the Gestapo; and so the Luxembourgers have camouflaged the portrait of their ruler behind another portrait or picture, as for example a picture of the pope, or oftener, a picture of the Virgin Mary, the Consolation of the Afflicted.

The opposition of the working classes to every German has never been so great as it is to-day. Even orators as distinguished as Gauleiter Simon^[6] and Dr. Ley failed to find phrases attractive enough to win the support of the workers. Nevertheless the sufferings and sacrifices of the good Luxembourgers are almost as much as they can bear; they are on the verge of nervous collapse.

Sabotage

As the period during which the district assembly (Kreistag) was to meet at Echternach approached, requested acts of sabotage took place on the Luxembourg - Wasserbillig railway line, near Manternach. In spite of the enormous sums offered in reward (1,000,000 R.M.) and the endless searches and arrests in the surrounding districts, the Boches found no trace of the culprits. In the course of the searches especially at Echternach they took possession of the food reserves of the population.

Home to the Reich?

In their census on the 10.10.1941, the Germans tried to force the Luxembourgers to declare that they were of German nationality; in addition the Luxembourgers were required to admit on the census form that their native language was German. But in spite of the fact that all sections of the population were subjected to the most extreme pressure, including the threat of imprisonment, the concentration camp and deportation to Poland or Russia, more than 95% of the people refused to make these declarations. Then at the last moment the Gauleiter announced that the census would not take place in the form originally intended. It was not long before the Luxembourgers felt the consequences of this plebiscite, the most dramatic in their history. On the pretext of taking action against the L.P.L., a secret Luxembourg organisation which had worked against the invader in every part of the Grand Duchy, the Germans arrested the Luxembourg patriots en masse. They were subjected to the most cruel treatment as a result of which a number of them died; thousands of people, both young and old (even old men of sixty) were imprisoned in the S.S. concentration camp at Hinzert in the Hunsrueck region, where they suffered the most inhuman treatment until they collapsed from hunger, cold and forced labour.

Thousands of young Luxembourgers are forced to join the 'Arbeitsdienst' (Labour Service) for six months or longer; there they are under military discipline. But they refuse to submit to the German yoke; they resist, following in the footsteps of their elders and parents. When the day of departure comes, thousands of their compatriots assemble around the station at Luxembourg. Then in spite of the presence of hundreds

of German police, they start singing their national songs; and to the sound of these songs the train leaves Luxembourg.

On the occasion of the national day of celebration in January the national flag of Luxembourg was flying on all the highest points for example on the chimney stacks of the blast furnaces at Esch, nay, even on the buildings which had been taken over by the Nazis.

The workers of Petange refused to take part in a meeting at Rodange where the Gauleiter was speaking; they were deported with their families and later on separated from their wives and children, who were also imprisoned in Germany. In their homes in Petango German families were installed.

Civil Administration

A few days before the Gauleiter's May demonstration in Rodange 34 men, women and girls of all classes were arrested; even a worker who had lost both arms several years ago was put into prison. This was to make the place safe for Simon because otherwise this coward would not have dared to set foot in Rodange. But when 30 Luxembourgers are arrested there are immediately three times the number there to take their places.

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On the morning of the demonstration S.A. men forced their way into the houses of the citizens of Rodange armed with Swastika flags and ordered them immediately to hang them out of their houses and in addition to pay 20 R.M.

A schoolteacher from Petange who refused to give the Hitler salute was beaten almost to death by the S.A. criminals, among whom a certain Schafer and Weides distinguished themselves. Over 28 railway workers were dismissed, and then arrested and deported to Germany.

In Berdorf the parish priest and 26 citizens were arrested. One of the victims, a young member of the L.P.L. from Luxembourg, named Raymond Petit, barricaded himself in a barn and in his desperation opened fire on the Gestapo men, seriously wounding one of them. He then committed suicide.

In Echternach a few days before the Kreistag, over 100 arrests took place after the Gestapo had searched in vain for arms in the Wolfsschlucht.

The Music Society of Diekirch unanimously refused to place themselves at the service of the Nazi propaganda. Thereon all the members were dismissed from their positions and were forced to work on the land.

Several peasants demonstrated in protest at the requisitioning of their horses and were sentenced to long terms of hard labour.

At the court of justice in Diekirch thousands of prosecutions are outstanding against citizens and peasants who did not observe the decrees of the C.D.Z."

- 1 - „Leunawerke“, 1916 von der BASF als „Amoniakwerk Merseburg GmbH“ gegründetes Chemieunternehmen, das 1925 in den Besitz der „IG Farbenindustrie AG“ überging, Enteignung (1945), VEB (1951), Übernahme durch ein deutsch-französisch-russisches Konsortium (1993/1994).
- 2 - Robert Ley (1890-1945), Politiker, NSDAP-Reichsorganisationsleiter (ab 1934), Gleichschaltung der Gewerkschaften (2. Mai 1933) und Leiter der „Deutschen Arbeitsfront“ (DAF), Anklage vor dem Internationalen Militärtribunal in Nürnberg, Selbstmord (1945).
- 3 - „Nationalblatt“, amtliche Tageszeitung der volksdeutschen Bewegung und aller Behörden in Luxemburg, nachgewiesen 1941-1944.
- 4 - Robert Bech (1887-1975), luxemburgischer Politiker, Minister für Inneres und Bildung (ab 1921), Außenminister (ab 1926), während des Zweiten Weltkriegs Exil in London, nach dem Krieg Rückkehr nach Luxemburg, Teilnahme an den Verhandlungen über die EWG, Regierungspräsident (1953-1958).
- 5 - Charlotte, gemeint ist Charlotte von Luxemburg (1896-1985), Großherzogin von Luxemburg (1919-1964), während des Zweiten Weltkriegs Exil in USA, Kanada und Großbritannien, durch Radioansprachen über BBC wurde sie zum Symbol für die Freiheit und Unabhängigkeit des Landes, nach dem Krieg Rückkehr nach Luxemburg, Abdankung zugunsten ihres Sohns Jean (1964).
- 6 - Gustav Simon (1900-1945), NSDAP (ab 1925), Bezirksleiter NSDAP (ab 1928), MdR (ab 1930), NSDAP-Gauleiter Moselland und damit auch Chef der Zivilverwaltung in Luxemburg (1940-1944), Selbstmord oder Erschießung (1945).