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

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Germany

Some time ago we started to make a systematic investigation of present conditions in the Third Reich. For this purpose we have worked out a detailed questionnaire as a basis for discussion and gaining information from people inside Germany and from those who have recently been there. We are now in a position to make known the first results of this work. The following is a summary of the answers received from Socialist circles in a large West German industrial town:

80 % Disagree

"A mood of depression prevails amongst the workers. 80 % of the factory workers are opposed to the Hitler regime, but their hostility does not take an active form. In these circles, the majority no longer believe that the Nazis will win the war, whereas at least part of the middle class still reckon with the possibility of victory.

The feeling of impotence in face of the totalitarian power and terror apparatus of the Nazi state is up till now still predominant. But on the other hand the present regime has nothing else to rely on to-day than this brutal power machinery. Neither the D.A.F. with its pseudosocialist phraseology nor the Nazi party with its talk of the 'Volksgemeinschaft' (the German community) has succeeded in breaking down the hostility of the workers. Even the many innovations which the Nazis have introduced into the German factories and which had the superficial appearance of socially progressive measures, were generally recognised for what they were, eyewash. The one inescapable fact is that the employers possess complete power in the factories, and that the workers have lost all the trade union rights and liberties they had fought for in the past; this is something that is obvious everywhere and everyday in German factories.

Malnutrition and Overstrain

Apart from this enslavement and deprivation of all their rights the workers suffer more than anything else from the strain of the long working hours and the scanty nourishment. Both lead to extreme exhaustion. As a result of this exhaustion accidents in the factories have increased at an alarming rate. There are also numerous cases of sudden collapse, especially amongst women. The state of health of the workers is deteriorating from month to month. In central and southern Germany there have been epidemics of dysentery which are attributed to malnutrition. For this reason there is a widespread fear of this malnutrition and its terrible effects on health. Even typhoid which has been brought back from Russia and is spreading throughout Germany, is considered to be due in part to malnutrition and overstrain.

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Wages and Deductions

It is of course still possible for people with money and influence to buy extra food behind the scenes. But for the workers the black market prices are far too high. The income of the workers has not increased even with the longer working hours to such an extent that there is any improvement worth mentioning in the position of the workers. Highly paid workers earn about £ 3 per week. But from this amount 30% is immediately deducted for taxation and other compulsory contributions. Then there are the 'voluntary' deductions which are in fact compulsory. These include the so-called 'iron saving' which has lately meant a further increase in the deductions.

Foreign Workers

Cooperation between German and foreign workers is on the whole good. There is a certain feeling against the Italian workers only. Little account is taken of the regulations concerning the isolation of Poles, Jews and prisoners of war. In the case of most of the foreign workers it is obvious that they are working under compulsion and they show clearly that they are against the Nazis. Thus it seldom occurs that they voluntarily prolong their employment contract and they usually do so only under pressure. On the average the foreign workers produce more than the German workers: the Russians toil hardest of all, as they do not get anything to eat unless they work very hard.

Opposition in the Factories

While there is no extensively organised sabotage, minor acts of sabotage are a frequent and regular occurrence. The exhaustion of the workers, which increasingly tends to develop into a state of apathy, affects the productive capacity of the workers more than the conscious resistance, active or passive. Both the effects of exhaustion and the existence of a sullen resistance to the Nazis is most clearly seen in the reaction of the workers to every attempt of the Nazis to gain their cooperation in raising production: appeals for suggestions how to economise in man-power and raw-materials, and schemes by which the workers should watch and encourage each other to work faster and more carefully, all such attempts to arouse their competitive spirit are usually a complete failure.

Illegal Work

Organised illegal work has suffered particularly because of the call-up, which has destroyed many valuable connections. This had made the activity of the illegal groups more difficult, but nevertheless they still carry on. One of the most important developments is that the disagreements which still existed among the various socialist groups in Germany have diminished even more since the war began and the desire to unite all anti-fascists has led to much better cooperation. Even former communist workers who have learnt their lesson from many and bitter experiences in the past are now anxious only to cooperate with other active anti-fascists, and even those who have remained loyal to the Communist party appear not as communists but simply as anti-fascists. The division which used to exist between the various groups of socialists and all kinds of communists have to-day almost disappeared; and those who are carrying on the illegal struggle have grown, by actively working together under the hard conditions of the Nazi terror to trust one another much more readily. This has greatly strengthened the hope in illegal socialist circles that later on also it will be possible to have a united socialist movement in which the communists will cooperate in the work for socialism.

Illegal work is at present almost restricted to meetings of very small groups of people where problems of the future and current political events are discussed.

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Radio

Listening-in to the English broadcasts is a great help in this work. All sections of the population listen in to these broadcasts, especially in the army, where both men and officers listen fairly openly. The Russian broadcasts are listened to much less. The so-called secret stations are treated with much reserve as nearly all their programmes are obvious propaganda. When such programmes are planned it is important to bear in mind that those who listen-in are risking their lives. Their greatest desire is to hear important facts. They can draw the conclusions for themselves. There should not be so much repetition. There is most jamming on the medium and long wave-lengths. It would be better to have a broadcast at 1 p.m. rather than at 2 p.m. Many women listen in to the broadcasts during the day and report to their menfolk later on.

Propaganda

Illegal activity is not restricted to listening-in to foreign broadcasts and to discussions. Now and then you can see inscriptions and printed, duplicated or hand-written leaflets or chain letters against the war and the Nazi system.

Terror

Apart from the death sentences published by the Nazis political trials of anti-fascists are continually taking place in which heavy sentences of penal servitude are inflicted with very little publicity. All anti-Nazis are agreed that at least the first step towards the destruction of the Nazi regime must come from outside Germany. They see no likelihood of opposition flaring up until Germany has suffered heavy military defeats and the Nazi terror-apparatus is no longer intact. Even in the event of a revolution there will probably be no immediate reaction from the mass of the population; the fear which grips them is so deeply ingrained. But when the storm does break loose, and it will do so sooner or later, they will mercilessly avenge themselves on their oppressors. The hope is generally expressed that, when the Nazi regime has been overthrown with external aid, the victorious powers will show enough foresight not to prevent the progressive forces in Germany destroying once and for all the power of those who have been the mainstays of fascism, above all the military caste.

Ideas about the Future

By its courageous resistance the Soviet Union has regained much respect and sympathy, and is to-day judged in a more favourable light than at the time of the Russo-German pact. But after the experience of the Nazi system of coercion and terror, every kind of authoritarian or totalitarian government produces only one reaction: We want the restoration of personal freedom! There is a profound longing for civil liberties. Everyone has a strong desire to be able to live once again as a free human being.

This does not mean that, after the overthrow of the Nazis, the old party system should be reintroduced. The unfortunate experiences of the former coalition governments is not forgotten and the re-establishment of a coalition on the Weimar

model is quite unacceptable. People believe that a socialist government is possible for even amongst the progressive middle-classes there is a large section which feels that it is both necessary and desirable to co-operate more closely with the socialists.

Anti-Nazi circles know exactly which people have really retained their integrity and in what positions it would be best to place them after the revolution. Great hopes are placed on certain outstanding and irreproachable personalities inside and outside Germany whom they expect to play a leading part in the rebuilding of a new Germany. For obvious reasons we can mention no names. At this

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point we feel it is important to mention that there is a definite feeling on all sides that no Jews should be chosen for such responsible positions. This is of course not a sign of anti-Semitism, but is due to psychological and political considerations. As a rule the anti-Nazis also know pretty exactly which people in their district must immediately be removed from their positions after the collapse of the Nazis, though this varies from one district to another. At all events there is a strong desire that a wholesale purge should follow and that reliable ex-officials dismissed by the Nazis should be immediately reinstated.

Emigration

All socialist expect their emigrant comrades to draft concrete plans for a socialist reconstruction programme so that everything will not be left to chance as in 1918. There is a widespread hope that after fascism has been destroyed, a united progressive Labour Movement will be formed. The revival of free Trade Unions is taken for granted. The constructive work done by the independent workers organisations in the Weimar Republic and afterwards destroyed by the Nazis is still valued to-day and is cherished in the memories of socialists and trade unionists.

Youth

The younger generation in the factories has learned about these past achievements from the older workers. It would be quite wrong to assume that the Nazis had succeeded in gaining the support of the working-class youth. On the whole it is true to say that the section of the youth which has been trained in the factories has adopted a negative attitude to the Nazi system. This does not of course apply to that section of the youth which has been subjected to special national socialist training and has grown up entirely in Nazi schools and organisations. It will probably only be possible to bring this Nazi-educated youth to 'reason' by forceful means."

Italy

We received the following reports from Socialists inside Italy.

A Revolt of the Cafoni

"In Apulia fascist rule is identical with the tyranny of the big landowners over the poor tenant farmers, the Cafoni. All measures of the fascist dictatorship are obviously devised for the protection of the person and property of the big landowners who are bitterly hated by the starving masses of the Cafoni. Cerignola is one of the agricultural centres where the masses live as they did in the darkest periods of the Middle Ages. The arable

land around Cerignola amounts to 70,000 ha (about 28,000 acres). This enormous territory is owned by five families, the Pavoncelli, Lafranquad, Berlingri, Zessa and Palieri. **[1]** The population of Cerignola, about 40,000 people, are entirely dependent upon these five families. All else is dependent upon these families: the police, the courts of justice, the church, the Carabinieri, the press, the councils, in short, everything.

Amongst these big landowners Count Pavoncelli stands out by his brutality, ignorance and avarice. The methods he uses to torment the Cafoni are incredible. Count Pavoncelli is a fascist. He knows that the end of Fascism would mean at the same time the end of his tyranny over the Cafoni. In Cerignola Pavoncelli and Fascism are one and the same. But the ideas propagated by the Socialist Party, the hope of freedom, the belief in a better future, have spread to Cerignola.

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At the beginning of August a group of Cafoni revolted following an incident in front of the town hall. Like a prairie fire this revolt spread over the whole town. The Cafoni - men, women and children alike - left their miserable huts where they were living like cattle, armed themselves with sickles and scythes and marched towards the centre of the town. They forced their way into the 'casa del fascio' (the house of the fascist party) into the palace of Count Pavoncelli and into the town hall and looted these buildings. The big landowners and their lackeys fled. Then Cerignola was cut off from the rest of the country; communication with the town by rail, telephone and telegraph was interrupted. The Socialists were thus prevented from passing the news of the spontaneous revolt to the neighbouring towns. In the meantime armed forces were sent to restore order in Cerignola which they besieged like an enemy fortress. Bands of fascist militia (Blackshirts) and Carabinieri used methods of modern warfare to break into the town. Violent battles raged around the public buildings. But there was no doubt as to the outcome of this struggle.

According to the reports of the authorities the number of casualties was 4 dead and 18 wounded. After two days order was restored, the order of Mussolini and Pavoncelli. But the attitude of mind prevailing amongst the Cafoni is not one of fear. Their living conditions are so desperate that they do not fear death. It will be the task of the Socialists to see to it that next time there is a revolt it is not limited to one town."

Execution of the old Socialist Santo Barillà **[2]**

"Our comrade Santo Barillà, 54 years of age, born in San Roberto in the province of Reggio Calabria has been shot in Rome on the false and infamous charge of having engaged in military espionage in favour of an enemy power. The fascist press made the shameless statement that comrade Barillà confessed his guilt. The truth is that Santo Barillà always was an incorruptible and upright man who never wavered in his socialist convictions and in his hatred of the fascist dictatorship. His offence consisted in helping a British sailor who had been shipwrecked and was gravely injured. He took him to his house, bandaged his wounds and nursed him until the fascists discovered him on the following day. Santo Barillà admitted his deed in front of the fascist courts and declared that he was proud of it. Before he was shot by the firing squad he cried out: 'Long live Socialism! Long live Freedom!'"

In the middle of September the Socialist Party of Italy published the following statement on European Federation:

Socialist Party and European Federation

"1.) The Italian Socialists are of the opinion that this war - besides being an imperialist and capitalist war for securing markets and raw materials like the war of 1914/18 - involves grave consequences for the internal policy of each country. The future situation of the working classes will depend to a considerable extent upon its outcome.

2.) The attitude of the Italian Socialists towards this war is determined by their hatred of Fascism and their firm conviction that the democratic freedoms represent very important preconditions for all further progress of humanity.

3.) The decisive front which can attack and destroy Fascism is the home front in each country. Only on this front can there be a solution to the social and political problems which enabled Fascism to rise to power. The military defeat of the fascist powers should be regarded only as a prelude to the decisive battle on the home front.

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4.) The democratic character of the powers which are fighting in this war against the fascist States is neither uniform nor unchangeable. War conditions, especially if this war lasts for a long time, can alter the internal structure of the democratic States. The Italian Socialists are determined at all times to preserve their freedom of criticism and their independence even towards democratic regimes. In shaping their policy the Italian Socialists are inspired solely by their concern for the interests and ideals of the Italian and the international working classes.

5.) The fundamental demand as regards the future order of Europe and the world is that political organisation should correspond to the actual development of the relations between the peoples. As regards Europe the first consequence of this demand is that political unification must ensure the already existing unity of European society. The old and reactionary systems of national sovereignties must be abolished.

6.) To carve up Europe into spheres of influence amongst the victorious democratic States is, in the opinion of Italian Socialists, the starting point for new wars and a mere continuation of the old and discredited balance of power policy. Italy must abandon her traditional foreign policy of vacillating between the two power blocs competing for the domination of Europe.

7.) The European Federation should not be a union restricted on its powers and constantly endangered by sovereign States, but an association of free nations who have devolved upon their workers' organisations a considerable part of the functions hitherto monopolised by State bureaucracy.

8.) A European Union built upon the basis of present capitalist relations would result in the rule of high finance and industry. Political freedom and the autonomy of the peoples who form the European Federation can only be guaranteed if the basic economic resources are nationalised.

9.) A system which organises Europe on the basis of hatred and revenge against certain nations will be of short duration and will be the cause of future wars.

10.) The drawing of frontiers cannot be determined according to the strategical needs of the victorious States. A peace settlement can be regarded as just and durable only if it secures also for small nations the right to self-government.

11.) The Italian Socialists denounce more than ever the domination of coloured peoples by European States. The European Federation cannot accept Imperialism as a legacy of the old Europe.

12.) Socialist Italy is especially concerned with the liberation of the North African peoples. These peoples are ripe for autonomy. Those amongst them who still need assistance from more advanced peoples will receive this assistance not from the militarists and bankers, but from the organisations of workers, technicians and intellectuals of a free Europe.

13.) The Italian Socialists strive towards the building up of a Federation of European socialist parties founded on a basis completely different from that of the old Labour and Socialist International."

Editorische Anmerkungen

1 - Biographische Daten der fünf mächtigen italienischen Familien mit Großgrundbesitz (Pavoncelli, Lafranquad, Berlingri, Zessa und Palieri) konnten nicht ermittelt werden.

2 - Santo Barillá, italienischer Sozialist, wegen angeblicher militärischer Spionage am 20. August 1942 zum Tode verurteilt, am nächsten Tag exekutiert. Weiter biographische Daten konnten nicht ermittelt werden.