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Italy

Our friends have sent us the following short survey about the work of reviving political and trade union activities in Italy:

Anti War Campaign

"The work of rebuilding the Socialist Party of Italy made excellent progress in the last few months. The same applies to trade union work. In nearly all important centres active circles have been created. And from everything that one sees and hears, it is evident that many good comrades are at work who are only waiting for an opportunity to prove their mettle.

In support of an anti-war campaign to be organised from December 1st to December 10th a number of leaflets have been smuggled into Italy and distributed there. A special manifesto was issued for this campaign."

The following report illustrates the situation on the Italian Home-Front:

Lidice in Italy

"In Ustie, a small village not far from Trieste, two policemen were found dead one morning. Having been wounded in the mountains they had succeeded in reaching the village, but died on the street near a peasant's house. Next day the Fascist Militia surrounded the house, forced the entire family, consisting of nine people, to shut themselves in, keeping doors and windows closed, they then set the building on fire. All around the house there were armed guards, preventing anyone from escaping from the burning house. So in order to set an example to the rest of the village and to warn the murderers of the policemen, an innocent family was wiped out.

A Fascist Teacher

An Italian school-mistress took a pleasure in being present at the executions of rebellious Slovene peasants which took place frequently in Lubiana. One morning she was found murdered in her house.

Opposition in Forli

An active group of anti-fascists was discovered among the boys of a secondary school in Forli. When the police chief interrogated their leader, the son of a poor cobbler, trying to ridicule their activity as a childish plot, the boy replied: 'The son of a blacksmith of this province brought about the ruin for Italy. Perhaps the son of a cobbler might be her saviour.'

And in Milan

Some 40 students were arrested in Milan together with their professor Puzzi **[1]** on a charge of having formed an anti-fascist group and organised a revolt against the State.

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In Tuscany

Numerous groups of socialists from Pisa, Florence, Siena, Livorno and Lucca were tried by the Special Tribunal for the Defence of the State, charged with having revived the Socialist Party in Tuscany under the name of the United Labour Party. All the defendants were sentenced to terms of imprisonment varying from 10-20 years.

Revolutionary Spirit among the Soldiers

At Civitavecchia the steamer 'Polluce' took on board 570 soldiers and N.C.O.'s manacled and escorted by the police, who took them to Asinara in Sardinia. The soldiers were accused of insubordination, many among them having protested against the reduction of soldiers' family allowances. In Asinara about 500 soldiers and N.C.O.'s are detained and are serving sentences from 15 - 30 years penal servitude. At Curru there is a concentration camp for soldiers, who are suspected of anti-fascism and are punished merely as a precautionary measure. At present they number 654. The last transport arrived at Curru from Africa.

A soldier sentenced to 20 years penal servitude by the court martial of Benghazi for having expressed socialist opinions, declared: The soldier's attitude towards Fascism is increasingly hostile, many among them are not afraid to express their antifascist sentiments even in the presence of the officers. I have been sentenced together with some 40 comrades for having protested against the arrogance and interference of the German military authorities. The Germans denounced us and the Italian military command had to comply.

The Italian soldiers of the Expeditionary Force in Russia are handed over to the Gestapo and sent to German prisons if they are charged with insubordination and subversive spirit.

Grave Incidents in Bari

Nearly everywhere incidents have occurred between German and Italian soldiers, but those of the Roman Castles of Catania and of Bari deserve particular attention.

In Catania on September 10th a group of Italian pilots of the 8th Wing had to defend themselves with arms against the attacks of German pilots. There were several wounded and one killed.

The incidents in Bari started on September 2nd, because the German forces were supplied with better food than the Italians. In Bari the food supplies for the German and Italian forces are in the same building. Therefore, the Italians could not help seeing that the Germans received meat and cheese three times a week whilst the Italian soldiers were receiving it only once or twice a week. It was also obvious that the Germans were receiving dried meat in addition, whereas the Italians could not obtain any of this. Resentment against this preferential treatment was particularly strong, because it was known that the Germans get their food in the local markets and as they had larger

funds, they succeeded in getting the lion's share. On the morning of September 2nd the Italian detachment which had gone with bags and containers to collect the food rations for the troops got hold of the German food rations instead of those reserved for the Italians. A violent struggle with the Germans followed, many received bayonet wounds before the police arrived and separated the parties. On the evening of the same day, in order to avoid further incidents, the [...] soldiers were confined to barracks, whilst the Germans

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had their usual freedom of movement. This order caused numerous protests among the population and quarrels between civilians and the German soldiers followed. In a coffee house a fight started between German and Italian officers. On the following day, September 3rd, the market people refused to sell fruit and vegetables to the Germans. On the 5th, following an order arrived from Rome, the prefect gave orders for a solemn ceremony of fraternisation of Italo-German friendship in the Politeama Theatre, but only the places reserved for soldiers and policemen were occupied, as the civilian population boycotted the affair."

Germany

The following striking extracts are taken from a special information Bulletin of the German O.K.W. (the Army High Command); Bulletin No. 221, of September 1942. It reveals the enormous shortage of man-power, for otherwise there would be no reason to send "many thousands of old soldiers" to the front, people about fifty years of age. It shows further that the Nazis are by no means convinced that they have turned all Germans into Nazis.

The Veterans of the last World War in the present German Army

"Among the soldiers of the German army there are many who fought in the first world war. They are to be found in all ranks, amongst officers, N.C.O.'s and privates. These men have experienced almost thirty years of continuous struggle of our people for freedom, in all its phases and in all its severity. Seldom has a generation of men been burdened with so many hardships as those old soldiers.

They fought in the first world war, they experienced the collapse in 1918, staged by the Jews and the Marxists, they had to suffer the consequences of the inflation, they lived through the severe economic crisis, in times of unemployment and partial unemployment, hunger and misery. In some parts of the Reich they had to endure enemy occupation, prison and exile, and now they are once again soldiers.

These men certainly have not had an easy life. And they are no longer youngsters, yet in spite of this many thousands of them stand their ground at the front and in the occupied countries often under the most difficult conditions. Some of them probably now and then ask themselves when the time will come when they are relieved of their duties. They think of their wife and child and of their civil occupation and it is certain that they often openly complain. This is understandable. It is not pleasant for such an industrious and peace-loving people as the Germans to have to defend themselves for thirty years against Englishmen, Americans, Jews and Bolsheviks. We old soldiers all know very well that the Fuehrer has made every possible effort to prevent this war. When he came into power, he had a big constructive programme. He wished to build up a State with the best social conditions in the world. He was already able to put into practice a great part

of his magnificent plan, but still much more would have been achieved by now if the peace of the world had not been sabotaged by the lust for destruction of Churchill [2] and Stalin [3].

We can easily understand that some of our soldiers who are no longer young feel very bitter at having to suffer all the

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hardships of war side by side with the young men. But to these soldiers we would like to say:

1. The whole German people is and will remain deeply indebted and grateful to its soldiers and especially to those who have twice in their life donned the field grey uniform and have many times risked their lives and their health during two wars. There is no decent person in Germany who does not feel this indebtedness and gratitude very deeply.

2. If even a young soldier, who faithfully does his duty earns our great respect, how much more worthy of the deep admiration of the whole nation is the same achievement in the case of a man who has reached his fiftieth year, who no longer has young blood in his veins, and yet who is a good soldier in spite of his grey hair.

3. To put heart and soul into doing one's duty in spite of all this requires strength of character. For the older soldiers are perforce often disappointed through lack of public recognition. It is human nature that the young man in the height of his capacity gains advancement more quickly than those twenty years older than him. Also there are not so many opportunities for promotion as one could wish. In short, here we see many men who are faced with the hard necessity of contenting themselves with simply fulfilling their duty and being in the eyes of their country-men a model of faithfulness and selfsacrifice.

Let us repeat, it is no easy task. In the darkest hours when our lot seems most difficult to bear we must turn our thoughts to our great aim. If it is true that German freedom can only be secured through victory, then the older soldiers have a right to be proud when they return home of the part they played in securing it. And in Germany to have taken an active part in the war is and will remain the greatest honour a free man can possess."

Each one a Guardian of National Socialism

"To be a national socialist and to be a soldier is one and the same thing. The movement first emerged from the spirit of the battlefield, a soldier from the front was the founder and is now the leader; soldiers at the front are securing its future and fighting for the freedom of the new Germany. Whoever is a soldier and gives his lifeblood, his health and many years of his life for Fuehrer and people has lived in the true spirit of national socialism.

Therefore every soldier is also in an especial sense responsible for seeing that the ideals of the Fuehrer remain binding for all times, for every sphere of life of our people. These soldiers are the guardians of his great socialist demands and are responsible for the preservation in all its purity of the community life of the people. Each day we get our standard of conduct from the soldiers on the battlefield. Their comradeship, their readiness for sacrifice is the greatest ever known. The whole people must live in the

same spirit, imbued with the same convictions.

Therefore all soldiers are agreed that anyone who in these times could think of betraying the national socialist front by corrupt dealings of any kind would be the worst enemy of the people and an out and out rascal. Corrupt

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people who gain profit for themselves through fraud or in any other dishonest way will become more and more rare in Germany. In any case these rascals, who are the exceptions to the rule, must be made to realise that all soldiers condemn them unanimously. They must not only know this, but be made to feel the consequences. Whenever we come across such a case we must be brutal and act ruthlessly. How does one go about this? That is quite simple. The matter should be instantly reported with full details in writing or personally to the military authorities. Of course the name must be written in full or it is useless. Maybe you will meet with some unpleasantness. But that cannot be a reason for a soldier to be a coward and shirk his duty.

For a soldier of our Fuehrer Adolf Hitler it is a sacred duty to do all in his power to prevent anybody from departing from the noble policy proclaimed by the Fuehrer. On the whole the morale of the German people is to-day excellent. Not only at the front but also in civil life there are countless examples of moral greatness and an unimpeachable attitude. The more reason for us soldiers to co-operate in tracking down and preventing the foul deeds of the few enemies of the people who exist amongst us. Every corrupt person whoever he may be, must be made to realise that amongst this soldier nation of Adolf Hitler he has no earthly chance of success."

We have received the following report from Southern Germany:

Sticking it Out

"In the course of the enormous campaign of meetings which was organised throughout Germany Prince Auwi^[4] (son of the Kaiser) spoke in our district. You can imagine the attraction of his personality, specially for workers who were forced to attend these meetings after work. Auwi said openly that in our district there is a greater tendency than anywhere else to listen to the 'enemy'. But we should know that there is only one person who speaks the truth that is the Fuehrer. The main theme of his speech was: We have to stick it out, even if we have to undergo great hardships!

This recent publicity campaign has in no way altered the general conviction among the workers that the war is lost. Although Nazi propagandists make desperate efforts to deny the possibility of a 'second Front', people here are convinced that it will come in the spring. Apparently the Nazis too realise more or less clearly that something went wrong with their war, because their old self-assurance has disappeared and they seem very nervous.

Gauleiter Wagner^[5]

Typical of the general atmosphere at present is the persistent rumour that Gauleiter Wagner was beaten up during a meeting. Rumour has it that during a speech which Wagner made in Munich in September the light suddenly went out. It was obviously the signal to attack Wagner and to beat him up terribly.

Fear of Revenge

It would be wrong to suppose, however, that people having lost their confidence in victory, generally wish to see the war ended no matter at what cost. On the contrary, many people who are not convinced anti-Nazis and socialists are of the opinion that they should make great efforts to try and

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win the war because defeat would have terrible consequences. They fear the revenge of the people in the German occupied territories, and they are deeply impressed by the propaganda which declares that the Germans will be enslaved, deported, separated from their wives and children etc. Especially in the East there is great fear of the revenge of the Poles, because the people there know just what crimes have been committed by the Nazis."

About the effect of air-raids we received the following report; it is written by a railwayman:

Air-Raids

"When I came to Karlsruhe my first impression was that not much damage had been done there. But on going through the town I saw soldiers pulling down whole rows of streets. In these streets only the fronts of the houses were standing, all the rest was buried in deep craters. The Rhine port was heavily hit, also the part around the castle.

In Saarbruecken the air-raid alarm was sounded too late. Bombs were already dropping when people ran to the shelters. The result was that thousands of people ran into the cellars just as they had come out of their beds. Next morning about 20,000 people were wandering about without a home, many of them insufficiently clad. They were taken to big camps and provided with clothes; leather shoes, however, were scarcely obtainable, they received gym-shoes instead. The majority of people of Saarbruecken who had lost their homes were sent to Lorraine; the people of Lorraine were forced to give up their rooms to them.

A large part of the population from Karlsruhe who had lost their homes were immediately evacuated to the Schwarzwald, and that in spite of the fact that many of them were clad only in their night clothes.

After such heavy bombardments the railways have not only the special task of carrying new supplies and evacuating the population. Salvage from bombed towns is sent by rail to places where it is dealt with. The other day I asked a colleague of mine who worked on these trains what load they had on; he said: `this is the former Lantz **[6]** works which is going to be turned into scrap in Italy.' Very often these trains can be seen which transport what is left of German businesses to Italy for the purpose of being scrapped there."

A soldier who was ill with typhoid fever in a hospital reported:

"Among the 75 patients in my ward only 12 left the hospital cured. Two of these committed suicide because when they went to Cologne on leave just after the big raid they found that their families had lost their lives during the bombardment."

Shortage of Oil

Report of a conversation with a German diplomat:

"Germany is bound to lose the war, German industry cannot cope with the war requirements. The greatest shortage of all is oil. A few weeks ago it was stated at a Japanese Embassy that Germany had made a peace offer to Russia. The conditions were so lenient that the Japanese were amazed.

In Berlin the morale is very bad, every `Blockwart' (Blockwart is a Nazi official entrusted with the task of spying on a block of flats which has a few hundred families)

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has a machine gun, and generally only SS-men are employed now as `Blockwart'."

A German working as interpreter in Northern Africa took part in this conversation. He said:

"I too noticed that the shortage of oil had very unpleasant effects. Nearly all the oil reserves were used up for the attack upon Tobruk and the advance upon Egypt and have never really been replenished since. The army had to be very careful with oil, e.g. officers were strictly forbidden to take unessential car rides. On account of this shortage of oil the air-mail service was very much restricted. That was a heavy blow for the German soldiers and now they received no parcels from home, for before this restriction parcels have been sent by air."

France

Traitor Pétain

"Socialisme et Liberté" **[7]**, - this is the title of an underground publication of the Comité d'Action Socialiste (former Socialist Party of France); it appears in printed form in Paris. The following article from the issue of September first 1942 shows how realistic is the judgment of French Socialists concerning the would-be guardian of French honour.

Traitor Pétain thanks and congratulates Hitler

"For a long time we were delighted by Pétain's neutrality.

We know this product of Jesuit education and we well remember that his defeatism in 1918 would have delivered France up to the Kaiser **[8]**, had it not been for the intervention of Foch **[9]** and Clémenceau **[10]**.

To-day the place of the Kaiser is taken by the Fuehrer. But Boche remains Boche, just as Pétain remains the enemy of freedom of thought, of democracy and of the Republic which already on February 6th he tried to annihilate for the benefit of the fascist rabble.

Since he was incapable of imposing his dictatorship, this Marshal of France, the false victor of Verdun, basking in the light of glory that was never his own, has sought to attain his aims by the defeat of France. Under the protection of his Fuehrer he makes our beautiful country, which used to be the home of freedom and an asylum for the persecuted, a German colony at the mercy of Hitler's hordes.

Unfortunately, there are Frenchmen who follow him; they cannot conceive of so much duplicity on the part of a man who owing to his military position should range amongst the greatest patriots. In addition, his propaganda services are busy spreading the most fantastic legends. In this way, at a moment when Pétain is yielding to all the demands of Hitler, his followers explain that Pétain resists, that he is going to defy Hitler!!!

This old braggart must be unmasked. For that it will be sufficient to remember his deeds. On June 22nd when that despicable creature Laval announced the famous 'relève' on the wireless he said 'Speaking in the name of the Marshal and in complete agreement with him, I loudly proclaim that I desire

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the victory of Germany'. There was no disclaimer from Pétain.

Two months later, after the British raid on Dieppe; 'Marshal Pétain, head of the State, and M. Laval, head of the Government, conveyed to the Fuehrer their thanks and their congratulations for the rapidity with which the German troops had cleared French soil of the British invader'. (!)

Will that not discourage even the most loyal supporters of the old traitor? Or will Pétain feel ashamed? Once more official emissaries spread the rumour that Pétain has no part in this whole business.

In vain! The French people now know what Pétain is. This old Jesuit will have to answer before the courts of justice of Free France. He will be Accused No 1, and even his age will not save him from the punishment which awaits traitors of his kind." (!)

"Populaire" [11]

We have received No. 5 (September 15th) of the "Populaire", the journal of the Comité d'Action Socialiste. Its main contents consist of a detailed investigation into the question of who was to blame for the defeat of France. The journal especially stressed that the C.A.S. regards Félix Gouin [12] and André Philip [13] as their special representatives inside the movement of General de Gaulle.

Editorische Anmerkungen

- 1 - Puzzi, nach „Europe speaks“ Professor, der in Mailand mit 40 Studenten wegen Bildung einer antifaschistischen Gruppe verhaftet worden war. Weitere biographische Daten konnten nicht ermittelt werden.
- 2 - Sir Winston Churchill (1874-1965), britischer Politiker (Liberale Partei, Konservative Partei), mehrfach Mitglied der britischen Regierung (ab 1906), Premierminister (1940-1945, 1951-1955)
- 3 - Jossif Wissarionowitsch Stalin, eigentlich Dschugaschwili (1879-1953), Bolschewik (seit 1903), mehrfach in Verbannung (1907-1917), Volkskommissar für Nationalitätenpolitik (1917-1923), Generalsekretär der KPdSU (1922-1953), Vorsitzender des Rats der Volkskommissare bzw. des sowjetischen Ministerrats, d.h. Ministerpräsident (1941-1953), Alleinherrscher, Hauptverantwortlicher für die kommunistische Gewaltherrschaft und millionenfachen Mord an politischen Gegnern.

- 4 - *Auwi = August Wilhelm von Preußen (1887-1949), vierter Sohn Wilhelm II., SA-Führer im Dritten Reich, Beitritt zum deutsch-nationalen Frontkämpferbund „Stahlhelm“, Beitritt zur NSDAP (1930), Beitritt zur SA (1933), preußischer Stadtrat und Mitglied des Reichstags, SA-Obergruppenführer (1939), Redeverbot nach abfälligen Bemerkungen über Goebbels (1942), bei Kriegsende Flucht nach Kronberg und Verhaftung durch amerikanische Truppen (1945), Verurteilung zu 3 Jahren Arbeitslager, Einstufung als Belasteter.*
- 5 - *Robert Wagner (1895-1946), deutscher Politiker, Teilnahme am Hitler-Putsch (1923), Gründung des Gaus Baden der NSDAP (1925), Mitglied des badischen Landtags (ab 1929), Berufung in die Reichsleitung der NSDAP (1932), nach der „Machtergreifung“ NSDAP Reichstatthalter und Gauleiter, Chef der Zivilverwaltung des Elsass (ab 1940), mit äußerst harten Methoden Versuch einer Germanisierung des Elsass, bei Kriegsende tauchte er unter, stellte sich dann aber den Amerikanern, nach Auslieferung an die Franzosen zum Tode verurteilt.*
- 6 - *„Lanz-Werke“ = „Heinrich Lanz AG“, landwirtschaftliche Maschinenfabrik in Mannheim, Herstellung von Lokomotiven (ab 1878), fast vollständige Zerstörung durch Bombardements im Zweiten Weltkrieg, nach dem Krieg Wiederaufbau, Übernahme durch John Deere (1956).*
- 7 - *„Socialisme et Liberté“, illegale französische Résistance-Zeitung, die das „Comité d'Action Socialiste“ (früher die frz. Sozialistische Partei), in Paris herausgab. Weitere Daten konnten nicht ermittelt werden.*
- 8 - *„Kaiser“ = Wilhelm II. (1859-1941), Deutscher Kaiser und König von Preußen (1888-1918).*
- 9 - *Ferdinand Foch (1851-1929), französischer Marschall, im Ersten Weltkrieg an der Spitze der 9. Armee (1914), dann der Heeresgruppe Nord (1915-1916), Chef des Generalstabes (1917), Oberkommandierender der Entente-Truppen (1918), Verantwortlicher für die entscheidende Wendung des Kriegs an der Westfront und für die bedingungslose Annahme der Waffenstillstandsbedingungen durch Deutschland (1918).*
- 10 - *Georges Benjamin Clémenceau (1841-1929), Arzt und französischer Politiker, Führer der äußersten Linken (ab 1876), Senator (ab 1902), Ministerpräsident (1902-1909 und 1917-1920).*
- 11 - *„Populaire“ = „Le Populaire“.*
- 12 - *Félix Gouin (1884-1977), Anwalt und französischer Politiker, Abgeordneter der Sozialisten (SFIO), Verteidigung von Leon Blum im Prozess von Riom, Gründer und Präsident des „Comité Français de la Libération nationale“ in Algier (ab 1943), Präsident der provisorischen Versammlung (l'Assemblée Provisoire) in Paris (1944), Premierminister und zugleich Staatspräsident der provisorischen Regierung (1946), sozialistischer Abgeordneter (1946-1958).*
- 13 - *André Philip (1902-1970), Anwalt und französischer Politiker, sozialistischer Abgeordneter (1936-1940), Treffen mit de Gaulle in London (1942), Kommissar im „Comité Français de la Libération Nationale“ in Algier, Mitglied in der beratenden Versammlung (L'Assemblée Consultative), Abgeordneter (1946-1958), Inhaber verschiedener Ministerposten (1946-1947), nach Kritik an der Algerienpolitik Frankreichs Austritt aus der SFIO und Beitritt zur P.S.A. dann zur P.S.U., Vorsitzender der sozialistischen Bewegung für ein Vereinigtes Europa der Staaten.*