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## **Germany**

All the reports we have recently received from Germany agree on one important fact: The pressure of the Gestapo and the terror of the State machine have been tremendously increased everywhere. For that reason we have to be extremely careful in publicly using any reports coming from Germany. But to each of these reports the writer adds: This terror can no longer save the Third Reich from its fate.

We wish to give here a few facts reported to us from a number of big German towns with important armament industries. For the reason indicated above, we shall not publicise from which districts these reports come. They were written between the middle of January and the middle of February.

### **Before the Stalingrad Catastrophe**

Concerning the general mood of the population in six big German towns with a large working class and middle class population, we have received the following:

"You cannot imagine how fed up everybody is with the war. Even the tremendous casualties on the Eastern Front do not shake people out of their utter apathy. Even the members of the Nazi Party are infected by this mood, although they still want victory at any price."

### **After Stalingrad**

A few days after we had received the report just quoted we got the following information: "The recent news from the Eastern Front (the fall of Stalingrad) has resulted in a tremendous collapse in the morale of the population; we shall make good use of it. It is specially necessary now to attack the still wide-spread belief in Hitler's infallibility. One cannot repeat often enough that Hitler himself has stated again and again that his is the responsibility for the German strategy on the Eastern Front. We consider it as very important to expose the defeat as Hitler's failure. Anyone who could help us in this task should do so."

### **Man Power**

You will be aware of the most recent attempts of the Nazis to get more out of the completely exhausted German workers by the most subtle means. Sauckel's decrees designed to get hold of every man and woman, old or young, fit or unfit, have been discussed everywhere. About the Gestapo terror, however, less is known, partly because at times the Gestapo sees to it that their activities are kept in complete darkness. We therefore emphatically warn you not to regard the German press and the German official communiqués as adequate sources regarding the extent of the terror in Germany.

Sometimes the German press gives great publicity to death sentences or even to the trials of underground workers. The intention underlying this publicity is partly to create the impression that no greater opposition exists in Germany than these trials reveal, partly to show the underground workers how dangerous their opposition is.

In spite of all these facts, which are well known in Germany, the Gestapo and all the institutions set up for the exploitation of the working class have not succeeded in attaining the increase of production which was the purpose of this terror. Every statement we have received from those directly affected, namely the workers and employees in industry, has been in agreement as to the facts, which were contained in a collective report concerning German production and the attempt to increase it. This report says:

"While the terror of the Gestapo and the whole party apparatus is constantly increasing to an almost unbelievable extent, production is steadily decreasing. Special bonuses and the 'Leistungslohn' do not alter this fact. The reason is partly the depreciation of the machinery which cannot be properly replaced; partly the general exhaustion of the workers through undernourishment and nervous strain; partly direct sabotage which consists in turning out bad jobs and most of all in 'go slow'."

## **Foreign Workers**

A resumé of the part played by the millions of foreign workers in German industry and agriculture concluded with the statement:

"The foreign workers whether they come to Germany voluntarily or not, are by no means adequate to meet the great deficiency of highly skilled and experienced German workers."

Other reports show to what extent the foreign workers keep their German colleagues informed about political and economic facts from the occupied countries. For a long time Goebbels succeeded in keeping the German people ignorant about the shooting of hostages in occupied countries; he did so because he knew that they would strongly condemn the murder of innocent people. But the constant influx of foreign workers has frustrated all these efforts.

## **Lack of Material**

We get an increasing amount of information concerning the shortage of important raw materials. The most recent report we have received said for instance that certain kinds of high quality steel could only be obtained, if at all, with the greatest difficulty.

## **Transport**

We have received the following report on transport in Germany and especially on the railways: "Difficulties on the railways are almost insurmountable. The railway system is constantly worked beyond capacity and is therefore heading for a breakdown. But here, too, direct sabotage is effective in increasing the existing difficulties. The railway personnel is working under special pressure."

At this point we might mention a fact which we heard from another source: The old railway workers who will be mobilised in accordance with Sauckel's decree are to be

employed only in repair shops because there they can do the least harm to the German war machine.

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## **The SS Prepares for the Future**

We have learnt from many reports and also from other sources that the Nazis intend by hook or by crook to keep their fingers in the pie - even if a socialist revolution or anything similar should happen in Germany. Already speakers are being trained in marxist, communist, catholic, liberal and other philosophies. At the opportune moment these people will appear as the new "leaders". It is therefore important that underground workers should submit all those unknown persons to a careful scrutiny before their cooperation in the reconstruction of Europe is accepted. The most recent report about such far-reaching preparatory measures of the Nazis runs as follows:

"Since it has become known that the United Nations intend to direct their measures of retribution against the whole of the SS, the Nazi authorities have commenced methodically to enrol the sons of former socialists and trade unionists in the SS. They are collecting them from all the units of the Wehrmacht."

## **Punishment of War Criminals**

A resolution by socialists in Western Germany concerning the punishment of war criminals says, amongst other things: "Punishment of those responsible for the crimes in the occupied countries is necessary and meets with our emphatic approval."

## **Peace Aims**

The following views on the coming defeat of the Nazis and its consequences were expressed a few weeks ago by German socialists who succeeded in smuggling messages out of Germany:

"The members of the former socialist parties and the former trade unions ardently desire to see the Nazis defeated. But they fear a more or less arbitrary plan may be forced upon the Germans and that the German people will experience 1919 all over again."

## **Opposition**

We can gather from the above reports that opposition to the Third Reich is still alive in Germany. A short message from the beginning of February especially emphasised this fact:

"Acts of sabotage are repeatedly committed in armaments factories, on the railways and in public utility enterprises. -

The worker's broadcasts of the B.B.C. are listened to regularly; this is very often done in small circles which immediately discuss the broadcasts in order to use them in wider circles. The communists do not take part in this; we have not the impression that they have learnt from the past."

## **The SS against the German People**

The following is the text of a leaflet which was published in French by "INBEL" [1] (Office Belge d'Information et de Documentation). This agency stated that Germans in Brussels distributed it amongst the population:

"Wherever you go in Germany you run into an SS man. The fifty chief officials of the SS have just been entrusted with dictatorial powers in the Reich. Thierack [2], the Obergruppenfuehrer of the SS, has become Reichsminister of Justice. 'Execution first and trials afterwards', is his motto. In addition whole units of the SS are stationed as a garrison in Austria and the Reich. We know the SS. It isn't by chance that they are better paid and better fed, and get more leave than the ordinary soldier. They watch and spy on us. We have known them since 1933 and we know

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that it is they that carry out the mass executions by firing squads in Poland and Czechoslovakia, and the atrocities in the occupied countries, especially in Russia, and who thus arouse the hatred and contempt of the whole world.

But at the critical moment this hatred will be directed against us if we do not immediately prove by word and deed that we have nothing in common with the murder gangs of SS. Yes, by deed, too. Whenever they take action against strikers, whenever they shoot hostages, we must make the distinction clear. We must make the Belgians see the real difference so that they too will treat us differently at the decisive hour. In a special and personal order Hitler defines the task of the SS as the fight against the enemy at home. While thousands of soldiers are perishing on the battle front, the SS will be shooting on our women, if they demand higher wages in the factories, or more food in the markets, or if weary of the bombardments they demonstrate against the war. For these are indeed only the two sides of the same medal. Hitler is waging war against other nations because they refuse to allow themselves to be bled white for the benefit of German capitalism. And when the German people will no longer passively allow themselves to be sacrificed on the altars of war, our rulers will act in the same way against the internal enemy, namely the German people. Hitler is afraid that the Second Front will be the signal for strikes and revolts not only in the occupied countries but also in Germany itself. HITLER WANTS TO AVOID THE CATASTROPHE THAT THREATENS HIM AND BY MEANS OF THE SS TERROR HE IS TRYING TO FORCE THE MILITARY AND THE HOME FRONT TO HOLD OUT. Soldiers, let us organise ourselves, let us form soldiers' committees. Let us prepare to fight our way home against the SS and against the officers of Hitler.

Let us use our arms for defending our homes against the SS gangsters.

We want to be done with the war. We want to settle our accounts with the war mongers. We want a free Germany."

- 1 - „INBEL“ = *Office Belge d'Information et de Documentation, belgisches Informations- und Dokumentationszentrum 1940-1945.*
- 2 - *Otto Georg Thierack (1889-1946), Jurist und Politiker (NSDAP seit 1932), Führer der nationalsozialistischen Juristenorganisation („Rechtswahrerbund“), sächsischer Justizminister (ab 1933), Präsident des Volksgerichtshof (1936-1942), Reichsminister der Justiz (1942-1945), Verschärfung der strafrechtlichen Verfolgung missliebiger Personen, Überstellung so genannter „Asozialer“ an die SS, entzog sich dem Nürnberger Juristenprozess durch Selbstmord (1946).*