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Germany

Readers are asked to bear in mind that the following reports, which relate to very recent events and deal with very controversial problems represent only the experience of individuals. Those responsible for them were only able to use the material available to them. Each of them repeatedly emphasizes the need for great care in drawing general conclusions from their reports.

The Role of the Communists

"There are widely differing opinions as to the influence of the communists. One thing however is clear: that the influence of the communists fluctuates according to the victories of the Red Army and the prevailing opinion about Russia. The advance of the Red Army and the courage shown by the Russian Soldiers arouses general admiration. For example, in one town where there were Russian prisoners of war, a high wall had to be built up around the prison camp because the passing German workers were greeting the prisoners across the low fence with cries of 'Red Front'. This sympathetic attitude is certainly widespread.

On the other hand the fear of so-called Russian conditions is widespread, and there are several causes for this. Goebbels of course is continuously making propaganda against 'Bolshevism' and paints this bogey in the grimness of colours, but this propaganda is certainly not the only cause of the wide-spread fear of Russia. It is intensified by the stories told by German soldiers who, though not Nazis, are convinced that in the event of the Russians being victorious they would be capable of creating the most terrible conditions. In many cases this is the only reason why these soldiers still fight on, for they no longer think there is any hope of winning the war. They hope that by continuing to resist, they may still manage somehow to come to a compromise with their opponents, which would in effect mean that the Russians would not be able to dictate conditions alone. I heard that many women have already procured poison so that they can commit suicide in the event of a Russian invasion of Germany.

But the reports of German soldiers fighting in Russia are not concerned simply with the fear of Russian reprisals. The German workers have always been fairly critical of social conditions in Russia, and it is known that there are good reasons for this reserve. Even to-day their attitude is hardly more positive. In spite of their admiration for the Red Army and for the courage of the Russian soldiers, German soldiers even of working class origin and even socialists say that what they have seen in Russia has not caused them to revise their opinion. Indeed I know of people

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who used to be very much in favour of the Russian system and especially of the

Russian revolution, who have now become much more uncertain than they used to be.

As I have already mentioned these are all more or less individual cases. I would therefore like to add:

The rôle the Communists will play in post-war Germany will not, however, depend only upon the present attitude of the workers in the Third Reich towards Russia and the Communists. Much, perhaps everything depends upon what the Allies do in Germany after victory. If the Allies are intelligent enough at least not to hamper the efforts of the progressive forces to eradicate fascism root and branch then the Communists will hardly stand a chance to become a decisive factor in German political life. Their chances will be even less if the Allies and above all the international Labour Movement positively assists the progressive forces in Germany. If that does not happen, if no fundamental changes in the economic and social spheres occur and if hunger, unemployment and insecurity again prevail, then the chances of the Communists may considerably increase.

Mussolini an Example?

The overthrow of Mussolini encourages Hitler's opponents and was a shock for the Nazis. It is true, however, that Mussolini's liberation by the Nazis was encouraging for their supporters. People in Germany hardly expect the generals to conspire against Hitler, - at any rate nobody believes that it will be such a simple matter as in Italy. Many are more inclined to think that some of the German industrialists will take the initiative in Germany. We must not, however, overlook the fact that the Nazi terror-apparatus is still absolutely intact.

Terror

The terror is even worse than ever. The Hitler Youth, the S.S. and the S.A. are being trained in the use of special weapons. They are also being taught methods of fighting appropriate for breaking strikes and demonstrations. The extent to which the people are spied upon surpasses all imagination - every one suspects almost everyone else of being a police informer.

During air-raids S.S.-men, with revolvers cocked, patrol the big shelters, ready to intervene should any 'disturbance' occur. Anyone who makes the slightest remark with a defeatist tinge is ruthlessly punished. For instance, in the course of a conversation with an S.S. man somebody very carefully expressed a certain amount of understanding for Russia's policy. The result was a year imprisonment.

Morale

Nobody doubts that Germany has already lost the war. Nazi party members do not talk about it - but they, like everybody else, are generally of the opinion, that the Nazi leaders do not know how to get out of the mess they have got themselves into, otherwise they would have finished this war long ago.

The morale of the civilians is so bad that soldiers on leave are often quite shocked by it. Many explain the higher morale of the troops by the fact that they are kept in ignorance of what happens in other parts of the front and in the rear. In any case, the home front presents a worse picture than the battle front.

But brutal terror is not the government's only weapon against the defeatists, they

also try persuasion. Certain groups of workers - we do not yet know exactly which - have to attend

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lectures after work, even after nightshift. The subject of these lectures is described as ‚Staatslehre‘ (political theory). Their main theme is that the Poles and the British are much more ‚patriotic‘ than the Germans and can ‚take it‘ better.

Sabotage

Many cases of sabotage occur in the transport service and in industry, - especially during air-raids. Anti-Nazi slogans are very often painted on the walls. The police admit that sabotage has been committed only when they cannot avoid doing so. In a special report from an engine driver, he regrets that transport by rail is not sabotaged enough although it would be comparatively easy now owing to inadequate maintenance, the rolling stock is all in a very bad state and in cases of accidents the overloading of the trucks would serve as a good excuse.

Recalcitrant foreign workers are given short shrift. The methods of dealing with them are similar to those used in the case of the Jews or even worse. It happens again and again that foreign workers are being taken from the factories because of sabotage.

Recently a scheme was adopted to train foreign workers for fire fighting during air raids. In one town, however, foreign workers are known to have thrown a big pump and hose into the fire."

Foreign Workers

The following report refers to a question much discussed in this country: Why do the German workers toil so wholehearted for the German war machine? Our reports show in the first place that this is not the case as sabotage in the form of the ‚go slow‘ policy is very wide spread. But a more important argument is that it could be asked with at least as much justification why the foreign workers work for Hitler's war machine. The answer is: In the first place they are directly forced to do so by the terror. In the second place they are in no way organised and therefore there would be no possibility at all that any real stand they might make could succeed. It is different, of course, in the case of skilled workers with the backing of an underground organisation. This is shown by the appeal we publish in our report on France.

The following is a report about Russian women workers: "I saw a munitions factory in Silesia, staffed only by Russian women workers; there were only a few Germans there as supervisors. These Germans sometimes got into difficulties for treating the foreign workers in a humane way. For example, one of the foremen, supervising 50 women and getting on well with them was called into the manager's office, some of his colleagues having denounced him for ‚intimacy‘ with the Russian women. He was accused of shaking hands with them, giving them a pat on the back when they had made a specially good effort, and similar ‚undignified‘ behaviour. The foreman then adopted a very reserved attitude towards the women and did not move from his desk. The result was that at the end of the week he was again called into the manager's office and asked why some of the workers had produced much less than usual. He explained that this was due to his own cool attitude towards them. After that he was allowed to use his own discretion in dealing with the Russian women."

Man power

"Many prisoners are at present conscripted for labour service, on the battle front as well as in the rear. Some of them are working for instance in Greece. Others are building a big road near Innsbruck. Their food and treatment are abominable. A man convicted to hard labour for

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political activities was captured in North Africa, and sent to Canada, and has now written to his relatives."

War Aims

"The German Socialists are disgusted by the propaganda of the Moscow Free Committee. But they ask for a definite statement as to Allied peace aims and in particular they want to know what attitude the Allies will have towards a really progressive Germany. Any such statement should, of course, be supported by concrete facts, it should be announced in the workers' broadcasts of the B.B.C. which are regularly listened to by many German workers."

Corruption

"The possibilities of shirking military service in the Third Reich will be revealed by a big trial which will be opened shortly. 250 young men are accused of having bribed a woman secretary to enter them in the official files as 'deceased'. After this had been discovered the woman secretary gave away a whole series of similar cases of bribery. - If it is asked how it is possible to live unregistered in the Third Reich, with its rigid system of control, the answer is that those who have money can live anywhere, unregistered and without ration cards."

Air Raids

"There is a terrific fear of air-raids. Until recently people in Silesia felt fairly safe. But since a branch of Krupps **[1]** and some other armament firms have established themselves in Breslau, there too the possibility of air-raids has become a daily anxiety.

During air-raids, it is each for himself! People rush for safety with ruthless disregard for anyone except themselves and their friends and relations."

France

Four Underground Trade Union Journals

A new journal has been recently founded by the French underground trade unionists. It is called "Les Informations Sociales" and is a true expression of the spirit of the French working class movement. There are at present four trade union journals: **[2]** "Le Mouvement Ouvrier Français"; "La Résistance Ouvrière"; "Les Informations Socialistes"; and "Le Peuple" which is published in Northern France.

The October issue of "Les Informations Sociales" contains the following appeal to the French workers who have been deported to Germany:

"The daily growing might of the American industry, the increasingly violent and

deadly attacks of the R.A.F. and the heroic and amazing power in resistance and attack of the Red Army have driven Germany on to the defensive.

In this summer of 1943 the Nazis think no longer of winning the war but only of prolonging it. They are butting their last hopes and resources into this attempt to secure a patched-up peace, a negotiated peace, a peace they hope to snatch from a world exhausted by this gigantic conflict.

FRENCH WORKERS! You are working in Germany on piece rates or on the bonus system; in view of Hitler's need for more arms to prolong his war and to postpone his fall, the Nazis are encouraging maximum production by seeming to increase the incentive. They dangle in front of your eyes the savings you will be able to take home. But at the same time prices are steadily rising. Your money will have no value, in France and in Germany alike.

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To fall for the bait of monetary reward is tantamount to becoming the dupes of the Nazis and also traitors to your own cause.

You French workers have weapons in your hands in your power to fight against the raising of output and to sabotage production in all its forms. You share that power with those German workers, who are not prepared to die for Hitler, as well as with the Belgians, Dutch, Poles, with all the deportees who, like you, will not recover their homes, their strength and freedom until after the defeat of Nazi Germany.

PUT YOUR NATIONAL HONOUR NOT INTO WORKING FAST AND BETTER, BUT INTO SABOTAGING FAST AND WELL!

French Workers! Work slowly and badly, without making yourselves conspicuous, without boasting about it. Learn as the German workers did to be watchful, silent and careful.

Organise and fight against comrades who work "too zealously".

Be the representatives of the true spirit of working France.

You are stationed at the German home front and your intelligence, your skill and your courage can help every day to defeat Hitler in his battle of production.

Show by your whole attitude that the liberation of the working class is not an invention of agitators but a desire deeply anchored in the mind, the arm and the heart of every worker.

For your liberation there is one pass-word:

THE UNITY OF ALL EUROPEAN WORKERS IN THE SABOTAGE OF THE NAZI WAR!"

Defeat of Sauckel

In this connection it is important to remember that the German man-power dictator Sauckel recently informed Laval that during the winter he will not demand any further deportations of French workers to Germany.

Fighting France

The illegal paper „Libération" writes in one of its recent issues:

"France will never forgive Pétain and Laval for having handed her over to the tender mercies of Germany in June 1940.

She will never forgive them for the armistice, that shameful betrayal which precipitated our country into an abyss of humiliation. She will never forgive them for carrying out a policy which, but for the attitude of the French masses, would have led to a conflict with the United Nations and have had fatal consequences for her future existence as a nation.

At a time when Moscow was still entertaining Ribbentrop [3] when England had only just introduced conscription and America was still manufacturing more Ford [4] cars than aeroplanes, we went into battle like detachments sacrificed to pave the way for a victorious offensive.

The vanguard of liberty, almost alone on the field of battle, and betrayed by incompetent leaders, was overwhelmed. The disaster was complete.

The sacrifice of France made it possible for Britain to prepare her resistance, it paved the way for American intervention, it gave Russia an additional breathing space.

At the very moment when power was torn by an evil conspiracy from hands too weak to hold it, there was a man who raised once more the standard which treachery was preparing to surrender.

Moved by the example of Charles de Gaulle, French resistance became a conscious force and the pulse of French underground activity began to beat ever more strongly.

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Thanks to the veiled but unceasing resistance of the French people, the effects of the betrayal of June 1940 have been counteracted.

By their resistance, the French people prevented Laval from decreeing general mobilisation and war against the U.S.S.R. and the Allies.

By their resistance the French people made every attempt to collaborate with the enemy fruitless.

The history of the last few months presents a magnificent example of what a people can do even in chains, when impelled by their deepest feelings to perform the great deeds which alone can safeguard their future.

If France had not risen against the policy of collaboration, the Americans would have been received in North Africa not with triumphal arches but with cannon fire directed by the Darlans, Noguès [5], Boissons [6] and others of their kind.

Whether some people like it or not, France, although enslaved, must already be counted among the fighting nations.

She has her place among them, not only because thousands of her sons are fighting on the front, but also because in France itself the French people have sworn not to lay down their arms until the oppressor has been driven from her soil."

The "Peuple du Pas-de-Calais" [7] gives an impression of the state of mind of the 100,000 miners of the Pas-de-Calais in the following passage:

"We have already expressed our opinion of the powerful federation of underground

workers and the fierce resistance of their members to all acts of oppression and to the Charte du Travail. Like a vast army on the eve of battle, this courageous army of workers constitutes a considerable resistance to the operation of the Charte du Travail. The moment the miners realised that half a dozen of their leaders had promised Pétain the allegiance of the Corporation, they rose like one man against this violation of Trade Union principles. They are impatiently awaiting the day now not far off when they will be able to rid themselves of these leaders. They are well disciplined and will wait for the signal to be given before they sweep away like chaff those who, supported by the occupation forces, have dishonoured and besmirched the name of the mining corporation."

Editorische Anmerkungen

- 1 - *„Krupp“, deutsches Stahl- und Rüstungsunternehmen im Ruhrgebiet. Gründung (1811) durch Friedrich Krupp (1787-1826), Ausbau der Firma unter dessen Sohn Alfred (1812-1887) zur weltgrößten Gussstahlfabrik. Nachfolger: Alfreds Sohn Friedrich Alfred (1854-1902) sowie dessen älteste Tochter Bertha (1886-1957) und deren Ehemann Gustav von Bohlen und Halbach (1870-1950) („Krupp von Bohlen und Halbach“), Prosperität während beider Weltkriege durch staatliche Rüstungsaufträge. Alleininhaber ab 1943: Gustavs Sohn Alfred Krupp von Bohlen und Halbach (1907-1967), Verurteilung (anstelle des haftunfähigen Vaters) von einem amerikanischen Militärtribunal zu 12 Jahren Haft und Einziehung des Vermögens (1948), Revision (1951), Übertragung des Privat- und Konzernvermögens an eine Stiftung (1968), Umwandlung in eine GmbH (1969), später in eine AG (1992), nach mehreren Fusionen heute Firma Thyssen Krupp AG.*
- 2 - *"Le Mouvement Ouvrier Français"(M.O.F.), "La Résistance Ouvrière", "Le Peuple": drei der anfangs vier französischen Gewerkschaftszeitungen während der Zeit der Résistance, gegründet von französischen Untergrund-Gewerkschaftern.*
- 3 - *Joachim von Ribbentrop (1893-1946), NSDAP-Politiker, Botschafter in London (1936-1938), Reichsaußenminister (1938-1945), federführende Beteiligung an der nationalsozialistischen Gewaltherrschaft, 1946 zum Tode verurteilt.*
- 4 - *„Ford“, amerikanische Industriellendynastie: Henry Ford (1863-1947), Gründer der Ford Motor Company (1903), deren Präsident von 1903 bis 1919 und von 1943 bis 1945; sein Sohn Edsel Bryant Ford (1893-1943), Präsident von 1919 bis 1943; dessen Sohn Henry II Ford (1917-1987), Präsident von 1945 bis 1960 (danach Vorsitzender des Verwaltungsrats).*
- 5 - *Charles Noguès (1879-1971), Generalinspektor der französischen Truppen in Nordafrika (1936), mit Beginn des 2. Weltkriegs Oberbefehlshaber der französischen Truppen in Nordafrika, von Pétain zum Oberkommissar von Marokko ernannt (1942), Verweigerung der Unterstützung der alliierten Landung in Nordafrika, nach dem Krieg Verurteilung in Abwesenheit zu 20 Jahren Haft (1947), nach seiner Rückkehr nach Frankreich (1954) keine Inhaftierung.*
- 6 - *Pierre Boisson (1894-1948), Gouverneur für französisch Westafrika (1938-1939, 1940-1943), während der deutschen Besatzung Frankreichs auch „Hoher*

*Kommissar für ganz frz. Afrika" genannt, nach der Befreiung Gefängnishaft (1944),
Freilassung (1945).*

*7 - „Peuple du Pas-de-Calais“, französische Untergrundzeitung, möglicherweise Ausgabe
von „Le Peuple“ für das Département Pas-de-Calais“.*