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## **Germany**

The letter we are publishing below was written by a German socialist whose occupation gave him the opportunity of being in touch with people in different parts of Germany. His report - which was written three weeks ago - concerning the political situation and the mood of the people in the Third Reich was based upon the experiences and judgments of a number of trained anti-fascists. For reasons of security we have altered a few details.

"As compared with earlier this year people are more out-spoken, but they are rather careful with whom they discuss serious matters.

The readiness to work actively against the Nazis has increased. Of course, this is not a general feature in Germany to-day. But the majority of people, 80 - 90 % - and I have seen and talked to many - are at any rate sick of the war. They want to see it finished at all costs as they think, whatever the conditions of the armistice may be, they could not be worse than the present situation. Most of them, however, are still passive and wish good luck to the others. There are various reasons for this. To name only a few: the feeling of complete helplessness in face of the Nazi machine; the great disappointment of the period before the war when they had to fight the Nazis without any support from outside Germany; grave anxiety as to the post-war settlement of Germany, and the effects of twelve years of oppression.

There is great anxiety that the peace settlement will not bring about the much-needed international understanding and

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co-operation, and will therefore not be a real safeguard for peace. People constantly look for Allied statements concerning the future shape of Europe and they are very disappointed at the lack of constructive ideas and bigger conceptions. Statements such as the one that this war is no longer an ideological war, the speeches and writings of Vansittart, the Morgenthau-Plan etc., have a very depressing effect even upon those people who are not influenced by Goebbels' propagandist exploitations of these. People watch with intense interest the development in the territories occupied by the Allies. They are very worried when they read that in one German village a Nazi has been appointed as burgomaster by the Allied authorities, or when they get the impression from the reports on Italy that the Allies do not give the same support to the government of Benomi **[1]** as to Badoglio. Well, I need not dwell upon all the aspects which have become apparent in connection with post-war planning. In face of all these difficulties only the most stable and energetic anti-fascists in Germany feel that they can tackle the work of reconstruction. In any case, it needs a tremendous effort to rise above the general state of lethargy and to help to shorten the war.

Some anti-fascists think that those who are capable of working for the reconstruction of Germany should not now expose themselves to the risk of being wiped out by the Nazis as they are needed to form the nucleus for building up a better Germany.

Amongst socialists the idea of a socialist united party, or at least a united socialist movement finds the best response. Agreement between the socialist and trade unionist emigrants regarding a common programme is therefore of utmost importance.

In considering the possibilities of building up a united socialist movement the role of the communists presents a special problem. The achievements of the Red Army have helped to create a certain sympathy for the German communists, although they have made no contribution towards these. On the other hand, some former communists have returned from Russia very disillusioned. We have to note in this connection that some of the worst activities of the Comintern have not become generally known to the people inside Germany. To give an example: only a few people know about the letter of Walter Ulbricht [2], then leader of the German communist party, in which he expressed an attitude which amounted to actual support of the Nazis. Moreover, many people believe that some acts of the communist parties and the USSR are simply 'tricks' to deceive the 'class-enemy'. Other look upon Russia as the only

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power which might help to dispossess the big land-owners and heavy industrialists. They think that she might at the same time be interested in the preservation of German industry as she will need it for the purposes of rehabilitation, whereas Great Britain and America might fear the competition of German industry.

Again and again I have heard the statement that Germany as a whole could not escape responsibility, and the consequences of this - occupation by the Allies, reparations etc. - were recognized and accepted. It seems that, in spite of the attempts of the authorities to conceal them from the German people, more has become known about the atrocities perpetrated by the Germans in occupied countries.

The fierce military resistance is partly due to the fear of the German soldiers that in view of the terrible atrocities committed by the Nazis the victorious Allies will retaliate in the same manner. Therefore they want to delay the victory of the Allies as long as possible and this makes them fight on desperately, without any hope of really altering the situation.

The fanaticism of the Nazi youth plays a big role in keeping up resistance. In reshuffling the units the Nazis often take officers from special Nazi-groups - e.g. pupils from 'Ordenburgen' (special Nazi training schools) - to see that there is no capitulation. However, instances such as the following do occur: A group of middle-aged soldiers was put under the command of one of these Ordensburg-youths, who ordered the man about in a most arrogant fashion. One day he was told by the soldiers that unless he adopted a different tone he would get a good smacking. We did not find out whether this warning had any effect, we only know that the young officer did not report this incident.

These youngsters who have been put through the mill of Hitler Youth education are, together with the Nazi cliques proper, the most active props of the regime. We are told that the number of volunteers for dangerous missions, who offer to 'sacrifice their lives for the Fuehrer' is still very large. On the other hand, the young people who have not

been specially trained by the Nazis are exhausted and are longing for peace and for education. We can therefore hope that it will be possible to re-educate these young people without very great difficulties, unless the occupation authorities take measures specially unfavourable for such re-education. Goebbels' propaganda concerning the post-war plans of the Allies must be

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given the lie very quickly, and a well thought-out plan of education must be tackled. Of course, we cannot expect to solve all our problems through education, but it certainly must play a bigger part in the future than in the past, for instance in the Weimar Republic, where salvation was expected from the economic side alone. It goes without saying that we see the necessity for enormous changes in the economic sphere also.

A number of experiences - most of which are, however, unknown to the outside world - show that the average German is by no means in full agreement with the brutalities and atrocities perpetrated by the regime. There is still (or once again?) a readiness to demonstrate this fact in one way or another:

In a big armament firm the Russian workers were replaced by foreign Jews. The German workers had to sign an undertaking that they would keep a strict watch over the Jews and would have nothing to do with them. In spite of this, many workers showed sympathy for their new colleagues and, whenever possible, gave them extra food.

A worker told me the other day how he hated his job of having to supervise Czech, Polish and Hungarian Jewish women. When he marched them through the town he did not dare to lift his head. He does what he can to relieve their fate. Why did he accept such a job? The answer is simple: Had he refused, he would have been killed. There would have been one antifascist less, the fate of the Jewish women would not have been improved, they would probably have been put under a Nazi foreman. Furthermore, this action would not have been known except to the man's very close friends and would therefore not even have had the value of an open protest. Such people are, of course, all the time torn by inner conflicts which they try to solve by being as friendly and helpful to their charges as possible.

There seem to be some possibilities in this direction: We know of a Russian prisoner who fled from a concentration camp and returned to his old job (where he had been very popular); he had not got into trouble for this, although the Nazis who had earlier denounced him to the Gestapo and the two local policemen who had instructions to recapture him are well aware of his presence.

Some especially patriotic mine-owners suggested the working of so-called 'Panzer Shifts' (the miners should work on a Sunday without pay and the coal thus produced should be given free to the State). To make the loss of the mine-owners

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specially heavy the miners worked tremendously hard on that Sunday (they produced 50% above the average). During the following week their production went down in the same degree. 'Panzer Shifts' were consequently dropped'.

This is an instance of effective anti-Nazi propaganda: During an air-raid a number of evacuees and workers were gathered in an air-raid shelter. Suddenly a soft but distinct

chorus chanted Goering's earlier promise: 'Above all I shall see to it that no enemy plane ever reaches Germany'.

Transport has become increasingly disorganized in the course of the year. Trains are not as overcrowded as they used to be (on certain lines, however, one has still to elbow one's way into the compartment or go through the window) because travelling has become so terribly complicated.

A great number of German soldiers are traveling about in Germany and they try to combine traveling on duty with extensive trips on their own account. The Wehrmacht very often makes searches in the trains. There are, however, very few ticket inspectors and they are all women.

There are only a very few lines which are run according to the time table. Nowadays passengers are usually informed about train departures by loud speakers. It very often happens that the train does not go in the direction announced; often passengers have to change because they find that the train is going to quite a different destination. There are long stops on the line, and a lot of shunting, etc. People are terribly afraid too of the bombing of trains by Allied aircraft. Some passengers spend the whole journey at the window to watch for planes in which case they would pull the communication cord to give the passengers a chance to take cover in the fields. Moreover, there is a new decree that for journeys beyond 100 kilometers a permit from the police, the Nazi Party or the Wehrmacht is needed. No tickets are issued without such a permit.

In the Ruhr district coal has been stacked on account of transport difficulties. Miners have even been put on the shoveling of coal. Up to now nothing has been said about working extra shifts. Very few foreign workers are employed in the mines.

On the whole the food situation has not deteriorated much since the beginning of the year; the reduction of the bread ration is only small. Now, however, there are queues in front of food shops.

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In restaurants one can still get the 'Stammgericht' (a simple dish) without coupons, in small towns even without having to wait long.

Due to transport difficulties the peasants are unable to take to town the fruit which is very much needed there (fruit and vegetables are rationed). Often they have no time to pick the fruit, and a lot of it is rotting. Those town dwellers who can manage to do so go into the country to supply themselves with fruit and vegetables. In many fields the corn is still in sheaves because it has not yet been possible to take it to the barns.

The Black Market, or rather trade by barter, is flourishing. Food can be obtained in exchange for coffee, cigarettes, human labour, etc., and money is not absolutely essential.

As the Allies approached Aachen people in a near-by town who had previously been convicted of political offences were arrested and put into concentration camp. The same measure is intended for all the other districts upon which the Allies advance.

There is a scheme for the evacuation from the danger zone, in the case of Allied advance, of all the high Nazi officials, the whole police, the whole population of military age and all foreign workers.

In the Ruhr district the miners are terribly bitter and apprehensive, because the Nazi

authorities there intend to drive the 'Eastern workers' into the mines and then flood them, when the Allies advance to that district. The Wehrmacht oppose this plan because they expect to reconquer this district (by drawing away troops from the East and using them for defence in the West), they therefore want only the removal of essential machinery so as to put the mines of operation for the duration of the Allied occupation. The Nazis are trying to win the favour of the miners, for example by giving them extra rations of Schnaps, bacon, etc.

In X., Y., and Z. small Panzer units are stationed to be used against the population in case of unrest.

As during the fighting for Arnhem the difficulties for the Nazis increased, the cinemas in a large German town were surrounded by military police and all members of the Wehrmacht in uniform were taken directly to Arnhem; this included sailors but they were sent back the next day.

Many members of the police force were also taken to Arnhem; their places were filled by members of the auxiliary police.

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The officers in charge of the auxiliary police are former pupils of the 'Ordensburgen'.

One is struck by the number of foreign workers in the streets; but only a few foreign workers are to be found in the trains. Only few men in SS and SA uniforms are to be seen.

An increasing number of ordinary people are being recruited for the Waffen-SS and entrusted with special tasks. By this the Nazis are evidently trying to prevent the wholesale conviction of Nazi formations after the collapse of the regime. A socialist who was first in the Luftwaffe, was then called up for the Waffen-SS and is now a guard in a concentration camp. The Nazis probably hope that in this way a sifting of the Waffen-SS will be necessary and that many of those who are guilty may escape.

The training of Nazi partisans is supposed to extend only to pupils of the 'Ordensburgen'. Probably the Nazis think that they will be the most effective guerilla fighters. I think, however, that the Nazis will also train other people for guerilla warfare.

This is a request from XYZ: Please ask the people and organisations concerned not to hold public commemorations for people who have recently been killed by the Nazis or have died in Germany. The people who have been in contact with X., for example, were very disturbed that so much was said and written about him. Such commemorations are an incentive to the Gestapo to hunt out the friends of the dead man which might mean disaster for them. All such commemorations should be left for the future. At present they have no propaganda value inside Germany and any value they might have in rousing people's conscience by no means compensates for the catastrophe they might bring about."

## **"From Resistance to European Unity"**

A few weeks ago we reported on an international meeting of representatives of European resistance movements and published the Manifesto adopted at that meeting. They are now publishing a bulletin "L'Europe Fédéraliste" **[3]** with the sub-title "From Resistance to European Unity".

The purpose of this bulletin is described in the editorial of the first issue from which we take the following extract:

"The comrades from various countries which grouped themselves around our journal "L'Europe Fédéraliste" want to make a thorough study of the problems posed by European Unity: the problem of Germany, the problems of the relations with the great Allied nations, the problems of structure, jurisdiction, power, economy, etc. Our journal is at the same time a rallying point for all those who are agreed that Nazism and war could only have arisen against the background of European anarchy and that freedom can only survive in a democratic and federated Europe.

Europeans of all nationalities, of all parties who have fought for freedom must create this Europe. Without European Democracy there will be no democracy in the separate countries. European Union or the liquidation of peace, these are the inevitable alternatives."

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## *Editorische Anmerkungen*

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- 1 - *Ivanoe Bonomi (1873-1951), italienischer Politiker (Sozialistische Partei), Sprecher des revisionistischen Flügels der Sozialistischen Partei, wegen Unterstützung des Krieges in Libyen Ausschluss aus der Partei (1912), Übernahme der Führung der Reformsozialisten (Partito Socialista Riformista Italiano, PSRI), Kriegsminister (1920-1921), Ministerpräsident (1921-1922), führend in der antifaschistischen Widerstandsbewegung (ab 1942), nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg erneut Ministerpräsident (1944-1945), Senatspräsident (1945-1951).*
- 2 - *Walter Ulbricht (1893-1973), deutscher Politiker, Politbüro der KPD (seit 1929), MdR (1928-1933), Exil (1933 Paris, 1938 UdSSR), Vertreter des ZK der KPD beim Exekutivkomitee der Komintern (1938), Mitbegründer des Nationalkomitees Freies Deutschland (1943), mit den sowjetischen Truppen Rückkehr nach Deutschland an der Spitze der „Gruppe Ulbricht“, Organisation des Wiederaufbaus der KPD im Raum Berlin (1945) und Durchsetzung der Zwangsvereinigung von SPD und KPD zur SED (1946), nach Gründung der DDR stellv. Ministerpräsident (1949-1955) und Erster stellv. Ministerpräsident (1955-1960), Generalsekretär (1950), später Erster Sekretär der SED (1953), Vorsitzender des Staatsrats (= Staatsoberhaupt, 1960-1973) sowie des Nationalen Verteidigungsrats (1960-1972), unter ihm Errichtung der Mauer in Berlin (1961), Rücktritt als Erster Sekretär der SED (1971).*
- 3 - *„L'Europe Fédéraliste“, nach „Europe speaks“ Bulletin mit dem Untertitel "From Resistance to European Unity", das von der europäischen Widerstandsbewegung herausgegeben wurde. Weitere Daten konnten nicht ermittelt werden.*