
EUROPE speaks

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Germany

A German skilled worker who up to the end of last year took part in underground work in Germany and escaped arrest by crossing into a neutral country reported about his experiences:

"Duesenjaeger"

"I was for several years an engineer in the X-works in Y. They produced oil-pumps for jet-propelled planes ('Duesenjaeger'). I know that it was very difficult to find pilots for these jet-propelled aircraft, for the speed of these planes reaches 600 miles per hour in the air and the landing-speed still amounts to about 275 miles per hour; only very young people, and not many of them, can stand this. I had the impression that the output of these planes is quite considerable. I was told that occasionally 600 machines per day were produced but the shortage of pilots is a problem so far unsolved."

V I

"V.I. has an oiltank which holds 700 litres; this shows what an enormous quantity of oil is needed to work this weapon. It is fairly certain that V.I. is now being launched from the district of the X-forest. The big oil-tanks for V.I. were formerly produced in the Y-works in Z. I know little about the production of V. II. and of other secret weapons. This is partly due to the fact that recently the measures against people who talk about things which should be kept secret have been considerably tightened up; Himmler's hand is heavily felt."

"Panzerfaust"

"Messerschmitts **[1]** and Duesenjaeger are the most commonly produced types of aeroplane. They are most urgently required; the production of Heinkel **[2]** 177, a four-engine plane, was given up long ago.

During recent months I found that all factories were issuing tools in a much more generous way than formerly. In the district where I worked there are a great number of big armament factories. It was impossible to exchange any tools earlier, as each factory was anxious to keep its own stock, but recently tools were even offered for sale or exchange.

A number of new weapons have been produced recently, for instance, the 'Panzerfaust' and 'Panzerschreck'. The "Panzerfaust" is used at a distance of 40 yards, and the "Panzerschreck" at a distance of 200 yards. The projectiles can penetrate armour plate of 10 cm thickness. The projectile of the "Panzerschreck" does not slide off the armoured plate. Its production is extremely cheap. This weapon is also used for the

destruction of buildings and shelters."

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Morale

"What are the thoughts and feelings of the people? The majority want the war to end soon. Most of them, however, do nothing to hasten this end, for such activities are still too dangerous. The average German is afraid of the Gestapo and also of the SS. Quite a few men choose to join the Wehrmacht which for them offers an opportunity of saving their lives through desertion to the enemy.

The works in which I was employed had about 1,800 employees, only 200 of them Germans. I should estimate that about five or six of them were prepared to initiate a decisive action against the Nazis. The number of those ready to participate in such action was, of course, larger.

The fear of what will happen at the end of the war is very great. The Germans know of the many crimes committed in their name and they fear the revenge of the victors. They are especially terrified of the Russians but they also fear British and American plans. Through members of certain industrial groups I heard of the existence of a scheme which would spell complete disaster for Germany's enemies."

Underground Work

"I used to be a communist; since the beginning of this year I have actively participated in underground work. My wife too was a communist; but she did not want me to endanger myself too much as she was thinking of the future of our family. Our group worked according to the instructions issued by the Free German Committee in Moscow. We systematically listened in to the broadcasts from London and Moscow and also got printed material occasionally. Such material always made a much bigger impression than any other form of propaganda. During the summer our work had taken on quite considerable proportions; some of us had even succeeded in obtaining light weapons. We had the impression that this was not very difficult. But, although we took strict precautions, the Gestapo evidently succeeded in placing one of their spies within our ranks, for suddenly a few dozens of my friends were arrested by the Gestapo. I myself escaped arrest and hid for a while with social-democratic friends of mine until I managed to flee across the frontier.

Former communists and socialists to-day cooperate in clandestine work. On the whole, socialist comrades have kept their convictions more loyally than communists, because the old socialists had a better training and therefore their convictions had a deeper basis."

20th July, 1944

"The OKW is still in the Bendlerstrasse in Berlin. It is not to be mixed up with the Headquarters of the Fuehrer. A good friend of mine is employed by the OKW. He told me that on July 20th the Headquarters of the Fuehrer was in Tauroggen; later on it was said to be moved to Silesia and rumour has it that it is now near Berlin; Jueterbog is mentioned in this connection. My friend told me that on July 20th Col. Stauffenberg **[3]** arrived in the Bendlerstrasse in Berlin from the Fuehrer's Headquarters. General Fromm **[4]**, the Commander of the Home-Army, who participated in the conspiracy was there.

He was allotted the task of appealing to the Home-Army to support the new government. At the last moment, however, he took fright and was therefore arrested by Stauffen-

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berg and his supporters. Stauffenberg himself signed the order in place of Fromm and in the name of Fromm; at that moment Runge **[5]** with his unit stepped in. He tried to arrest Stauffenberg and his men; Stauffenberg being a war cripple had only one arm. Holding a revolver in his one hand Stauffenberg defended himself until all his ammunition was used up. Even then he continued to struggle and was beaten to death by Runge's SS men."

Volkssturm

"I have the impression that the war might be finished this Christmas. Of course, I have no complete survey of the situation, I only know that industrial reserves are being rapidly exhausted. As everywhere else in Germany, in our district the `Volkssturm' has been organised. From the start this presented great difficulties. At the beginning volunteers were appealed for. But their number was so ridiculously small that recruiting became obligatory. The members of the `Volkssturm' have to give up their weapons after every exercise. Every time the `Volkssturm' goes on manoeuvres with the `Panzerfaust' or the `Panzerschreck' there are a number of casualties, some of them fatal. Conflicts between works managers and Party authorities have arisen owing to the unwillingness of the works managers to letting their few remaining German workers join the `Volkssturm'. In many departments only foreign workers are employed, for instance, we worked together with many Russians and Poles. But the charge-hands and the foremen were Germans, and they now have to join the `Volkssturm'. The Russians are very reserved; there are some informers and Gestapo spies amongst them but the great majority of them are good comrades."

In the middle of November some of our friends had the opportunity of speaking to repatriated French prisoners of war who told them of conditions in German Prisoner of War Camps and about the treatment of prisoners of war by the German people. This is a summary of their account:

Secret Radio Sets

"The morale of the prisoners was excellent. It could not be shaken by the propaganda of the journals `Trait-d'Union' **[6]** (Link) and `L'Echo de Nancy' **[7]** both of which were edited in Berlin in the spirit of Vichy. The papers completely omitted any mention of German defeats. The prisoners, who did not trust these Nazi-inspired papers, were anxious to get reliable news and therefore installed underground wireless sets. This was not possible in the Stalags where the control was very strict, but they did it in the Kommando Camps. The prisoners who had some freedom of movement brought lamps, wires, resistances etc. Specialists assembled the various parts and constructed the receivers. These were installed under the floor, in the baths, even in a dustbin which had a double bottom and in which they regularly cooked their soup. In this way news was received and passed on from Stalag to Stalag. The Germans heard about their own defeats through the prisoners. If one set was discovered and confiscated by the enemy another soon took its place.

Secret Papers

In Stalag X another form of information, not less secret and effective, was used. There a paper written in the dialect of the Auvergne was circulated. The Germans demanded that it

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should be in German or French. The editor refused saying that he did not know these languages. He was then put under special guard, even being conducted to and from the lavatory. The paper, however, continued to appear. For the lavatory became the editorial office. Every day an unknown person took away the paper covered with writing and put a blank one in its place. I think that this procedure still continues.

Insubordination

Many cases of insubordination occur amongst the prisoners. Groups of prisoners who enter their Stalag on their Kommando Camp salute with an outstretched arm at the same time making the V-sign with two fingers.

The following little incident shows to what an extent prisoners keep their self-respect. Two SS-men, sons of the farmer who employed some French prisoners of war, came on leave. One day, when passing the prisoners, they threw a cigarette to each of them. The prisoners silently trod them underfoot. The next day, the same two SS-men offered cigarettes to the prisoners; they took them, crushed them between their fingers and scattered the tobacco on the ground.

Such acts were viewed with a certain tolerance by the Germans. But if anything occurred which in any way appeared to threaten their prestige they were quite firm. For instance: Any girl who was found in the company of a French prisoner of war got three years imprisonment, and sometimes the men got four years. Often only the woman was punished. Many such cases were squashed if brought before the commanding officer. But the Gestapo acted mercilessly.

Hitler Youth

The following story is characteristic of the way in which German children are encouraged to defy parental authority. One day, when I had finished my work, a friendly woman offered me a cup of coffee. Her son, a boy of six, dressed in the Hitler uniform snatched the cup from me. His father was furious at this behaviour and ordered him to take off his uniform. The boy refused. When he had repeated the order three times the father slapped the boy's face. Thereupon the boy went to school and reported this incident to the teacher, and the father got three months imprisonment. In this family there was no sign of affection between children and parents. As soon as the children got up they gave their parents the Hitler salute. The boys were proud that at ten years of age they were given a dagger to wear as a symbol of the military virtues of their race.

Morale

At present the German people go through hell on account of the bombings. There is also a great shortage of food. Everybody curses the regime which secures neither victory nor bread. Only the terror of the Gestapo and the SS keeps the people from openly revolting.

Army morale is at a low ebb. The new fact that the members of the SS are conscripts

- and not, as formerly, volunteers - and are distributed amongst all military units, is of great consequence. It is officially forbidden for soldiers on leave to talk to civilians about events at the front. Those who are caught doing so are sent to hard labour in camps. In spite of this we heard soldiers who had returned from the Russian front complaining of the shortage of material there.

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Soldiers in rest camps get a 'pep' talk every week.

The Vichy Militia, now in Germany, is in charge of young German recruits. When our prisoners meet those wretched compatriots of theirs they do not hesitate to make them feel their hatred.

By agreement with Vichy the Reich uses prisoners of war for fire fighting services. The results are almost nil, on the one hand because of the intensity of the fires, and on the other because the prisoners put very little energy into this dangerous job."

A German soldier who after much effort had succeeded in reaching a neutral country a few weeks ago made the following report:

German "Feme"

"In all places which the German Army expects to evacuate soon a few absolute reliable Nazis are left behind; their only task is to watch the population and to shoot or put out of the way all those who are likely to collaborate with the Allies. Such groups of Nazis are supplied with arms and ammunition which they generally hide behind the tiles in bathrooms, kitchens etc. In the front line dependable Nazis are placed amongst the various units as spies to find out the mood of the soldiers and to inform the Gestapo headquarters of any kind of criticism voiced by the men."

From Southern Germany we got the following report:

"In our district trenches are not yet dug. Wherever possible people shirk this kind of job. Most people think that the Allies would get a better reception here than in the Aachen district. The Nazis, of course, do their utmost to deter people from collaborating with the Allies. In some places, for instance, tank traps had been fixed which people consider to be directed against German units trying to retreat. The reports in German papers about political murders help, of course, to intensify the peoples' fear of the Gestapo and their accomplices. The readiness of many Germans to co-operate openly with the Allies is also restrained by the possibility - which has recently become more evident - that territory which had been occupied by the Allies might be recaptured by the Nazis, whose vengeance on collaborators is terrible."

- 1 - „Messerschmitt“, von dem Flugzeugbauer Willy Messerschmitt (1898-1978) 1923 in Bamberg gegründete Flugzeugbau-Gesellschaft, seit 1938 „Messerschmitt AG“, neben zivilen Flugzeugen Produktion von Kriegsflugzeugen, 1969 in dem Luft- und Raumfahrtunternehmen „Messerschmitt-Bölkow-Blohm GmbH“, München, aufgegangen.
- 2 - „Heinkel“, von dem Flugzeugbauer Ernst Heinrich Heinkel (1888-1958) 1922 in Warnemünde gegründete „Ernst-Heinkel-Flugzeugwerke“, neben zivilen Flugzeugen Produktion von Kriegsflugzeugen, nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg z. T. enteignet.
- 3 - Claus Graf Schenk von Stauffenberg (1907-1944), Generalstabsoffizier, Studium an der Kriegsakademie in Berlin-Moabit (ab 1936), Teilnahme an der Besetzung des tschechischen Sudetenlands (1938) und am Polenfeldzug (1939), lehnt zunächst Teilnahme an einem Umsturzversuch ab (1939), Generalstabsoffizier an der Westfront, Anschluss an den militärischen Widerstand (1942) und Befürworter einer gewaltsamen Beseitigung Hitlers (ab 1943), mit dem Kreisauer Kreis Entwurf von Regierungserklärungen für die Zeit nach dem Umsturz, Vorbereitung des Operationsplans „Walküre“, von ihm selbst ausgeführtes, erfolgloses Attentat auf Hitler (20. Juli 1944), Verhaftung, Verurteilung zum Tode und Erschießung (noch am selben Tag).
- 4 - Erich Fromm (1888-1945), Generaloberst, Befehlshaber des Ersatzheeres (1939-1944), eingeweiht in die Pläne für das Attentat auf Hitler vom 20. Juli 1944, Rückzug im letzten Moment, ließ danach Graf Schenk von Stauffenberg und drei Mitverschworene erschießen, dennoch wegen Teilnahme am Attentat auf Hitler vom 20. Juli 1944 angeklagt, zum Tode verurteilt und exekutiert (1945).
- 5 - Runge, SS-Mann, der nach „Europe speaks“ versuchte, Graf Schenk von Stauffenberg nach dem Attentat auf Hitler vom 20. Juli 1944 in der Bendlerstraße zu verhaften. Weitere biographische Daten konnten nicht ermittelt werden.
- 6 - „Trait-d'Union“, nach „Europe speaks“ in Berlin herausgegebene französische Zeitung im Geiste der Vichy-Regierung. Weitere Daten konnten nicht ermittelt werden.
- 7 - „L'Echo de Nancy“, 1940 bis 1944 erschienene, unter NS-Direktion stehende Vichy-freundliche französischsprachige Zeitung, die vom NS-Regime zum Bezug für frz. Gastarbeiter im Deutschen Reich zugelassen war und auf den Maschinen der 1940 eingestellten republikanischen Zeitung „L'Est républicain“ gedruckt wurde.