

Alsace

From reliable persons who have come from Alsace we have received the following reports:

The Morale of the Population

The political tension in Alsace is greater at the present time than ever before. A deep-rooted hatred of the Germans is gradually developing. The people are impatiently awaiting the day when they will be able to settle accounts with their oppressors. They are determined not to let any German go scot-free, and to deal also with the few Alsatians who have taken sides with the Germans.

Few Volunteers

The Germans try to get volunteers from Alsace for the German Army. They have met with little success, especially in Mulhouse. The Mayor of Mulhouse, Maas, wished to alter this state of affairs by issuing a personal appeal; he asked some well known people of Mulhouse to give their signature to this appeal. Not a single one of them was willing to sign. Even persons (Alsations) occupying positions in the local administration refused to give their signature. It is quite possible that disciplinary measures will be taken against them on this account.

Labor Service and the Auxiliary Police

The nineteen year-old Alsatians are mobilized for the Labor Service. In most cases they have to carry out this Labor Service in Russia and many have already lost their lives there. Older people (up to 52 years) are drafted into the Auxiliary Police, which is a sign of the lack of personnel.

Food Supply

Until recently the food supply was comparatively good. The meat ration is still 400 grammes (near a pound) per week. Lately, however, certain difficulties have become evident. Food is becoming scarcer. It is not clear whether this scarcity is due to a real food shortage or only to the increasingly evident lack of rolling stock.

Collection of Woolen Material, Confiscation of Sheets and Table-Cloths

There was a collection of woolen materials in Alsace, but with very poor results. It is striking that without exception the Germans who migrated into Alsace after the fall of France gave nothing. Their explanation was: "We have already given enough and for a long time now we have had no woolen materials. You Alsatians are still better off than

we are; it is your turn to give up something."

Sheets and table-cloths are requisitioned from the hotels. It is said that they are used for bandages, as there is a great shortage of first-aid material for the wounded.

The Morale of the Germans

Conversations of Germans living in Alsace show that the great majority of them have given up all hope of a victory. They are mostly of the opinion that Germany can only prolong the war, but not win it. Many of them reckon that the collapse will take place already in May or June, following a failure of the German spring offensive. Should this offensive be successful but without bringing the war to a conclusion before next winter, then their opinion is that internal collapse can be expected at the beginning of next winter.

The following examples indicate that many Germans here no longer reckon with victory:

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The general director of the Alsatian Potash Company, a certain Herr Viehweg, lives in Mulhouse. This Herr Viehweg was before the war the representative of the German Potash Syndicate in the Alsatian Potash Trading Company, and almost continuously in Mulhouse. He wormed out information concerning not only the Company but also the personnel. After the German invasion he settled down in Mulhouse. Quite recently he has changed his residence, and what is most significant, to Badenweiler, in Germany! His wife's explanation was: Whatever happened, Alsace would remain French, and they wanted to get away in good time.

The police president of Mulhouse, a Herr Saskowsky, told one of his employees that he was already looking forward to visiting French Alsace after the war.

German officials who have recently arrived in Alsace are, it is said, forbidden to bring their families with them.

Tension between Party and Army

The following incident shows the tension which exists between the Nazi party and the Army. In private clinic of St. Damian in Mulhouse (a hospital belonging to the Sisters of Niederbronn, built shortly before the war) many soldiers are lying with amputated limbs. The "Kreisleiter" (regional Nazi leader) of Mulhouse, Mourer, recently led a party of girls to the clinic, who wanted to bring presents to the patients. Mourer expressed his intention of giving an address to the patients, whereupon a captain ordered him to leave the hospital. This institution, he said, was under the command of the military and the Party had no powers there. In vain Mourer protested and threatened. He had to give way and leave. He then approached the military commandant of the Mulhouse region, General von Alten. This general is known to be a monarchist; he had no choice, however, but to accompany the "Kreisleiter" to the clinic to secure for him an audience. At the command of the general the wounded men had to listen to the "Kreisleiter".

In his address Mourer launched a violent attack on the priests. They were, he said, as bad as the Jews and the Freemasons.

After the address a soldier asked permission to say a few words. The request was

granted. The soldier, one of whose arms was almost completely shot away and who was wounded in the other arm said that he had fought with various units, all of which were practically wiped out. In the last unit in which he served his three best friends had fallen. They were priests like himself. But they never came across a "Kreisleiter" in all the fighting.

It is said that the retirement of Brauchitsch can also be taken as an example of the tension which exists between the Party and the Army. The rumor goes that he demanded that the armed SS and the other armed Party units should come under the supreme command of the military. Hitler is said to have refused this, whereon Brauchitsch tendered his resignation.

The following incident is worth mentioning as further evidence of the atmosphere which prevails in Alsace:

At a "Kameradschaftsabend" (social gathering of employers and employees) of the Mulhouse foundry (Société Alsacienne de Constructions Mécaniques) military music was hissed at and Mourer prevented from speaking.

At a celebration organized for the potash workers of Wittelheim which was held in the Mulhouse Volkshaus (working men's club) only a small number of employees turned up. One of the speakers welcomed the "Kreisleiter" Mourer amongst other people. While he was stuttering the name the audience shouted in a chorus: Moo ... Moo ... Moo...

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During the singing of the German National Anthem five workers remained seated. These were immediately arrested by order of Mourer.

Germany

Effects of the Losses

During recent weeks places were evacuated all over Baden and Wurttemberg for hospital purposes. A number of schools were closed down for the same reason. The population is deeply shocked by the heavy losses on the Eastern front. In a small village with only 200 inhabitants, 25 of whom are soldiers, six have already fallen. The position is still worse in another village. From this village there are 120 soldiers at the front; and 68 have already fallen.

No End in Sight

Soldiers on leave from the Eastern front repeat again and again: "We cannot see where this will end. Whenever we think that the Russians have at last suffered a really serious defeat which might become decisive a new Russian Army appears." The reports of the inexhaustible reserves of the Russians have the effect of intimidating the German people and making them nervous.

"Eugenics"

We have received the following report of how the Germans get rid of their "unproductive invalids".

"One night several buses fitted with beds and stretchers stop in front of institutions

for such invalids. The personnel in charge of these buses is armed. The director of the institution gets a list of those people who have to be delivered to the authorities. He is told that all arguments about this matter are useless and that he must keep silent about it on pain of death. In spite of all these precautionary measures the fate of those who have been taken away in this manner has become common knowledge amongst the invalids; for this reason violent fits of despair and attempts to escape often occur amongst those who remain behind."

The invalids are taken over the mountain to Grafeneck where they are killed with poison gas. The murdered people are cremated in a big crematorium belonging to this place. The relatives are informed after the lapse of a certain time that the patient has died of an infectious disease and that the body had to be cremated for fear of causing an epidemic. At the same time they receive an urn with the ashes and sometimes even have to contribute money towards it beforehand. They are officially informed that the clothing of the deceased will be handed over to the NSV (National Socialist Social Welfare Service).

In this manner a considerable number of the inhabitants of the following institutions have been killed: The lunatic asylum of Illenau near Buehl in Baden; the lunatic asylum of Emmendingen; The Kork institution near Kehl; the institution of St. Josef in Herten near Rheinfelden; Regional infirmary Wischs near Schopfheim.

A short time ago one of these official murderers, a Nazi nurse, lost her own life in carrying out this work. The official announcement of her death declared: "She died in the service of her fatherland."

Helping themselves!

The German military administration and the German State Railways have been faced with a special problem during last winter. A number of goods carriages from troop transport trains did not return to Germany. They had been "requisitioned" by the troops at the front, because they provided the soldiers with a warm shelter which they generally could not obtain otherwise.

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Combing out

The mobilization of fresh troops has been carried out during the last months with tremendous energy. All factories are combed out again and again in order not only to obtain soldiers for the front but also to ensure the best possible and most rational use of the available man power. In Berlin for example a bakery making bread for the army was forced, a few weeks ago, to release 300 of its 450 workers for employment in the armament industry.

Rationalization

There is an unmistakable tendency to eliminate the small factories completely and to concentrate the whole of production in the hands of a few giant concerns. This tendency is carried to such an extent that even restaurants and household kitchens are to be substituted more and more by rationalized communal feeding centres.

Per Luggage Van

The crews of U-boats from the districts of Bordeaux report that many U-boats have been sent to North German ports, where they have been dismantled and transported to Trieste by rail. In the meantime the crews of these U-boats have reported in Trieste.

France

In one of the previous reports about the opposition movements the possible fusion of the separate groups was mentioned. The groups in question were "Liberation", "Liberation Nationale" and "Liberté". According to the reports at our disposal, at that time this process had already reached quite an advanced stage and could almost be regarded as completed.

In the meantime, however, the group "Liberation" has become aware of certain difficulties which stand in the way of such a move. The circles within this group who have Left sympathies (former Socialists, some Communists, but most of all, trade unionists) are beginning to entertain doubts concerning the group "Liberation Nationale". The movement is too anxious to swallow up all other oppositional groups. This is not necessarily a bad tendency. But when the following facts are taken into account, it seems advisable to be wary:

There are rumors that connections exist between the circles around Pétain and the leaders of "Liberation Nationale" (two former staff officers). Pétain and his followers are probably considering already what would happen if England were to be victorious. At all events they want to remain in power and it is not out of the question that Pétain and those around him will wish to make us of this opposition group. During a conversation with one of the leaders of "Liberation Nationale" we discussed the situation which would arise if England's chances of victory were to increase, and he stated in no uncertain terms: "Perhaps it will be impossible to do without Pétain." He added, however, that the rumors which were circulating about his movement were false and were spread by Vichy people who have an interest in splitting the opposition movement. But there is no doubt that some connections exist between "Liberation Nationale" and some important Vichy personalities.

There is yet another circumstance which arouses mistrust amongst Left-wingers; it is the fact that the supporters of "Liberation Nationale" for the most part come from other than Left-wing circles. Many of them were undoubtedly enemies of the "Front Populaire".

For these reasons "Liberation" has refused at the last moment to merge itself with "Liberation Nationale". They also considered it of importance to retain their own paper. "Liberation", which will at the same time be the mouthpiece of those trade union groups who are in active opposition to the regime.

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This does not mean, however, that "Liberation" refuses all contact with "Liberation Nationale", on the contrary, the representatives of the two groups meet regularly, both locally and nationally.

In my opinion the policy of "Liberation" was right, even though the rumors about "Liberation Nationale" may be somewhat exaggerated.

On the other hand, the group "Liberté" has completely merged itself with "Liberation Nationale". We have to take into account, however, that they had suffered heavy losses

in Marseilles and Toulouse through the activities of the police. "Liberation Nationale" has suffered similar losses, but in their case it appears that these accidents have had no serious consequences, which naturally does not serve to dispel the suspicions concerning this group.

The group "Liberation Nationale" now publishes the paper "combat" which appears fortnightly in Unoccupied France in an edition of 35.000.

In Occupied France this group is closely watched by the Germans. For this reason it has not been able to carry out many of its plans for action as for instance the distribution of "Combat" in the occupied zone.

The supporters of "Liberation Nationale" do not seem to take sufficient care in their work and have not yet mastered even the most primitive rules of underground work.

The Socialists

The work in Occupied France is much further advanced than in Unoccupied France. Especially in Northern France there exist real organizations with many members who carry out good propaganda work. They have an illegal paper, "IVeme République" (Fourth Republic) and regularly print leaflets, 20,000 to 30,000 copies at a time. These socialists in Northern France are in constant contact with the Belgian socialists who are also doing very good work. They exchange experiences in order to utilize them in their respective fields of activity.

This excellent work of the socialists of Northern France acts as an encouragement to the socialists in other parts of Occupied France. The whole work in the occupied zone is under the direction of a Central Committee which makes great efforts to influence the few socialists in the unoccupied zone who are willing to do underground work. They also have contact with the new opposition groups, but they insist upon having and developing an organization of their own.

In Unoccupied France the development of socialist work is very unsatisfactory. In the South of France the Socialists never had a powerful organization, they were rather a kind of society for preparing election campaigns. This is now more noticeable than ever before. But in spite of this, there are a few comrades who try to get some socialist work going. These comrades recently had a very unfortunate experience: They printed a pamphlet about the "Trahison" which involved them in great expense. The printer, however, after a police search in his house, lost his nerve and destroyed the whole edition. Only one single copy was saved, this is now circularized amongst the leading comrades.

Trade Unions

As was said before the trade unionists who are actively opposed to the regime are organized in the group "Liberation". A certain trade union organization in the occupied zone has also joined this organization. The trade unionists working against the regime have a somewhat easier position now than a few months ago, since many trade unionists who were then almost in favour of "Collaboration" have now realized that they were on the wrong track. To a great extent, their eyes have been opened by the first measures which followed the "Charte du Travail".

Communists

The communists are very active. In the Paris district they have still many sympathizers amongst the workers. The fact that many of the executed hostages were communists has increased their prestige. At all events, many CP officials have acted very courageously. The communists do everything in their power to bring about a "Front national pour la liberation de la France". They approach all circles who are in opposition to the regime and offer to cooperate with them. CP officials who have worked and lived under illegal conditions for over two years, for instance, approach socialist officials to try to convince them that they should work together with the CP. So far the attitude of the opposition groups and the socialists has been to reject the suggestion of the communists, although in a friendly manner.