
EUROPE speaks**[US-Ausgabe]**

Reliable inside material from Nazi-Europe
Provided through confidential channels by
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No. 8, March 10, 1943*[Seite: - 1 -]***Italy**

The possibility that Italy may break away from the Axis is supported by the following reports from Italy:

Lidice in Italy

"In Ustie, a small village not far from Triest, two policemen were found dead one morning. Having been wounded in the mountains they had succeeded in reaching the village, but died on the street near a peasant's house. Next day the Fascist Militia surrounded the house, forced the entire family, consisting of nine people, to shut themselves in, keeping doors and windows closed; they then set the building on fire. All around the house there were armed guards, preventing anyone from escaping from the burning house. So in order to set an example to the rest of the village and to warn the murderers of the policemen, an innocent family was wiped out.

Opposition in Forli

An active group of anti-Fascists was discovered among the boys of a secondary school in Forli. When the police chief interrogated their leader, the son of a poor cobbler, trying to ridicule their activity as a childish plot, the boy replied; 'The son of a blacksmith of this province brought about the ruin for Italy. Perhaps the son of a cobbler might be her saviour.'

Revolutionary Spirit among the Soldiers

At Civitavecchia the steamer 'Polluce' took on board 570 soldiers and N.C.O.s manacled and escorted by the police, who took them to Asinara in Sardinia. The soldiers were accused of insubordination, many among them having protested against the reduction of soldiers' family allowances. In Asinara about 500 soldiers and N.C.O.s are detained and are serving sentences from 15-30 years penal servitude. At Curru, there is a concentration camp for soldiers who are suspected of anti-Fascism and are punished merely as a precautionary measure. At present they number 654. The last transport arrived at Curru from Africa.

A soldier sentenced to 20 years penal servitude by the court martial of Benghazi for having expressed socialist opinions declared: 'The soldier's attitude toward Fascism is increasingly hostile, many among them are not afraid to express their anti-fascist sentiments even in the presence of the officers. I have been sentenced together with some 40 comrades for having protested against the arrogance and interference of the German military authorities. The Germans denounced us and the Italian military

command had to comply.'

The Italian soldiers of the Expeditionary Force in Russia are handed over to the Gestapo and sent to German prisons if they are charged with insubordination and subversive spirit.

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Grave Incidents

Nearly everywhere incidents have occurred between German and Italian soldiers, but those of the Roman Castles of Catania and of Bari deserve particular attention.

In Catania, on September 10, a group of Italian pilots of the 8th Wing had to defend themselves with arms against the attacks of German pilots. There were several wounded and one killed.

The incidents in Bari started on September 2, because the German forces were supplied with better food than the Italians. In Bari the food supplies for the German and Italian forces are in the same building. Therefore, the Italians could not help seeing that the Germans received it only once or twice a week. It was also obvious that the Germans were receiving dried meat in addition, whereas the Italians could not obtain any of this. Resentment against this preferential treatment was particularly strong, because it was known that the Germans got their food in the local markets and as they had larger funds, they succeeded in getting the lion's share. On the morning of September 2, the Italian detachment, which had gone with bags and containers to collect the food rations for the troops, got hold of the German food rations instead of those reserved for the Italians. A violent struggle with the Germans followed, many received bayonet wounds before the police arrived and separated the parties. On the evening of the same day, September 3rd, the market people refused to sell fruit and vegetables to the Germans. On the 5th, following an order which arrived from Rome, the prefect gave orders for a solemn ceremony of fraternisation of Italo-German friendship in the Politeama Theatre, but only the places reserved for soldiers and policemen were occupied, as the civilian population boycotted the affair.

Anti war Campaign

The work of rebuilding the Socialist Party of Italy made excellent progress in the last few months. The same applies to trade union work. In nearly all important centres active circles have been created. And from everything that one sees and hears, it is evident that many good comrades are at work who are only waiting for an opportunity to prove their mettle.

In support of an anti-war campaign to be organized from December 1 to December 10, a number of leaflets have been smuggled into Italy and distributed there. A special manifesto was issued for this campaign."

Down with the War!

We have received reports on the effects of the manifesto entitled "Down with war, Down with Fascism!" The following is a summary of the general situation after the distribution of the manifesto:

"The campaign calling for an end of the war and of Fascism did not, of course,

succeed in completely changing the whole political position. But our Party, the Socialist Party of Italy, which initiated the whole action, got an opportunity of testing the political situation and the mood of the population. We feel that there is no need to give the actual number of men, women, and young people, workers, middle class people and peasants who were beaten up and arrested during and after the campaign. Even secondary school boys were arrested for circulating the manifesto among their schoolmates. Several of our older comrades, who for many years now have been taking part in political activity, were arrested merely on suspicion of having read the manifesto. Several of our comrades were arrested and are still under police supervision. The suburbs, especially those parts of the town where the manifestos and in-

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scriptions on the wall were most plentiful, were searched.

One extraordinarily encouraging experience during this campaign was the use made of our propaganda material: copies of our manifesto and little placards for sticking on the wall multiplied like the fish of St. Peter. Workers, black-coated employees, women and even young lads reproduced copies on their own initiative. The day after the first distribution, in Turin, Genua, Milan, Bologna, Trieste, Spozia, Loghorn, Rome and Naples, the city guards and the crossing sweepers were mobilized, as well as the police, to paint over the inscriptions on the walls with white lead or tar. In Milan this work went on continuously, for at nightfall the inscriptions re-appeared more thickly than ever.

In another industrial centre, the campaign aroused great interest among the soldiers. The propaganda material circulated particularly in the barracks and depots. In a hotel in this town where German officers were quartered, the walls were literally plastered with inscriptions against the war and the Axis."

Opposition

We have received the following report on the various political groups which form part of the Italian opposition and on their mutual relations: "The most important groups are: 'Justice and Freedom', the 'Republican Union', the Catholic Action Groups' and the 'Anti-Fascist Nationalist Union'. The essential things these groups have in common is their opposition to dependence on Germany, and their past memories and grievances. To some degree they harbour the illusion that it will be possible to restore the conditions which existed before the Fascist revolution, and they fear that this is threatened by the radicalism of the Italian Fascists which has developed under Nazi influence.

The Italian Socialists and the Communists are the groups who actually have the widest influence. There are also a number of small groups of left-wingers. The Socialist Party gets support from all categories of Italian workers, from industrial workers, and peasants, and also from office workers, artisans, small tradesmen, professional people, intellectuals and students. The Communists rely almost exclusively on the proletariat. Relations between these two main left wing groups are very strained. The Communists pursue a sectarian policy denying the right of any other organization to exist. They are dishonest in their dealings with the Socialists and anti-Fascists. In all anti-Fascist, political activity in the past, they have carried on their own activity at the expense of every non-communist political group."

In contrast to this mistrust which, as is shown in the above report, prevails among the organized groups it is interesting to note the increasing readiness of the ordinary

individual to discuss current events more openly and in greater detail than was the case until quite recently. Thus we get the following report about life in a factory:

"There are many political discussions. Quite a number of workers of all grades realize that Fascism symbolizes war, misery, hunger, and the destruction of any kind of civilization. At their benches, the workers discuss their working conditions, their special class problems, and questions of a general political nature. Naturally, those who take part in such discussions are not always of the same opinion, but they talk things over in a calm and friendly atmosphere of mutual confidence such as did not exist in former times. This change of atmosphere makes it possible for the Socialist Party of Italy to develop extensive and by no means superficial political activity."

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Germany

We have received the following report from Southern Germany.

Sticking it out

"In the course of the enormous campaign of meetings which was organized throughout Germany, Prince Auwi (August Wilhelm, son of the Kaiser) spoke in our district. You can imagine the attraction of his personality, especially for workers who were forced to attend these meetings after work. Auwi said openly that in our district there is a greater tendency than anywhere else to listen to the 'enemy'. But we should know that there is only one person who speaks the truth and that is the Fuehrer. The main theme of his speech was: We have to stick it out, even if we have to undergo great hardships!

This recent publicity campaign has in no way altered the general conviction among the workers that the war is lost. Although Nazi propagandists make desperate efforts to deny the possibility of a 'Second Front', people here are convinced that it will come in the spring. Apparently the Nazis, too, realize more or less clearly that something went wrong with their war, because their old self-assurance has disappeared and they seem very nervous.

Fear of Revenge

It would be wrong to suppose, however, that people, having lost their confidence in victory, generally wish to see the war ended, no matter at what cost. On the contrary, many people who are not convinced anti-Nazis and Socialists are of the opinion that they should make great efforts to try and win the war because defeat would have terrible consequences. They fear the revenge of the people in the German occupied territories, and they are deeply impressed by the propaganda which declares that the Germans will be enslaved, deported, separated from their wives and children, etc. Especially in the East there is great fear of revenge of the Poles, because the people there know just what crimes have been committed by the Nazis."

Shortage of Oil

Report of a conversation with a German diplomat:

"Germany is bound to lose the war. German industry cannot cope with the war requirements. The greatest shortage of all is oil. A few weeks ago it was stated at a

Japanese Embassy that Germany had made a peace offer to Russia. The conditions were so lenient that the Japanese were amazed."

The War in the East

The following letter was written by a German soldier to his mother on July 26th, 1942, while the Germans were advancing in Russia. One of his friends copied it and brought it safely abroad.

Different from the O.K.W. Reports

"Actually I am badly in need of a good long leave. It would be quite possible as I have nothing to do at present. The air force radio station where I have been working up till now no longer exists. Perhaps I will really get my leave soon; though it looks very much as if I shall be sent into the front line after all, as several of the new troops recently sent to the front have already been killed and our signal unit has also had some new casualties.

During air attacks, the lack of cover becomes unpleasantly obvious as you can imagine. In places, the grass is burnt for miles as a result of those damned new incendiaries used by the Russian aeroplanes. Skillfully making use of the undulations of the land they approach our columns at a height of 20 to 30 meters and spray us with their flame-throwers, the flames of which are 10 to 20 meters long.

We advanced very quickly as far as X and met no special difficulties. But on the other side of X the enemy had dug themselves in and occupied excellently fortified

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positions. We had to fight our way forward. After a few kilometers we reached their main line of defence and the mines in front of it were like the sands of the seashore. They cost us a lot of casualties. Sometimes we had to resort to hand fighting to get the Russians out of their trenches. I shall never forget standing on the edge of a gun pit, revolver in hand, calling on a Russian to surrender. I had seen him jump into the pit only a few minutes before and he was now lying there on his stomach pretending to be dead. He did not move and I fired several times into the sand beside him. At last he took courage, slowly turned over and put his hands up. The Commander had witnessed the whole scene from the distance and sent a messenger to ask whether we did not know that he had given orders that no prisoners should be taken. I did know it, but nevertheless I had already disarmed two Russians and sent them to the rear. And even now I could not bring myself to shoot the Russian, especially after he had trusted me and surrendered. So I left it to the driver while I shot the horse which was badly wounded. I can still hear the dreadful cry of the Russian when he realized that he had been fooled. Such an experience gets right under your skin and leaves its mark on you for the rest of your life."

Such letters give an idea of the terrible momentum of the German war "machine", the name of which is more appropriate than most people think. Everybody tries to shift the responsibility for the atrocities to someone else; everybody tries to get somebody else to become the actual perpetrator of the butchery. Such an attitude cannot and should not be excused; and yet letters and reports like this show that it would be equally wrong simply to describe all Germans or even all German soldiers without distinction as "butcher-birds" by inclination or by nature. - The letter continues:

"Thousands of the Russians stood to their guns and things looked very black for us as we were unable to force them out of all their positions and had to drive on through a withering fire. We were harassed by 'Stalin organs', which are a special type of mortar, and by armoured units. The surface was a nightmare, for nearly all the time we were driving across open country and suddenly we broke an axle. We could go no further and everything else whizzed past us. In half an hour's time we were alone in the countryside. At last at midnight one of our heavy armoured cars with three inch guns arrived. The next morning we drove back to our unit with our kit. Behind the hills, a Russian ambulance column was driving peacefully along when it was shot up by German Stukas. ... Suddenly, two Russians, armed to the teeth, came blundering towards us. They were only 50 yards away when they became aware of our presence and at our challenge they threw themselves to the ground. We opened fire and at last they stood up, still retaining their weapons, however. Only after we had fired a second time did they reluctantly ground their arms. My first thought was to offer them cigarettes, whereupon one of them threw his arms around my neck because we had not shot them. We sent them back towards our main body of troops."

France

The opinions of industrialists in Vichy France

(written October 31, 1943)

One of our friends who recently spent some time in Vichy France had several detailed conversations with French industrialists. We have already published many and full reports revealing the attitude of the workers, the Socialists and trade unionists of every shade of opinion, and we think it may be interesting also to hear the point of view of the leading French industrialists. - They have obviously been much influenced by Goebbel's propaganda.

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Anglophobia

"One is immediately struck by the fact that all these people are shockingly ill-informed about what is actually happening outside unoccupied France. They shower you with questions about Germany, and in doing so, repeatedly reveal their admiration of the German genius for organization. None of these people, for example, had the slightest idea of Germany's transport difficulties, or of the shortage of raw materials in that country. They are absolutely convinced that, with their great organizing ability, the Germans will find ways and means of overcoming their difficulties. The blind hatred of England expressed by all these members of the ruling class is amazing. They go as far back as Jeanne d'Arc to prove that historically England has always been the enemy of France; they declare that England's economic hegemony during the whole of the 19th century was a catastrophe for France. The opinion is often expressed that France would certainly be better off under the economic leadership of Germany than under an Anglo-American hegemony. Their feeling of hatred against the English is now also directed against America.

At the present time Britain is condemned for her alliance with Russia. It is generally asserted in these circles that the British had already tried to disintegrate France by supporting the Front Populaire government and wanted France to turn communist. Their

present alliance with Russia was merely the outcome of their desire to divide the whole of Europe into British and Russian spheres of influences.

The big industrialists' fear of the Front Populaire is in my opinion not altogether without foundation in view of the lack of understanding generally shown by the French employers in regard to the conditions in which their workers live. The cleavage between rich and poor is growing daily. Workers have to manage on starving wages.

De Gaulle and Laval

If you talk to these people about the German terror-regime in the occupied countries and about the executions, they usually reply that what the Germans have done and still do is nothing in comparison with the crimes of the British. Even if a few Communists and Jews are shot, this is a matter only of a few thousands, whereas England by her blockade is causing millions of people to die of hunger and is ruining the health of the population of many countries for years to come.

The following details from certain conversations are of interest: De Gaulle was described as a traitor, an idiot, an imbecile. Laval was spoken of as a clever politician who later on would perhaps prove to be the saviour of France. He was carrying out a policy of wait and see, only yielding when it was absolutely necessary, and had thereby foiled most of Germany's plans. He was convinced that even if Germany did not actually lose the war, she would in any case not win it; Germany and Russia would so weaken each other that France would be able once again to occupy a leading position in Europe. Laval knew that it was cheaper to play the role of a 'neutral'; this only cost France 200 Millions per day, whereas ten times as much would be needed for a war. In addition, France was now not compelled to sacrifice her youth which Germany and Russia had to do and as Britain would certainly have to do in the future. France's attitude of neutrality made it possible for her to provide her youth with a splendid education such as they get to-day in the 'Camps de Jeunesse'. Here under the direction of officers who had formerly been on active service, the youth received a political training which would later on have very good results.

In the course of another conversation, Laval was described to me as a hero. He was the man who to-day took all responsibility on his shoulders although he knew that if England were in the end to win the war, his own position would be extremely precarious; and that even in the case of a German victory, he would forfeit his life, since he had shown too much opposition to Germany. In the event of the outbreak of an internal conflict in France, Laval would also be in danger since he was hated by Gaullists, Collaborationists, and the adherents of the Front Populaire alike. He

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was, therefore, the man who was standing firm in the midst of the storm and it was a pity that he was so misunderstood in the neutral countries and among the allied nations.

Weapons from Heaven

During my stay in Lyons, I heard from various people that large canister bombs had been dropped in the district of St. Etienne near Bourg in Bresse, each containing some 30 revolvers and a dozen light machine-guns and ammunition, and some of them also first-aid material. The reaction of some of the industrialists was immediately to accuse Britain of beginning to arm the Communists, whilst the military circles with whom I

came into contact believed that these arms were meant for defense against the total occupation of France.

The Youth

In contrast to prominent middle-aged industrialists of this type, the younger ones, many of whom have been in the war, are fanatic French patriots. They are working for the reconstruction of France, though sometimes only by organizing contacts among their former schoolmates, or army comrades; they take jobs in the North African colonies and in this way directly or indirectly help their families whom they can supply from there at least with vegetables. They strongly oppose the attitude of the older generation towards the belligerent powers; not having as yet profited from the boom in the war industries that the needs of Germany have produced, their point of view is similar to that of the small wage earners. For these young people, the Germans are still the military enemy, or the guards in the prison-camp or, in the case of the S.S. men, just the torturers of the people. Their deep aversion against everything German is unquenchable."