

Germany speaks

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[Germany]

Hell

A doctor who has just returned from Russia where he has been employed in the German Army Medical Corps, reports:

"I had expected to use there modern war surgery, to be able to widen my own knowledge and experience since the Germans have the reputation of using the newest scientific discoveries in all spheres. But even the most urgent necessities were lacking; supplies were fully concentrated on arms and ammunition, and hospital needs were almost completely neglected, there was even a scarcity of anaesthetics. I stood once in a room with fifteen soldiers screaming with pain, on whom amputations of arms or legs had to be performed in full consciousness."

Losses of Aircraft

A German Flying Officer declared a few weeks ago: "Our aeroplane losses on the Eastern Front are in fact enormous, the Russians have told substantially the truth. The reason for these losses lies however not so much in the superiority of the Russians, nor in the fact that the German High Command has used the machines recklessly. The main cause of the great losses must be attributed to the transport system, which was not in a position to supply essentials such as spare parts for repairs. Thus it happened that damages to the apparatus which could easily have been remedied could only be patched up in a makeshift way, which resulted in many crashes and in any case considerably shortened the life of the machines."

Battle of the Atlantic

Questioned about the general war situation the same officer said:

"Neither our reverses in Libya nor the retreat in Russia troubles us very much. What is much worse on the whole is the situation with regard to the Battle of the Atlantic. Our main hopes were set upon giving a knock-out blow to England by a total blockade. The achievement of this has now become impossible."

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U-Boats

"The U-boats have not played the important part that we had expected; since the beginning of the intensified Battle of the Atlantic 250 U-boats have not returned to their bases. With regard to a great number of them it is not yet known what has happened."

Apart from the possibility that they might have been sunk by the English it may be that a number of losses were due to inefficient seamanship since with many of the crews only very hasty training was possible."

Effects of the Bombing

A German soldier reports: "During the last few months the British bombs have not caused such heavy damage as earlier. The Nazis have developed an extraordinarily clever technique for camouflaging military objects; the R.A.F. have often been deceived; they are, however, very accurate marksmen. The Germans take great trouble to protect important junctions; they imitate shunting depots and station buildings in which they then leave a light burning as if by mistake. They know that the English bombers react immediately to such lights by releasing their bombs."

In order to counteract the effects of the bombing upon morale the Nazis distribute extra rations immediately after heavy air raids. And this has proved very effective.

Morale

The morale of the German people has progressively degenerated during the last months. This seems mainly due to the shattering of the optimistic belief, which ruled in many circles, that at least on the European Continent the German Army was invincible. That Russia had been attacked - Russia, who at the outbreak of the war was looked to for support and an easing of the blockade - is all the more regarded as a mistake now, since the advance in Russia has become a retreat.

Southern Germany

The morale of the population in Southern Germany is said to be at a very low ebb. The words often repeated earlier: 'The war will soon be over!' are no longer heard. French prisoners of war are treated in as friendly a manner as ever by the German people and are given a surprising amount of help when trying to escape. They are supplied with mufti, maps and compasses, and are told exactly what to do in order to get through. Over a thousand escaped French prisoners of war are known to have passed through a small Swiss frontier town in nine months.

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Russian Prisoners of War

To Heuberg Camp in Wuerttemberg, earlier a concentration camp now used for delinquent French prisoners of war, many Russian prisoners of war were recently taken. They receive much worse food than the French and are treated like cattle. For the merest trifle - not lining up in a straight queue for fetching meals - they have been repeatedly beaten. In a South German working party in which were many Russians, three of them killed a shepherd who threatened to interfere with their attempt to escape. In retaliation three other Russian prisoners of war were condemned to death by hanging, and their own comrades were forced to execute the sentence in the presence of the whole camp.

From various sources we have heard that Russian war prisoners have been systematically killed by slow starvation, since there seemed to be nothing else to do with them. I was deeply shocked, writes a reporter, at the way in which the slogan "Let

the Russians starve" has gained a hold in Germany. It seems to have become customary to regard only Germans as human beings in the real sense of the word. At the utmost the rights of Germany's allies are acknowledged and of the French who are still being wooed as allies; all others are regarded as outlaws. What is openly talked about concerning conditions in Poland, for example, beggars description; it is so unspeakably horrible that one wants to disbelieve it.

Death to the Sick

The systematic murder in Germany of the sick and of invalids has meanwhile been proved by a series of authentic reports. (Compare for example the statements of Shirer in his "Berlin Diary".) That it is not merely a matter of very grave, demonstrably incurable cases the following example shows:

A German who is familiar with the higher administration visited a friend of mine and asked him anxiously:

"Do you really think that my lungs are better and that they will remain so?"

He was told that there was no need for him to be worried about his slight lung trouble whereupon he revealed the true reason for his grave anxiety:

"I am afraid that if I develop really serious lung trouble I shall be put out of the way."

On being told that the reports so far had recorded only the poisoning of mental cases he replied finally: -

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"That I have also heard, but only heard, about the other I know."

These two last words he emphasised repeatedly.

He said nothing further, nor did he explain whether grave cases of tuberculosis were among those which have been put out of the way in the interest of the nation. Shortly afterwards, however, he told us that in the German town of G. thousands of people who were gravely ill had already been killed. He even knew of some SS doctors who had been drafted to the murder detachments and had later committed suicide; this activity had become intolerable even for their elastic conscience.

Notes on France

Oppositional Groups

There are in the main three patriotic groups in France which are in opposition to the Nazis: Liberté, Libération Nationale; Libération. There are also active oppositional groups of Trade Unionists and Socialists. The first three groups have united at least as regards publications and for their three papers have substituted a single one:

"Combat"^[1]

The first issue appeared in December 1941 with an edition of 50,000. The attitude of the Trade Unionists and Socialists towards this organisation is not yet quite clear. They are however at least willing to collaborate closely with this unity group. Especially difficult for the Trade Unionists is the question of what attitude they should take up

towards the association of workers and employers created by the new Charte de Travail (Labour Code). They are only clear that it is necessary to oppose the plans of the Government; they must however first have practical experience of the working of the Labour Code.

Témoignages Chrétiennes [2]

Catholic circles, which in their opposition lay special stress on the maintenance and deepening of Catholicism and Christianity generally are now giving out leaflets regularly with the title: "Témoignages Chrétiennes". Their purpose is to carry on the struggle within the Catholic Church against those who still have illusions about the Nazis. They published for example the letter of the Dutch Bishops, the sermons of the Bishop of Muenster and other indictments of the Nazis from Christian circles.

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Socialists

In October 1940 there was a small conference of representatives which was attended by former officials of the S.F.I.O (Socialist Party of France). It became clear during the course of this conference that a quarter of those present were for Belin [3] (Minister of Labour in the Vichy Government and a former leader of the C.G.T., the French T.U.C.). A quarter were really afraid to undertake any new activity. The other half were tired out; they evidently realised the necessity of doing something but had no enthusiasm for this work.

Progress came during the winter; in every Department of the unoccupied zone it was possible to find one to three representatives. In the occupied zone things seem to be rather better than in the unoccupied.

In January 1941 this organisational work developed one step further. The following slogans were the basis for bringing the comrades together:

1. Liberation from the Germans;
2. Re-introduction of a democratic government;
3. Action for Socialism.

These points are headings for a programme of action to be carried out in this chronological order of sequence.

The machinery of organisation is still comparatively small. It is very good in Northern France (Departement Nord and Pas de Calais) and in the "Zone Interdite" generally. In the other part of the occupied zone the situation leaves much to be desired.

The difficult problem of creating regular contacts between the occupied and unoccupied zones has not yet been satisfactorily solved. The advantage in the occupied zone is that the comrades have only the Germans to deal with. In the unoccupied zone Vichy's police apparatus and the "Legion", which consists of Frenchmen, are great obstacles to the new work of the socialist party.

Cadres have been set up again in 65 to 70 Departements altogether. Both of the zones have their Central Committee. The leaders of the Cadres have contact with one another.

The work of those militants who had clearly realised that it was necessary to do something was the first step in preparation for work on a bigger scale. The work done so far has only aimed at creating the basis for something more definite.

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There is much good will, but there is a great lack of experience and also of the necessary means. Up to September 1941 two leaflets and also a pamphlet attacking the regime have appeared in the occupied zone. In the free zone on the occasion of July 14, 15,000 stickybacks were prepared with the inscription "Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité! Vive la République!" Also a leaflet on the murder of Marx Formoy [4] (20,000 to 25,000 copies). Further, in the unoccupied zone a kind of chain-letter action has been carried out on the occasion of all important political events.

Many socialists are already active in the other illegal oppositional organisations. It is interesting that socialists and trade unionists who lost sight of each other for some time and had sought to re-establish contact, met once more in these organisations.

The fact that the S.F.I.O. never was a real organisation, or rather that it was only an organisation for election times, now has a bitter harvest. The socialists are faced with the task of building everything anew, and those socialists who have decided for collaboration with Germany are a great obstacle to this work. Using the old organisation as a basis they seek to get a footing. Moreover, since they can work legally (they have a journal "L'Effort" [5]) it is easier for them than for the opposition which has to work illegally. The fact that many officials of the S.F.I.O. were public personalities, and today are more and more under police observation, makes further difficulties for the work.

The newly begun work is therefore in the charge of younger people, who should be supported by all enemies of the Nazi regime.

Editorische Anmerkungen

- 1 - "Combat", *Le journal de Paris; de la résistance à la révolution, französische Résistance-Zeitung, die zwischen Dezember 1940 und August 1974 erschien, nach „Europe speaks“ erschien sie 14-täglich und hatte den Schriftsteller Albert Camus als Mitgründer und Leitartikler, nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg offenbar tägliches Erscheinen (vgl. Internationale Zeitungsbestände in Deutschen Bibliotheken, a.a.O., S. 101).*
- 2 - "Témoignages Chréliennes" = „*Courrier français du témoignage chrétien*“, von dem Jesuiten Pierre Chaillot gegründete, zwischen 1941 und Juli 1944 in Paris unregelmäßig erschienene französische Résistance-Zeitung (erschien zwischen Juli und Dezember 1944 als „*Courrier du témoignage chrétien*“).
- 3 - René Belin (1898-1977), französischer Gewerkschaftsfunktionär, Generalsekretär der Gewerkschaft des öffentlichen Dienstes (1930-1932), Sekretär und zweiter Mann der CGT (1933-1940), in der Vichy-Regierung zunächst Minister für

Industrieproduktion und Arbeit (1940-1941), danach Staatssekretär für Arbeit (1941-1942), nach der Befreiung Frankreichs Flucht in die Schweiz (1944), Einstellung der Ermittlungen wegen Kollaboration mit NS-Deutschland (1949), Bürgermeister von Lorrez-le-Bocage (1959-1965).

4 - *Marx Formoy = Marx Dormoy (1888-1941), französischer Politiker, Innenminister in der Volksfrontregierung von Léon Blum (1936-1938), Gegner des Regimes von Marschall Pétain, Verhaftung (1940), Hausarrest in Montélimar (1941), Ermordung (1941).*

5 - *„L'Effort“, französische Zeitschrift, laut Untertitel „sozialistisches Organ für den nationalen Wiederaufbau“, unter der Direktion von Charles Spinasse und Paul Rives herausgegeben, seit 1942 pro Vichy und offene Kollaboration mit der deutschen Besatzungsmacht.*