

25

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THE TOTAL MOBILIZATION OF GERMANY

The following has been summarized by the Staff of "M" Project from an article entitled: "Ototalnoi Mobilizatsii v Germanii" by A. Leontev in Bolshevik, No. 21, pp. 50-60, November, 1943. This Summary should be read in conjunction with Eugene Varga's earlier statement which was distributed as R-24 in our Series.

Henry Field

CONFIDENTIAL

THE TOTAL MOBILIZATION OF GERMANY

The German Government proclaimed a total mobilization in Germany at the end of January, 1943. At that time the German population was still dazed by the Stalingrad catastrophe. Thus the Voelkischer Beobachter of February 8, 1943, wrote as follows:

"The entire existence of the nation and the individual physical existence of each of us is at stake."

By means of total mobilization it was hoped to meet the losses of manpower and materiel suffered by the German Army during 1942-1943 on the Eastern Front. Again it was believed that this measure would serve to distract the attention of the German population and of the Occupied and Allied countries of Europe from the desperate situation in which Germany found herself.

The Berlin correspondent of a neutral newspaper made the following evaluation of the total mobilization: "In the opinion of Berlin total mobilization was designed primarily to deflect the attention of the Germans from the losses suffered on the Eastern Front. The total mobilization is to inspire the population at home and the soldiers at the Front with the fact that this

extreme measure would bring about a decisive turn in conditions on the Fronts. Moreover, it was to serve as an example for mobilization in the Occupied and Allied countries. The conference of Hitler with all the Quislings is evidence of the fact that this was considered."

The foreign press reported that the validity of the Decree of Total Mobilization was immediately extended to the Protectorates of Czechoslovakia and Moravia. Moreover, Hitler ordered the Government of Antonescu to carry out a total mobilization in Romania similar to that of Germany. A similar demand was made of Mussolini.

On February 13 Goebbels defined the problem of total mobilization as follows: "The task of total mobilization is to free soldiers for the front and to free workers for war industry."

Commissioner for the Utilization of Manpower Sauckel issued a Decree regarding the registration of males 16-65 and women 17-45 years old who were to report to the Labor Bureaus. All individuals of these ages who were engaged in handicrafts, trade, in free professions, in small establishments, and all those who were not

working on war needs or who unemployed were made subject to transfer to war industry in order to free a part of the workers for military service.

When the time came for putting into effect total mobilization the German press disclosed that the results would be much less than expected. Thus, at the end of May the Berliner B^örsenzeitung wrote as follows: "Up until 1943 when Sauckel issued the Decree by which all men and women were subject to mobilization it was not yet known that the German reserves of manpower were relatively insignificant and that the women would be the principal group subject to mobilization. In fact in Berlin approximately 83 per cent of those subject to mobilization were women and only 17 per cent were men. In the rest of Germany the percentage was similar."

The paper goes on to say that in Berlin only 10.9 per cent of the men were found suitable for work in production. The reason is obvious since all those fit in some way either for the Army or work had already been grabbed up by previous mobilizations. Thus, those left for total mobilization were the invalids, the sick, the feeble-minded, etc., so that only one-tenth of all those registered proved suitable for use in production.

In so far as the women were concerned, 44.7 per cent of the women affected by total mobilization had never worked before or had not been gainfully employed for more than seven years; 19.2 per cent were employees of business houses or institutions, 9.8 per cent of those coming to the factories worked at home or in agriculture. Only 26.3 per cent of the women had been previously engaged in production.

Two or three months later after publication of this Decree the German press expressed sharp disappointment with its results. On April 30, 1943, the

Frankfurter Zeitung attempted to explain as follows:

"The fact that as a result of the closing of numerous business houses, shops, etc., not so much labor power was freed for war needs is explained by the fact that these branches of the economy had been combed very thoroughly previously."

The Berliner Lokalanzeiger of August 14 cited the following statement of the official, Herr Scholfang from the Monatshefte für Sozialpolitik: "Up until the end of June 3, 500,000 individuals had been registered. It was hardly possible to expect reserves among the male population; nevertheless, 500,000 registered, 400,000 of whom

have already undergone examination. About 3,000,000 women had registered; of these 2,500,000 have already been checked. The great majority of the registered women had either never worked or had left employment because of illness."

The women who had never worked in factories in most instances clearly expressed a desire to remain away from production. The German press and radio complained of the indifference of the German women who were unwilling to go to work in war industry and who devised all kinds of tricks to escape mobilization for war industry.

On March 12 the Voelkischer Beobachter wrote as follows: "Again it must be stressed that in no instance is it considered to permit 'resettlement' in all possible and impossible offices. We need primarily a labor force for industry and not secretaries or salesladies. It is necessary to state openly that a part of the women called up try to get jobs that can in no way be regarded as important for the war."

Nevertheless, considerable contingents of women were sent to the factories. Their effectiveness and usefulness is described in the following manner in Götenborgs Posten: "In spite of the total mobilization

there is perceptible an insufficiency of labor power. One of the largest German directors stated that 250 women were assigned to him in January. However, only a half of this number remained in the factories. The discipline is low in the factories. Those called up by total mobilization waste about 30 per cent of their time."

A considerable part of those registered by total mobilization have proven to be unfit for war industry. However, not all the workers in the war industries who could be freed for the Army were fit for military service.

The Frankfurter Zeitung of July 29 wrote that including war prisoners there were 6,500,000 foreigners in Germany who worked in industry and agriculture. The paper states that about 25 per cent of the labor employed in Germany consists of foreigners. Moreover, if the entire number of workers of Greater Germany is considered and if there is added to it also the Protectorate and the General-Gouvernement, the number of foreign workers would be more than 12,000,000. Thus, the Germans have replaced a considerable amount of the manpower taken from industry by foreign workers.

A three-week interval was set for carrying out the total mobilization. Subsequently the interval was extended and only in June-July did the German press begin to publish the results of the accomplished mobilization. The unanimous appraisal of total mobilization by the German press can be summed up by saying that total mobilization did not justify the hopes placed upon it; but this is not surprising since the national economy has been combed out and so considerable reserves of labor power could not be counted upon.

Thus, the Frankfurter Zeitung of July 24 writes:

"The human reserves of the retail trade, of handicraft shops, of hotels and restaurants, have been utilized more than once for war purposes. Moreover, as a result of conscription a considerable part of the best forces had previously been drawn out of this reservoir. However, also those who were left behind have been regarded as mobile reserves that could be utilized for urgent tasks of war industry."

Thus, the campaign of combing out had drawn into war industry all the reserves that were not irreplaceable in their work. If at the beginning of this year it would have been decided to mobilize again for the war industries

the reserves employed in retail trade in handicrafts, in hotels and restaurants there would have remained nothing else but to close a part of these establishments."

Previous mobilization measures had left behind in the retail trades and other non-war establishments only the old and the weak so that they no longer represented a serious reserve of labor power for war industry. This was realized soon by the German Government for during the latter half of the year the regulations for closing such enterprises were relaxed. Apparently the Government realized that the discontent of the people resulting from the indiscriminate destruction of retail trade and handicrafts considerably outweighed the benefits of total mobilization.

In spite of total mobilization for the needs of war industry complaints of the insufficiency of workers in war plants continued to increase during the Fall of 1943. This indicates that total mobilization by no means justified the hopes placed upon it. Thus the Münchener neueste Nachrichten of October 8 published an dithyrambic appeal to octogenarians: "An investigation of the work capacity of 25 to 80 year olds yielded surprising results. It has been shown that 18 out of

every 100 men 70 years old and over have the same physical and mental work capacity as 30 to 40 year olds. It has also been shown that in regard to adaptability and agility there is no difference between these 80 year-olds and individuals in the thirties and fifties. Thus the capacity for work should never be judged by age since age does not always affect work capacity." The paper goes on to suggest that 70 to 80 year olds be utilized for **reconstruction** of destroyed dwellings, etc.

Not only the aged but also the sick have been drawn into production. Thus the Deutsche Medizinische Wochenschrift of September 17 wrote that urgent necessity forced the sending of tuberculars to the factories.

The insufficiency of manpower is so great in Germany that frequently the problem arises of utilizing extensively entirely **unsuitable** manpower. The Voelkischer Beobachter of July 23 writes that the wounded are being quickly retrained for servicing locomotives and the State Railways. Thus "the State Railways have adapted all measures for servicing a considerable personnel of wounded. The railroads are chiefly in need of such personnel that could be utilized wherever there is felt a

great need for them--especially on locomotives and all departments of the transportation service."

Many Germans have tried all kinds of subterfuges to escape total mobilization. The Kölnische Zeitung of April 1 writes: "During the past weeks there have been observed many attempts on the part of individuals subject to mobilization to obtain jobs which at least connected with fulfilling war tasks."

On October 26 the Berliner Boersenzeitung wrote as follows: "So many Germans have attempted to avoid the labor service by obtaining positions in the inspection councils of the large undertakings that Reich Minister for Economy has ordered various economic enterprises to limit the number of inspection councils in the interests of total war."

From the reports of the Soviet Information Bureau it is known that in the summer campaign the German Army lost 900,000 soldiers and officers and that 980,000 soldiers and officers were taken prisoners. To these figures must be added a considerable number of wounded who cannot be restored.

In the latter part of 1943 the German press spoke again of total mobilization. This time the execution

of mobilization was entrusted to the Minister for Defense Speer and not to Goebbels. Now it affected primarily the large enterprises which were still working for the needs of the civilian economy.

The Berliner Börsenzeitung of October 7 discusses the new total mobilization as follows: "During the first phase of the attempt to increase production in the war industries, raw materials and equipment were transferred from less important plants to war plants. The second phase was characterized by the flow of freed manpower to the factories from Germany itself and from other countries and this was accomplished by subjecting the population to labor service. The third phase is the demand for total mobilization. This means that the number of workers outside of the war industries will decrease more as the concentration of the apparatus of trade and industry increases more and more. On the one hand there is being combed the working personnel of the industries and on the other hand there are being combed entire branches of industry...."

The Münchener neueste Nachrichten of November 6 writes: "As many as possible of the large establishments should be closed, especially those whose production has

no military significance, so that the entire personnel should be transferred to war industry if the conversion of the given establishment is not feasible. Another method is the combining of the establishments. In this process the management of the establishment has to apportion a definite part of its personnel."