

# ILLEGAL PERIODICALS IN GERMANY<sup>1</sup>

BY WALTER SCHOENSTEDT

THIS winter many new illegal papers have appeared in Germany. It is no longer uncommon to run across anti-Nazi leaflets and newspapers without even looking for them, for the illegal editors have greatly improved their methods of production and distribution. Moreover, the tale-bearers are not so active as they used to be, and the police must perform its task single-handed.

A few months ago the milk or potato dealer who helped Hitler to power ran eagerly to the police if he had the slightest information about underground activities. Today he remains quietly behind his counter. Another portion of the middle class now actively helps the revolutionary editors by furnishing rooms and money. This transformation in the middle class is easily explained: Hitler has not kept his promise to abolish the department stores and hand over their plants to the small retailer. In 1934 Woolworth was permitted to open a series of new stores. The small retailer no longer cares whether the department store owner is Aryan or non-Aryan. His enemy is the department store itself, and he is more and more openly accusing National Socialism of having deceived him. Taxes are going up, there is no purchasing power, rents are rising, there are evictions throughout the country.

Thus the middle class, which furnishes Hitler's chief support, is rapidly being ruined, and its conscious members are

joining the revolutionaries. The others are despairing. In 1934 there were about 20,000 suicides. Most of these must be laid to economic causes.

Under these circumstances German revolutionary literature is becoming more and more widespread. The illegal cadres have grown enormously in numbers. Despite mass arrests, despite the increased vigilance of the police, the underground editorial boards have redoubled their output. Particularly the larger cities and industrial centres are flooded with anti-Hitler propaganda.

Even within the SA illegal papers are appearing. These are edited by discontented storm-troopers, consisting for the most part of the so-called old guard. The foremost among these journals is the *Red Standard*. It contains excellent drawings and resembles in tone the Nazi papers before Hitler's rise to power. It quotes from old speeches, calls attention to points in the old Nazi program, and recalls to the storm-troopers the Socialist ideal which they once dreamed of in their bivouacs. Every storm-trooper knows the *Red Standard*. It lies in the cupboards or even on the tables in the barracks. As a letter, it finds its way into their homes. Its most recurrent refrain is the call to a second revolution which will bring the real Socialism for which many storm-troopers risked their necks.

The existence of these illegal papers shows the degree of disintegration within

<sup>1</sup>Translated from the German by Ralph Manheim.

the SA. At the beginning of Hitler's régime the SA man thought the day of reckoning had come. The enemies whom he could reach most easily and whom he often knew personally were the Jew and the Marxist. He and his comrades daily, hourly, arrested these "enemies," dragged them into the SA barracks, into the concentration camps, and on rare occasions to the police. But these enemies were soon overcome, superficially at least. And soon the greater part of the SA men became aware that there must be other, far more dangerous enemies; for there was no improvement to be seen; industry had not been nationalized, the banks and the stock-exchange were unmolested. Then came June 30. Roehm, Heines, Ernst and the others who had been the storm troopers' heroes were dead. And the SA man's personal situation had taken a turn for the worse. Now he had to compete with the Reichswehr, the police and the SS.

## II

The SA man who was forever on the look-out for Jews and Marxists has today learned to admire the heroes of the other side, Dimitroff and the thousands of unknown Dimitroffs. In those days he was enthusiastic in his search for secret hiding places; in every package he scented forbidden literature. Today he edits his own illegal papers, which assume a critical position and make new demands. Today he is searching for different enemies of the nation. He goes about it in various ways and arrives at various results. Sometimes he connects up with the anti-Fascists and provides them with the long-awaited channel into the SA.

Another new type of paper is represented by the cultural *Thrust and Slash*. This periodical is reproduced by photog-

raphy. I saw the first number at the house of a Berlin professor, a good friend of mine. He said to me:

"We get it regularly. Nobody knows where it comes from. Its effect is all the more powerful, because we are in a position to check up on the truth of its statements, and every day we ourselves are face to face with the facts it deals with. The print is so small we can only read it with a magnifying glass. But believe me, we read it. I am neither a radical nor a conservative, and despite all the confusion I have been able to keep my objectivity. Here there are forces at work that will survive all of us. Those people have helpers among us professors, among doctors, writers, painters and theatrical people. They know their business and don't bungle. If you conceive of the conditions under which they work, how they fight on despite all persecution, and then reflect on the low standards of our universities, our theatres and particularly of our literature, you could despair—"

This professor, a medical authority, had a picture of Hitler next to a frightful death's head before him on his desk.

I have run across papers addressed to each particular trade or professional group. In Berlin the transportation workers have their own organ, the *Red Signal*. The railroad workers have the *New Road*, the hospital workers the *Operation*. And there are many other papers dealing specifically with industrial or professional questions. Most significant of these are the papers of the large printing establishments, particularly the Ullstein shop paper, the *Red Querschnitt*.

The *Querschnitt* was a well-known monthly which ceased to appear when Hitler came to power. The *Red Querschnitt* is photographically reproduced, has on the average eight pages, and is a work of art

among illegal papers. The title page, red against a yellow background, looks as if it were printed from a wood or linoleum cut. Four of its pages are addressed to the employés and editorial staffs of Ullstein's.

Having worked for some time at Ullstein's, I can report two examples of ways in which this paper has been distributed.

Ullstein's has its own shop postal service, carried on by messengers. This postal service is used for business communications between the staffs of the various Ullstein publications, for the orders of the National Socialist Shop Committee, and so on. Late in September, 1934, the illegal *Red Querschnitt* passed through every channel of this postal service in a closed envelope of the firm. No house detective or Gestapo agent was able to cast any light on the case.

The second time they used the German Postal Service. When a letter is mailed in Berlin without postage, the postman delivers the letter and the addressee must pay the postage. But if the addressee is non-existent, the letter returns automatically to the sender. The editors of the *Red Querschnitt* could afford no postage. They wrote the names of the Ullstein employés on the backs of the envelopes and addressed them to names and streets that did not exist. The entire issue was thus delivered at the expense of the German Postal Service. Other groups have used similar methods. And the ingenuity of the methods of distribution has made the papers more popular, and inspired respect even in hardened Nazis.

In addition to the shop papers there are others, mimeographed for the most part, which regularly appear in the various neighborhoods, and are devoted to local problems.

These are the *Red North*, *Kreuzberg at the Front*, the *Red East*, *Socialist Watch*,

the *Anti-Fascist*, the *Red Flag* and many more. They contain quotations from the burned books, from Heine through Gorki to the worker writers. They quote Lenin and Marx, recommend the exact study of the works of the strategist, Clausewitz. They contain revelations about rearmament or the preparations for bacteriological warfare. Technicians, workers, writers, artisans and chemists write for these papers. They are so rich in material and treatment that the editor of any daily paper could profit by studying them. The circulation of the individual papers averages from two hundred to one thousand, but the number of their readers is ten or twenty times that number, for they are secretly passed from hand to hand until they are "read to pieces."

How are these publications distributed? They often lie inside the legal paper on your door-step; they are found between the pages of telephone books or in letter boxes. Workers find them in their lunch bags. They come through the mails attached to advertising matter. You find them in the cafés inside your legal paper. And every day new means of distribution are found.

There are also mimeographed leaflets, stickers, slogans stamped on match-boxes. These are concise in form and deal with current events. After June 30, for example, thousands of one-page leaflets addressed to the storm-troopers appeared.

### III

Another category of illegal literature is disguised as prospectuses or travel booklets. Under deceptive covers which read "The New Radio," "Opel Autos," "Visit Bernau," "Visit the Wagner Festival," "Fireworks in Treptow," and so on, they are passed out on street-corners or left on

tables in public libraries among bona fide travel prospectuses. After the first few lines the reader suddenly comes across an article about June 30, the church conflict, the lack of raw materials, the disappearing gold coverage or public opinion outside Germany. At the beginning of October, 1934, I saw two well-dressed young men standing in front of a movie house distributing a pamphlet whose cover advertised the show. But inside the pamphlet was an account of the Young Communist League's position regarding the new Youth Law forbidding young people under twenty to work; and regarding the Labor Service and the question of the agricultural laborers. This method of distribution was in great currency in the summer of 1934 and because of the manifest impossibility of censoring all advertising matter, it will doubtless be employed more and more.

Since Hitler's rise to power numerous anti-Fascist papers have been appearing in Paris, Prague, Zurich. The most important of them are known within Germany. Many of them are smuggled across the border on thin paper and in reduced format. The best-known of these are the *Gegenangriff*, edited by Willi Muenzenberg in Paris; the *New Vorwaerts*, put out by the leaders of the Social-Democratic Party in Prague; the *Rundschau*, a many-sided organ of Communist information edited in Basel; and the *Deutsche Front* and the *Deutsche Volkszeitung*, which appear in Saarbruecken. The Prague *Illustrated Arbeiterzeitung* is of particular importance; its miniature edition is perhaps the best known in Germany.

In addition to all these periodicals, the "Brown Book" is well-known in Germany. It has appeared in miniature under various disguised titles, the best known of which is "Hermann and Dorothea." It is hardly a quarter of an inch thick and fits into your vest pocket. "Experts" set the circulation of the "Brown Book" in Germany at 50,000.

In recent weeks Bruno von Salomon's stirring appeal "To an unknown SA-man" has spread throughout Germany. Bruno von Salomon is the brother of Ernst von Salomon, a well-known writer and the author of many National-Socialist books strongly emphasizing the Socialist and revolutionary side of Nazism. Bruno von Salomon is well-known to the storm troopers as the fearless leader of the North-German peasants. His appeal has made the deepest impression. In part it reads:

"—meanwhile this hope has deceived us bitterly. Instead of work—unpaid labor service; instead of Socialism—the domination of the captains of industry; instead of freedom and bread—hunger and terror; instead of national liberation—recognition of the borders set by Versailles.

"—then came June 30, and the will of your Fuehrer gave you an opportunity to sit in a concentration camp and meditate on the second revolution. Many of your comrades have that opportunity no longer. Like you they fought whole days and nights for the Fuehrer; they sacrificed their whole life's strength to him. And in the end they stood helpless before the rifles of the SS. As a reward for having honorably served their leader, they were shot down like mad dogs."

# CRISIS IN EUROPEAN AGRICULTURE

BY JONATHAN F. SCOTT

**D**o you remember La Bruyère's classic description of the French peasant in the Seventeenth Century?

"One sees," he says, "certain ferocious animals, male and female, scattered over the country, black, livid, and burned by the sun, attached to the land which they dig and work upon with incomprehensible obstinacy. They have an articulate voice, and when they rise on their feet they exhibit a human face; and in fact they are men. At night they retire to their dens, where they live upon black bread, water, and roots. They spare other men the trouble of sowing, cultivating and gathering articles of food."

"From 1500 to 1850," says the German economist Schmoller, "the great social question of the day in Europe was the peasant question." Pick up any comprehensive book on the old régime in France and you will find pages devoted to the abuses from which the peasant suffered. His misery may not have been as extreme as La Bruyère thought it was, but his lot was miserable enough, and he was often subjected to gross injustice. In Central and Eastern Europe, conditions were worse than in France. Serfdom was the rule; and the serfs were habitually overworked and oppressed by their masters. A Hungarian peasant complained that he had to spend so much time working for his overlord that he could only cultivate his own fields by moonlight. His case was typical.

By the middle of the Nineteenth Cen-

tury, however, the European peasant question is supposed to have been pretty well solved except in backward countries like Russia. As a result of the French Revolution and the reforms that followed in its wake, the peasant was freed from his feudal shackles. He still had to struggle hard for a living, but he was no longer subject to grave abuses. In many regions he reaped the benefits of greatly improved methods of farming and sometimes achieved a modest prosperity. He fitted into the social and economic order and was counted a conservative influence. Gradually the problem of the industrial worker, the urban proletarian, replaced the peasant problem as the great social question of the day. So, as late as 1920, an able English student of contemporary European affairs observed in an article, "Rural Europe Comes to Power": "It is the urban civilization of Europe that is threatened. The peasantry will survive and multiply."

Yet there is a peasant question in Europe today that cries to high heaven for solution. All over Europe peasants and farmers have been finding it more and more difficult to keep their heads above water, and many are on the verge of despair. Apart from the situation in Russia, however, where the peasant problem is intimately bound up with the success or failure of the Communistic scheme, the question has attracted little attention in the United States. It seems to be more or less taken for granted that in the rest