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ALLIED EXPEDITIONARY FORCE
Psychological Warfare Division

INTELLIGENCE SECTION

Ref. I.S.280.

4 September 1944.

WEEKLY INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY - No. 5.

(Note: The following is a Summary of matters of interest received at PWD during the past week, and is for guidance only.)

B. WEHRMACHT MORALE.

(covering the period Aug 27 - Sept. 4)

1. GENERAL PICTURE:

There has been a further fall in the already low morale of the ordinary infantry soldier. (* See last page) This group had seen their heavy weapons destroyed or lost, had no doubt about being up against vastly superior forces and realized they were defeated. They were glad to be out of the fight. Typical statements from such men are: "It can't last much longer, and life is sweet". "Nearly everyone is thinking how he can best desert". "We could have got away but then we should only have been thrown into the line again".

The Paratroops continue to have by far the best morale in the German Army now. S.S. troops are becoming less of an elite, and defeatism and rank dissatisfaction are occasionally found among them. Nonetheless, the Paratroopers, junior officers and some S.S. men evince high morale. Typical expressions of paratroop morale are contained in such statements as the following :-

"Of course one thinks of one's family, but as a paratrooper one only has one ideal: Victory must be ours. We have sworn an oath.....one does one's duty and it would be cowardice not to fight to the end....."

"As a soldier one does one's duty and fights wherever one is put.....We don't give up hope, it is all up to the leaders; something quite different will happen from what everybody expects...

"We will win because we must win the War. If we don't win, Germany ceases. Therefore we shall win."

"Spirit against material. It has never yet happened that mere technology has conquered spirit." (i.e. German "Geist" versus Allied material superiority).

It is becoming increasingly clear that these men are the backbone of Nazi resistance.

Belief in secret weapons, present and future, is also largely confined to the people holding the above mentioned views. The majority have ceased to take them seriously. "If they existed they would surely be used."

There is no change to record in attitudes towards the Putsch against Hitler, which is largely disapproved of as a cowardly "stab in the back", even by anti-Nazis.

A recently captured order by C-in-C of the Panzer Group West, dated 16 July, and signed Eberbach, who has since been captured, demonstrates the serious concern, even at that date,

over deterioration in discipline and self-respect of troops in that command. It can be assumed that events since that time have increased these symptoms of poor morale.

Desertion: It can be regarded as significant that of a sample of 90 Ps/W, 24 were deserters, fourteen of them Reich Germans. No personal details of motives can be given. While too much must not be inferred from this, the figure is unusually high.

Treatment in Captivity: There are no cases reported of Ps/W expecting to be badly treated. Many Ps/W, including those of the S.S., relate that their officers had told them to expect sterilization, execution or deportation to Russia into forced labour if they were captured, but the men did not believe it.

A captured order by the commander of 353 Inf. Div., dated 8 August, "to be brought to the notice of all ranks", goes to the expedient of stating that ".....prisoners taken by the Allies are no longer sent to the U.S.A. or U.K., but to Russia....." and ".....the first transport of such prisoners is said to be on its way to Siberia....."

II. NATIONAL SOCIALIST IDEOLOGY AND HIGH MORALE.

based on 335 interviews
A systematic analysis of the relationship between morale and political attitudes shows that ideological devotion to National Socialism rather than rational confident evaluation of the military situation is the basis of such high morale as persists among German Ps/W. In particular, faith in German victory was most highly correlated with

Devotion to Hitler personally
Identification with National Socialist doctrine
Exoneration of Germany from War guilt,

and least correlated with

Confidence in German military reserves
Belief in the inferiority of Allied soldiers
Belief in the firmness of the home front.

This study of 335 Ps/W provides a very convincing statistical confirmation of the fact that German morale rests upon emotional irrational foundations. Blind Nazi devotion appears to influence the Ps/W's morale much more than empirically perceivable battle experiences. These conclusions bear out not only many reports from the field that there is a nucleus which cannot be influenced by our propaganda, but also constitute vindication of the Nazi policy of intensive political indoctrination for its military purposes.

On 3 Sept., 20 officers and 30 enlisted men were shown a "communique" alleging the entry of Allied troops into the Saar region. Preliminary report shows that their minds were hardly disturbed at all by this "news" of fighting on German soil.

On the other hand, two S.S. men of a recent sample of Ps/W interrogated have stated that they would lay down their arms if the Allies reached or crossed the Rhine.

(A fuller report on this point will be issued when details are available.)

III. REACTIONS TO PROPAGANDA - ALLIED AND GERMAN:

The high-morale paratroopers discounted, with contempt, our leaflets and radio. If this group is excluded, then all sources agree that our leaflets are effective in producing direct desertion or softening among the ordinary rank and file of the

Wehrmacht.

21 Army Group state that "the evidence from interrogation and captured documents during the past week (up to 24 August) has amply demonstrated the long term effect of our propaganda, and..... that we are now reaping the harvest of past leaflet shoots and drops carried out when the front was static." Another appreciation confirms their general report, mentioning especially the efficacy of the new fighter-bomber technique of leaflet dropping. Polish deserters have stated that Allied leaflets often help Germans to desert, and have proved their point by leading groups of two or three Germans into captivity with them. This has been experienced by many of the Units in 21 Army Group.

Further instances of the efficacy of our P/W operations are the following:

An administrative officer of the 277 Inf. Div. stated on capture that he has passed the leaflet "Eine Minute" (one minute) to all he could find in order to try and avoid panic in the Falaise pocket, so that German troops might surrender "in good order and with military bearing". Five Ps/W of the 363 Inf. Div., looking for their company and a way out of the Vire pocket, picked up a copy of "Nachrichten für die Truppe (Aug. 14)". They believed the information it contained about their plight and decided to surrender to the first Americans they saw. "There was no use in running around any more."

Similar reactions to broadcasts from Britain are reported by those who are able to listen.

There is evidence that the German measures for counteracting our propaganda are being stiffened. 12 Army Group reports increasing numbers of stories of punishments threatened and inflicted for reading Allied leaflets. The effect of these threats is, however, weakened by the soldiers' knowledge that officers themselves are interested and do not follow their own injunctions. The leaflets are collected, stamped all over "Hostile propaganda", and returned to the troops, who as soon as practicable, receive a pep-talk by an officer, to erase the effect from their minds.

In view of the fact that our leaflets, and especially "Nachrichten", are almost the only regular source of news for the German front line, it is however doubtful if the High Command can do much at this stage to stem the flood of our influence on the German soldier, except on the fanatics who are, in any case, quite immune even without the officers' intervention.

IV. A LAST TESTAMENT:

The following extract from a captured, undated, letter of a German soldier to his wife, illustrates the quality of those who keep the Wehrmacht fighting :

".....When you, my dear Annemarie, receive these lines, then everything will be over. Then I have done my part and have given my Fuehrer, Adolf Hitler, that which can only be given once. With the one certainty I have then gone. 'The Fuehrer will do it, that I know'.....On my last leave you asked me what is to become of little Siegfried.. Please raise this little Siegfried who was so dear to me, so that he will become a good National-Socialist. Take care that he doesn't become a lounge lizard (Tangojunge). He must become hard and vigorous so that my sacrifice was not in vain; for if all the boys become like that then Germany will stand forever where our beloved Fuehrer has placed it. Never forget me. I have fallen as a soldier of Adolf Hitler. It is my repeated wish that Siegfried, too, should become an S.A. man as I was....."

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".....Wenn Du meine liebe Annemarie diese Zeilen erhaelst, dann ja, dann ist es vorbei. Dann habe ich mein Teil dazu beigetragen und habe meinem Fuehrer Adolf Hitler, das gegeben, Was man nur einmal geben kann. Mit der einen Gewissheit bin ich dann gegangen; Der Fuehrer schafft es, das weiss ich.'.....Ich meinem letzten Urlaub hast Due mich gefragt, was nun aus dem Kleinen Siegfried werden soll.....Erzieh bitte diesen Kleinen Siegfried, der mir sehr lieb war, so dass er ein guter National-Sozialist wird. Passe auf dass er kein Tangojunge wird, Er muss hart und stramm werden, damit mein Opfer nicht umsonst war, denn wenn alle Jungen so werden, dann steht Deutschland fuer immer da wo es unser geliebter Fuehrer hingestellt hat.....Vergiss mich nie, ich bin als Soldat Adolf Hitlers gefallen. Auch Siegfried soll, das mein nochmaliger Wunsch S.A. Mann werden, so wie ich einer war....."

* NOTE:

(An impressive report from P & PW Twelfth Army Group, dated 23 August, and a report from Kempton Park up to 26 August, were received in the last few days. The Twelfth Army Group sample included representatives of 23 German formations, half of the sample being members of four different Para. Divs. and of four S.S. Divs.)

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