

even whether he is certainly alive. If he is alive, he is plainly not in a condition to appear in public. It may be that he is really ill, suffering from a cerebral complaint following on the events of July. More than one report has alleged this to be so. Yet since the 20th July he is known to have spoken and acted with sanity and even assurance. This fact suggests that the cause of his retirement may be temperamental, that there are times (as at 1 o'clock on the morning of the 21st July) when he can speak before a microphone, and that there are others when he is unable to deliver a speech. It may be no disease, but a loss of nerve (such as he fervently protested a year ago would never happen to him) which makes him afraid to appear in public. Such fear, whether of assassination or of a breakdown, may well have increased since his escape from death in July. But it was probably operative long before that. He missed a more important occasion than last Thursday when he failed to speak on the 30th January, 1943, the tenth anniversary of his accession to power.

At all events it can be assumed that at so critical a stage in the war as the present his advisers would have insisted on his appearance had that been humanly possible. The question arises as to how long the mystery of his retirement can be maintained. If he does not reappear soon it will be difficult to persuade his countrymen that he is still alive. Some phrases in the speech of last Sunday can, indeed, be read as skilful preparation by others, or as his personal foreboding of his disappearance from the public scene. He warned his people not to expect to see him. He considered his present task to be the direction of the war and not the making of speeches. He said that his own life was immaterial to the accomplishment of his task and that he would spare neither health nor life to fulfil his duties as "the first German." He has said these things before, but their repetition can hardly compensate for the absence in Germany's bombed cities of a leader visibly radiating that unwavering resolution which, through another's mouth, he still claims to possess.

If the speech was put together by others than Hitler it was a clever pastiche. It was rambling in structure and occasionally vigorous in phrase. It had the familiar historical recapitulation, the parallels between the past and present tasks of National Socialism. It affirmed that the Leader was devoted body and soul to the single aim of strengthening Germany against Bolshevism, which is at least in accord with what is known of his convictions. The egocentric note of last year's speech was even more prominent, especially in the passages on Germany loyalty, National Socialist magnanimity, the necessity of hero-worship, and the treachery of the July criminals and of members of "old, ailing and morbid dynasties." References to the actual strategy of the war were absent. One of its few realistic references was to the heroic efforts of Japan, Germany's "greatest ally." The leaders in Italy, Hungary, Slovakia and Croatia, who had rallied the forces of resistance against national decay, all received honourable mention. Perhaps this was an attempt to make good the blunder of his statement on the 25th September that Germany had been deserted by all her European allies. Typical of Hitler's manner was also the description of the concentric Allied attacks of August and September as "bitter repercussions" of the 20th July. The Volkssturm, though a chief occasion of the meeting, was accorded only the briefest mention. Several types of traitor were threatened: anyone who should use dagger or bomb against Germany, members of former parties who believed that the time of their resurrection might have come, and, most cryptic category of all, those who now thought fit to involve other people in conflict with their conscience. Is this a warning to those who may be planning another 20th July and attempting to induce Army officers to break their oath of allegiance to their supreme commander?

The keynote of the Volkssturm meetings of Sunday last was, as a V.B. headline expressed it, "Volkssturm in the spirit of the Feldherrnhalle." The main speeches by Goebbels in Berlin and by Schepmann in Danzig, were undistinguished, and did little more than repeat points which have already become propaganda slogans. The former gave assurances about the modern organisation and armament of the levies: there would be no question of sending Berliners unarmed against the enemy. Schepmann stressed the responsibility of the S.A. for weapon training and admitted that some 4 million men were already enrolled. The most vigorous Nazi speech of Sunday, made neither in Germany nor in connexion with the Volkssturm, was by Terboven at a rally in Oslo, in which he used with some effect all the propaganda appeals of the moment to encourage belief in victory, which, thanks to the holding up of the enemy through precious weeks and months, would be accomplished by technical developments allowing German armament to abolish the material superiority of the Allies.

He contrived in the same speech to stress that as in 1923 the Nazis had surmounted a situation which ordinary politicians thought hopeless, so it would be again.

There are two interesting features in the propaganda concerning V2, the use of which was announced by the O.K.W. on the 8th November. It was calculated to attract some public attention in a week in which the only outstanding items were Roosevelt's victory and Hitler's failure to speak. In the second place it was announced with studied moderation, as a contributory irritant to the enemy and without any suggestion, in spite of its name, that it was retaliatory. It was stated to be "far more effective" than V1, and to travel faster than sound. But such comment as has been seen preferred to praise it as a marvel of construction and to deal with British censorship of news rather than to describe damage.

Official German reports of the fighting in the Scheldt estuary avoided actual mention of the Allied capture of Walcheren, but the O.K.W. bulletin of the 10th gave a summary of what German resistance there had achieved: "in weeks of gallant fighting" the German troops had blocked the Allied access to Antwerp and had gained time for measures depriving them of the use of the port. The same bulletin gave the information that the port area of Antwerp had for weeks past been under fire from V1 and V2. Second place in these bulletins has been taken by the advance of General Patton's army in Lorraine and by what the O.K.W. termed the American attempt "to eliminate the fortified town of Metz by strategic envelopment." Unofficial accounts of these engagements laid stress on the fact that Patton's offensive was the first stage in a more general and extensive attack. The position in Italy, in Hungary and in East Prussia was described as more or less unchanged; one communiqué said that after rainy weather in Hungary the Russian attacks had been resumed. There is no confirmation of a report that Kesselring has been killed.

The outstanding military event of the week, the sinking of the *Tirpitz* in Tromsø Fiord on the 12th, has so far elicited no German comment. This successful attack is the eighth attempt to sink by level bombing a capital ship which was regarded by the Germans as unsinkable. The destruction of the *Tirpitz* three and a half years after that of her sister ship *Bismarck* deprives the German navy of its last seaworthy battleship. The most powerful ships it has left are the pocket battleships *Lutzow* and *Admiral Scheer*, at present inactive in the Baltic.

An important indirect effect of air attacks on German population centres, which has so far not been noticed in this *Summary*, is the impediment to police control. The difficult task of controlling movements of population is seriously complicated by the destruction of records. This has happened in the town of Saarbrücken, whither General Patton's armies are now heading. The local newspaper announced at the end of October that "special circumstances" made it necessary to register the entire population of the Stadtkreis, presumably at the same time as the distribution of ration cards. The same paper admits the difficulty of locating workers by saying that "present conditions make things easier for shirkers"; there is in certain areas of the Reich now no means of compelling those who make no effort to do so to return to their work. Among the agenda of Gau propaganda leaders in Kurhessen is said to have been discussion of "the tremendously increased work of the Security Police and Security Service." There, as elsewhere, the police would seem to have been reduced by being drafted into the armed forces. According to a private report, the regular police in some districts have now all gone to the front, their place being taken by conscripted men of over 35. A report from East Prussia speaks of elderly members of the Volkssturm doing duty as police. The Essen papers recently made the unusual statement that the Gestapo was now being instructed to deal severely with rumour-mongers. So outspoken a reference suggests that the situation is getting out of hand in certain areas. So does a phrase in General Dittmar's last talk: he spoke of opposing "with maximum counter-efforts" all attempts to break the German home front.

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It is impossible to assess with any accuracy the strength and extent of the underground resistance organisation in the Protectorate but that the Germans expect a rising sooner or later is quite plain. Their policy to combat this danger lies in a combination of praise, warnings and practical measures. During the past

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