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EUROPE.

GERMANY.

THE oppressive calm of the last two months has been broken by military events on two fronts. Both these have been announced to the German people as initiatives of the enemy. The German News Agency stated on the 4th July that a Russian offensive could be expected at any time. On the 6th *Transocean* refuted as erroneous British and Russian reports of a German offensive begun on the 5th. It was explained that local engagements had developed into a heavy battle, because the Soviets intensified their counter-attacks by bringing up "masses of reserves" thus "making it necessary for the German command to make use of reserves." Later German reports added that after these attacks had been repulsed the initiative had passed into German hands. The communiqués of the German High Command on the 9th and 10th July reported "deep penetration" and "considerable ground gained" north of Byelgorod, the capture of over a thousand Soviet tanks and fighting of increasing intensity in which the air forces of both sides were heavily engaged.

The German objective in the latest fighting on this front is not clear, though it is significant that German agencies have scornfully repudiated "long-term objectives" which they say have been suggested by enemy sources, "mentioning names like Stalingrad and Moscow." All that can be said is that the German public has been given the impression of a German attempt to forestall a Russian offensive, very similar to Timoshenko's drive towards Kharkov in May of last year, and that by striking hard on a limited front German forces may achieve gains that will not only strengthen the whole Eastern line but would prove a useful compensation for failure or stalemate in Southern Europe. Since an offensive that failed would at the present juncture be worse than no offensive at all, German propaganda holds to the claim, expressed most concisely by the Berlin correspondent of *Stockholms Tidningen* that "the alleged German offensive is not an offensive."

By contrast the Allied invasion of Sicily has been soberly presented to a public prepared, and almost anxious, for it. The German News Agencies have for the past fortnight been suggesting both the imminence of attack and the increasing strength of the Axis forces assembled to meet it. Berlin correspondents

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