

in Germany during the past week. The excuse that Tunisia is not decisive cannot avoid the implication that the next attacks will be made nearer home: "the war will be decided by what happens in the centre and not on the rim." The admixture of encouragement and warning has been quite indiscriminate; *D.N.B.* argued that the question was not whether the Allies wished to invade Europe or not; they must do so, if they hoped to turn the fortunes of war in their favour. "The initiative is not by any means entirely in the enemy's hands." The publicity given to the Atlantic Wall has this week reached its peak. In distributing awards to engineers and builders Speer claimed that this bastion of the homeland was "one of the proudest creations of German building." The defences of Southern Europe were also claimed to be very strong; there was now "no soft under-belly" to the Axis. Broadcasters on this theme emphasised that the Mediterranean was broader and deeper than the Channel; the Allied steed might well hesitate before the water-jump. And finally emphasis was laid on the determination of the defence forces: German troops would defend every inch of Italy as if it were their own country. Yet the available evidence suggests that German troops have so far been sent to the Balkans rather than to Italy. In the midst of this mass of reassurance a realistic note was sounded by Sertorius, who warned the public not to hope for any long pause before the next move: Germans must not think that the enemy would take long to rest or regroup his forces; "a week at the outside" was necessary to restore the full fighting strength of the three Allied armies in Africa.

This preoccupation and suspense is evident too in the absence of discussion about what is happening on other fronts. Comment on U-boats and sea-warfare is this week notably absent, nor has much been said about air-raids, apart from continuing the propaganda line of emphasising the cost of the raids to the Allies in men and machines. The German communiqué of the 17th reported Royal Air Force attacks "by weak forces" on two dams only, but "heavy casualties" among civilians due to the flooding. The Russian front has supplied some news; it appears there is now hard fighting reported from at least three sectors of the huge Eastern Front, and some apprehension has been expressed regarding the possible developments. Sertorius, broadcasting on the 10th, warned his listeners that the whole length of the Eastern Front was in a condition allowing of large-scale operations, and that the Soviets might commence a big offensive at any moment. Supporting the fourth appeal of the German Red Cross, Hitler said nothing to brighten this picture, but repeated that the German Army in the East had overcome a crisis which would have broken any other army in the world. Despite its many trials, the Home Front must not forget the soldiers, whose sufferings are beyond all comparison even with what raids can bring.

The trials of the Home Front are many and varied, and this week brings evidence of those connected with war-production. Official speakers have been on the whole optimistic in their assessments of the recently-tapped sources of manpower. Reichsminister Funk, addressing a conference of the Reich Economic Chamber and the Gau Economic Chambers, stated that redirection of labour and the closing-down campaign had together brought over a million new workers into war industry, and that the closing-down measure had released 30,000 of these—a very modest figure compared with *Transocean's* estimate early this year of a possible 300,000. Sauckel told an audience in Weimar on the 13th that the man-power at the disposal of the Axis powers was superior to that of Great Britain and the United States. For some time past the foreign workers in Germany have been a somewhat intractable problem, both as regards numbers and treatment. The sharp German comment on Molotov's note shows this to be a sensitive point in labour management. *D.N.B.* emphasised that the import of foreign labour cannot in any sense be termed slave traffic, that Germany has no reason to fear enquiry into the position and that feeding and conditions must be good, or production would have suffered. As to the quality of much of the work done, various local sources express disappointment, especially at the quality and reliability of workers sent from western Europe. One leading German newspaper remarked recently that the whole question of "labour" needs reconsidering "from the point of view of quality." One reason for this must be the extreme youth of many recruits to industry no less than to the armed forces. Boys of 16 act as overseers of foreign workers in factories, 15-year-olds are employed in Army Services behind the lines, and there is a report which, however, is so far unconfirmed, that the 1926 age group has been called up for military service.

Himmler's visit to Austria confirms the facts of unrest given in this *Summary* last week. In Carinthia, the scene of the recent trial, he referred to the "bad

elements" which had to be purged from that region before the Reich could recover its "peace of mind," and his presence in Vienna was connected by one report with increasing local discontent among the workers of the district. There has apparently been trouble in Leipzig with posters and labels distributed in streets and parks and through the post bearing either the single word "Hunger" or the phrase: "Be no Hitler-slave." The rationing measures announced in this *Summary* last week appear to have displaced both Africa and air-raids as the main topic of conversation. The plea that it is important to eat vegetables does not seem to have carried much conviction. One paper urges housewives to remember what the last year of the last war was like.

It was announced early this month that a number of German bishops have been called to Rome for consultation, and since then the approaching summer conference of the German bishops at Fulda will have important new matters on its agenda, including relations between Catholic and Evangelical Churches in Germany, the trials of people in bombed cities and the spread of paganism. Pagan views on marriage emerged rather sharply in connexion with recent attempts to increase the birth-rate. A Conservative daily paper stressed the importance of measures to protect the biological strength of the nation, whereas the *Schwarze Korps* stated outright that "unfruitful marriages must be dissolved, and dissolved quickly."

#### CZECHOSLOVAKIA.

Responding to the signal given by Moravec in his comments on the Pilsen raid of the 16th April (see *Summary* No. 146), the Protectorate Press has been fulminating loudly against the cruel barbarity of the British and the hypocrisy of the London Czechs. The general tone is that "while the Germans have ensured that Czechs should live peacefully in health and in civilised order, British pilots have killed some Czechs. The Germans give us bread, the British iron." Thousands of people, according to the Czech Press, attended the funeral of the victims, who, according to the same source, numbered eleven.

Pilsen was again heavily raided by the Royal Air Force on the night of the 13th-14th May. Detailed reports of this latest raid are not yet to hand and it has not so far been admitted.

A new recreation scheme for Czech workers, on a much larger scale than last year, was due to be inaugurated on the 17th May. It is being organised by the National Trade Union Centre, which has prepared thirty reception centres at spas and country resorts throughout Bohemia and is expected to provide 30,000 workers with a week's holiday during the spring and summer.

The potato ration in the Protectorate has now been reduced from 3½ to 2½ kilog. per person weekly. The official explanation for this is the greater availability of other vegetables.

Dr. Paul Schmidt, Chief of the Press Department of the German Foreign Office, was in Bratislava last week for a visit of several days. He delivered a lecture in the university on the 11th May, giving the Nazi version of the origins of the war and explaining the principles of the New Europe. Slovakia, he said, was the first State to be instituted on these principles. In an address to journalists the following day, Dr. Schmidt emphasised the high political mission of journalists under the New Order. During the visit Premier Tuka presented him with the Cross of Prince Pribina in recognition of "his great merits and services rendered to the Slovak State and nation."

Karmasin, leader of the German Party in Slovakia, made a sharp attack at the end of April on Germans who shirked their duty and who "wrongly interpret the notion of volunteering." All possible devices, he said, were used to avoid service with the S.S. at the front, and Karmasin ended by warning defaulters that "drones are removed in every beehive." A week later it was officially announced that numerous volunteers had left Slovakia for the *Waffen-S.S.*

Several Slovak newspapers announce that measures have had to be taken against students of Ruzomberok Grammar School who had formed a secret youth organisation to carry on Communist and Pan-Slav activities. Similar circles had been established in other towns, according to *Gardista*, which also declared that all the organisers were baptized Jews.

It is now reported that the first Slovak air-line, which is to operate three times weekly on the route Prešov (East Slovakia)-Bratislava-Vienna, was formally opened on the 15th May.

[25464]

B 2