

of the United States Neutrality Act appears to have been an exception, and this makes it doubtful whether the formal entry of the United States into the war would really have only a slight effect upon German morale, as has recently been believed. The Wilhelmstrasse spokesman, on the 14th November, complained that the amendments had been accepted "under false pretences which do not correspond to the clear wish of the United States people, and as regards the inevitable consequences of which the majority of the Congressmen are probably in the dark," instead of attempting to brazen the whole thing out as of little consequence either way. Germans abroad are said to have shown undisguised consternation at the news, though they are deriving some comfort from the closeness of the vote and from the strike situation that has since developed in the United States. As yet, there has been no German comment on the affair of the *Odenwald*, though, if the vessel, or its cargo, is held or confiscated by the United States authorities, the reaction is likely to be violent.

Dr. Paul Schmidt, the Wilhelmstrasse spokesman, has temporarily deserted his loquacious post to head an official German press delegation to Turkey. In view of the prestige which Dr. Schmidt now enjoys in Germany (see last week's *Summary*), it is extremely likely that his visit will be concerned with more important things than merely improving German publicity and propaganda in Turkey, and observing the activities of British and American journalists and broadcasters there. It is, to say the least, singular that Schmidt, who has been the most vociferous channel for recent German denials that peace feelers were being put out—"There have been no German peace feelers, nor will there be any in this war," he said on the 11th November—should now have joined Germany's most assiduous peace "feeler," Papen, in Angora. Indeed, on the very eve of Schmidt's arrival there, Papen gave his notorious interview to a Spanish journalist, in which he spread his pinions as an "angel of peace" even more widely than heretofore, though the piquancy of the situation has been added to by the Wilhelmstrasse on the 18th November describing the interview—which has now been published in the Barcelona newspaper *Vanguardia*—as "apocryphal." Though the German peace offensive that was believed to be developing a fortnight ago now appears to have been delayed or called off, in the form then envisaged, in view of the unfavourable publicity it received almost everywhere, it does not seem from Papen's latest activities, or from other indications, that the idea is entirely dead. Before the end of the year the campaign may again be in full blast. Even if the Germans are not sincere—and this is more than probable—they believe that neutral statesmen will be flattered by being approached as potential mediators, and that confusion will be thrown into the ranks of their enemies by this peace talk. Both the Party and the Army still appear to be convinced that appeasers linger beneath every stone, in this country as well as in the United States, though it is to be hoped that the Prime Minister's speech last week may have caused some disillusionment on this score.

Though the *Kölnische Zeitung* of the 30th October compared the eastern front unfavourably with Dante's *Inferno*, and Germany's prospect of bringing the war in the East to a speedy and victorious conclusion is no nearer than it was at the end of October, Hitler himself does not appear to think "All hope abandon ye who enter here," for he has appointed Alfred Rosenberg to be Reich Minister for the occupied eastern territory, entrusting him with the task of setting up a civil administration there. A beginning is to be made in Lithuania, Latvia and parts of White Russia, which areas will form the Reich Commissariat of the *Ostland*, with Gauleiter Lohse as Reich Commissar there. Gauleiter Koch, who has already been appointed Commissar of the Ukraine, will also be responsible to Rosenberg, whose deputy is to be Dr. Alfred Meyer. It may be that the Higher Command has considered that its task of keeping order in the newly occupied territories in the east will be facilitated by the existence of a German civil administration—or perhaps the army leaders are anxious to have a civilian Party scapegoat in case things go wrong there! It is known that they have regretted being unable to saddle the Party and the civil administration with responsibility for disturbances, and consequent reprisals, in occupied Western Europe.

Despite the apparent preparations for a return to normal conditions there, the Germans now appear more than ever resigned to a continuation of the eastern campaign through the winter, though they are likely before very long to withdraw a proportion of their forces, and to "stabilise" portions of the front.

Despite their successes in the Crimea it is not believed that conditions are regarded by them as permitting a frontal attack upon the Caucasus before the spring, and even they must by now be anxious to avoid unnecessary losses. It appears that every member of the staff of the German Mission in a certain foreign country is now mourning at least one near relative, and the same is reported to be the case among Germans everywhere abroad, not excluding refugees. It is confirmed that casualties have been particularly heavy among the aristocracy, many of whom belonged to motorised cavalry regiments. Casualties in the east among the *élite* flying personnel are also believed to have been heavy, though Germany's most severe flying loss in the war as yet is that announced on the 18th November of the test pilot and "stunt-flyer" General Ernst Udet, who at the time of his death was Director-General of Supply and Technical Development, and had been personally responsible for the adoption of many of the aircraft types now in first-line use in the G.A.F. He is said to have been killed while testing "a secret new weapon." It is reported from Vienna (by contrast with Prague, where German wounded are rarely seen in the city itself) that there are wounded soldiers everywhere, and that a hundred thousand of them, mainly with leg and arm wounds, have been sent there. The enormous Steinhof lunatic asylum, all the regular inmates of which recently "died at the orders of the Gestapo," it is alleged, is crowded with war wounded. Among the most pathetic sights in Vienna, according to a neutral observer, are the large numbers of very young soldiers suffering from shattered nerves.

The extent of Germany's labour shortage is reflected by the news that the inmates—now said to number 8,000—of the notorious Dachau concentration camp near Munich, are being trained as factory workers. An aircraft component factory, employing 2,000 of them, without pay, is said to be already in operation inside the camp itself. In addition, the Dresden Labour Office has recently instituted in various factories "corners for old men," who both work more slowly and are paid at lower rates than able-bodied workers!

CZECHOSLOVAKIA.

There is no outstanding event from the Protectorate this week. The central motive of the German-prompted press campaign, which still pursues its almost hysterical course, is revealed in a recent pronouncement of the *Völkischer Beobachter*, arguing that the Czechs are "on the edge of the abyss," but still have "one last chance" of seeing reason. In one form or another the Czech *intelligentsia* is warned that it must "bend or break"; that its leaders from 1848 to 1939 had led the nation on a false trail which must be abandoned for ever, that all theories of Slav brotherhood are the merest "fiction"; and that "we" (the tiny group of Quislingites) "want a new leading class." The notorious Colonel Moravec has published a small book entitled *Events and Errors*, the main argument of which is that the Old Europe was "a mere British colony," that this is "a truly Jewish war," and that half "the London scum" (an endearing epithet for the exiled Government) are of Jewish or foreign descent. (He is, of course, perfectly aware that, as regards the members of the Czechoslovak Government, this is up to 100 per cent. untrue.) Germany's programme alone can save Europe from ruin and misery; and local patriotism will then be replaced by continental. It is more than probable that Moravec is playing for the place of the Bohemian Quisling, now that Heydrich's drastic action has deprived the puppet Government of such sorry shreds of prestige as they might be argued to have preserved.

In authoritative Czech circles in London it is considered that Hácha and his Cabinet belong to the past and no longer even perform the painful function of a buffer. It is but fair to add that the abject pronouncements (see *Summary* No. 110) issued in their name were intended by them as a last desperate attempt to stop the executions: and even this has failed, since every day brings fresh victims. A fresh instance of bad psychology on the part of the Germans is the fact that the texts of the statements of the President and the Cabinet were written in such bad Czech that every reader, as he read them, realised that they had originally been composed in German and laid before their "authors" for signature.

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