

TWILIGHT OF THE SWASTIKA FEELING IN THE BALKANS

by European Correspondents

In all the satellite states of the Balkans war weariness is assuming an increasingly anti-National Socialist complexion. The Swastika, which for many years was worn as a challenge by numerous Fascists there, is gradually disappearing from public view. The adherents of the Swastika who up to the end of 1942 occupied the key positions in the ministries of the various Balkan States, have either disappeared from the scene or are trying to find a back door to the national parties of the right. This disowning of the Swastika is perhaps even more significant of the end of Hitler's rule in Europe than the palpable dissatisfaction of the people at seeing their men driven to the slaughter for the sake of Germany.

We give below a few typical incidents that will serve to illustrate this development in the Balkans.

Hungary

Public opinion in Hungary unanimously condemned Ciano's execution. Funeral orations were pronounced at public meetings and long obituary notices were published in all the papers. Ciano was spoken of with gratitude as Hungary's friend, and it was recalled that at the time of the Vienna Award he had helped Hungary to acquire part of Transylvania. Incidentally, of course, attacks on Rumania were not lacking, but strong reprobation was also expressed of the neo-Fascist and National Socialist party which was responsible for "the murder of Ciano."

Bulgaria

At the end of January, 1944, Swedish papers reported that mutinies and demonstrations against the German troops had occurred in numerous Bulgarian garrisons which the Bulgarian Government was barely able to suppress. A letter from two members of the Sobranje, Kimon Georgiev and Ivan Bagrianov, addressed to the Bulgarian Prime Minister Bozhilov has attracted a good deal of attention. It contained the following demands:

- (1) The Bulgarian Government must withdraw its troops from all territories not inhabited by Bulgarians or recognized as part of Bulgaria.
- (2) Existing relations with the Soviet Union must be improved and strengthened.
- (3) A treaty of friendship should be concluded with Turkey.
- (4) The Bulgarian Government must be established on a broader basis by the addition of representatives of the Centre and the Left.

In his speech to the Sobranje on January 25, 1944, Bozhilov, the Prime Minister declared in reply to the first of these demands, that Bulgaria laid no claim to any non-Bulgarian territory that had not a Bulgarian majority.

Rumania

In Rumania open panic reigns. The nationalist papers are trying in vain to stem this panic by soothing statements. They try to make a joke of the Rumanian's fears by describing

how the majority of the thinking population is beset by a new disease, "mapitis." They spend the whole day bending over maps, studying the front lines and measuring the distances from the Russian frontier.

The majority of the Rumanian officials in Transnistria have already been withdrawn to Bucharest. The flood of refugees from the Eastern territories that are in imminent danger is adding to the panic of the population of the hinterland, who feel retaliation approaching for the attack on Russia and the declaration of war on the Allies, in spite of the reassuring explanations of the German General Staff.—The fact that the Rumanian Government have recently been making a clumsy attempt to relax the anti-Semitic laws and even to restore Jewish officers and non-commissioned officers to their original rank is worth recording.

Serbia

George Sbarcea, a Rumanian journalist, has recently published a very illuminating account of conditions in Serbia. He relates, for instance, that a large poster on the walls of the Belgrade railway station bears the words in German: "Don't get angry, don't wonder, and even if you think it's a bad habit!" He further says that one would not know Belgrade again. The people are only half clad. In spite of the bitter cold they often only wear sandals and many go barefoot. Black coffee is mainly hot water without sugar. Nobody listens to the propaganda broadcasts. The Rumanian journalist's account closes with the words: "In Belgrade, when people return at night to their homes, from which a piece of furniture, an ornament or a picture disappears every day, they are obsessed by the one thought—what next? Perhaps something will happen tomorrow or the next day, or the day after that—anything that will make an end of the war, the misery and the hardships."

20TH CENTURY-FOX TOLD "LIFEBOAT" DISAPPOINTING

New York—Continuing its campaign for better roles for Negroes in the film industry by giving careful scrutiny to new movies, the NAACP has advised 20th Century-Fox Film Corporation that the role given Canada Lee in "Lifeboat" is "disappointing."

A report on "Lifeboat" was made by Donald Jones, of the NAACP staff who saw a preview arranged by the New York office of the producer. Jones, in his report to his office said the role of Joe Spencer "is strikingly non-essential. "Lifeboat" could have been just as powerful if there had been no Joe Spencer. He was referred to as 'Charcoal and George.' The role is a sop, a weak gesture."

The NAACP letter to the producer declared: "It is our hope that "Lifeboat" does not represent what 20th Century-Fox Films feel is a proper opportunity for Negro actors in the films and that future release will show a marked change in treatment."

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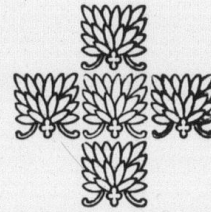


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