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For week ending 25 July 1950

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WESTERN EUROPE DIVISION

WEEKLY SUMMARY

VOL. VII - No. 4

For week ending
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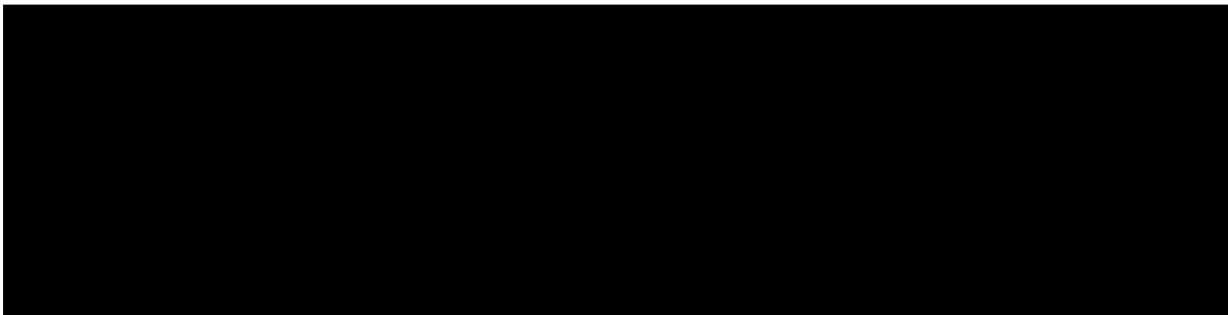
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FRANCE

B The Korean situation has made France see the necessity for greater efforts on its part in the defense of western Europe; it will also lead to increased French demands for prompt and substantial US aid. The French are beginning to draw a lesson from the inability of the US to stem the North Korean aggression promptly, and French military leaders now believe that the immediate training of a large French army is imperative. The new attitude appears in the Assembly's approval of Premier Pleven's proposal to increase the 1951 military budget by 80 billion francs. The military consider Pleven's proposal as only a small part of the new expenditures France will have to make for defense. There are reports that some officials favor extending compulsory military service from one year to two. Such a move would put a severe strain on the economy, so there have been suggestions that the US double the MDAP grant for 1951 over the amount for 1950. Despite US assurances, however, many Frenchmen are not convinced that arms shipments to western Europe will continue as scheduled; they believe that the MDAP is already lagging. These suspicions will increase French efforts to obtain US aid.

FRENCH AND SPANISH NORTH AND WEST AFRICA

A By the end of June, the Stockholm peace petition was well on the way to becoming the most successful propaganda device that the Communists have used in French North Africa in many months. Not only have a considerable number of Europeans been taken in, but even some outstanding native nationalists are finding the peace appeal irresistible and are thus being maneuvered into helping the Communists drive an entering wedge into the nationalist movement.

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S E C R E T

Farhat Hached, President of the Tunisian nationalist labor union, while at the Budapest meeting of the Communist-dominated World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU), joined in a declaration with Hassen Sadaoui, President of the Tunisian Communist Union, calling on all the union members of Tunisia to sign the peace petition. Hached has since given evidence of breaking with the WFTU, but has not disassociated himself from the petition.

In Algeria, Ferhat Abbas, leader of the nationalist party, Democratic Union of the Algerian Manifesto (UDMA), has signed the Stockholm petition, despite the fact that he is himself anti-Communist and the UDMA newspaper only a few weeks ago was denouncing the Algerian Communists in a series of scathing editorials.

Only in French Morocco, where the Istiqlal (nationalist) Party has recently taken a militant stand against Communism, has the petition failed so far to obtain the signature of any top nationalist leader. A good many of the lower-ranking Istiqlal members have signed, however, and Allal el Fassi, head of the Istiqlal, has admitted privately that it is "difficult to declare oneself against 'peace'" and has suggested that the US should provide a line of positive propaganda to fight this movement.

Meanwhile, all Communist papers are giving the campaign first priority and are beginning to identify the struggle for "peace" with native aspirations for independence, asserting that only by being independent can North Africa escape the horrors of another war.

B Communism will suffer a serious tactical defeat in Tunisia if the nationalist General Union of Tunisian Workers (UGTT) withdraws from the Communist-dominated World Federation of Trade Unions, as now appears likely. The WFTU affiliation of the UGTT, the most powerful labor union in Tunisia, has enabled the Tunisian Communist Party to exercise influence out of proportion to its actual strength.

A recent article in Mission, the Neo-Destour (nationalist party) organ, presumably written by Farhat Hached, President of the UGTT, is sharply critical of the WFTU, charging it particularly with being led away from the international trade union ideal by a "partisan spirit which continually grows stronger." The article also cryptically announced the calling of a special session of the National Council of the UGTT. The special session is expected to be followed by a vigorous editorial campaign amplifying the UGTT's complaints against the WFTU.

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The UGTT has been thought for some time to be out of sympathy with the WFTU's Communist orientation, and to be retaining its membership only for opportunistic reasons. The timing of the open attack was surprising, however, as Farhat Hached had just returned--in the company of Hassen Sadaoui, President of the Communist labor union in Tunisia--from a meeting of the Executive Committee of the WFTU at Budapest.

Apparently taken aback by Hached's article, Sadaoui, in a rather weak rebuttal, pointed out that all resolutions adopted by the Executive Committee had been by unanimous vote, including the vote of Hached.

B

Overwhelming nationalist antagonism to the French reform program for Tunisia is foreshadowed by the revival of the moribund Old Destour (Constitutional Liberal) Party in opposition to the policies of Habib Bourghiba, Neo-Destour leader. Bourghiba has publicly supported and tried to assume credit for the reform program, which provides for a gradually increasing participation of Tunisians in the government of the country, but leaves ultimate French control substantially undiminished.

Salah Farhat, Secretary General of the Executive Committee of the Old Destour, has accused Bourghiba of compromising Tunisian sovereignty and renouncing Tunisian demands for independence. The seven-point statement of aims recently announced by Bourghiba, though calling for more local self-government, implicitly accepted the continuance of French hegemony and the concept of the French Union.

The growing isolation of Bourghiba from the main stream of nationalist opinion may eventually result in his displacement as head of the Neo-Destour Party. For the time being, his activities are producing confusion in the ranks of Tunisian nationalists, as well as a dramatic reversal of the relative positions of the two nationalist parties. The Old Destour, which lost most of its strength several years ago because of its conservatism, now finds itself, as the upholder of demands for complete independence, in a more radical posture than the new party.

Outside of Tunisia, most North African nationalist comment has been critical of Bourghiba for negotiating with the French on any terms short of independence.

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ITALY

B

Premier De Gasperi's appeal for national unity in view of the grave international situation will check the trend toward the formation of a single-party (Christian Democratic) Government. Should, however, Romita's Unitary Socialist Party (PSU) be brought into the Cabinet, there might be an appreciable weakening of Italy's support for the NATO. At the same time, the presence of the Liberals and Monarchists in the Government would further delay action on needed socio-economic reforms and thereby impair the popular position of the government.

In a recent speech to the Christian Democratic Party directorate, De Gasperi stressed the need for a campaign of national solidarity to protect the nation's peace, independence, and security. He also urged the directorate to invite those parties outside the Government which support its pro-Western policy to participate in this campaign. With the higher degree of discipline now in the Christian Democratic Party, De Gasperi's plea will undoubtedly restrain for the time being various elements within the Party--particularly Dossetti's militantly reformist left-wing group--from pushing further their demands that the Party assume sole responsibility in the Government.

If, however, the Prime Minister sought to bring Romita's PSU, the Liberals, and the Monarchists into the Government, he would run into considerable difficulties. The PSU has repeatedly declared itself opposed to the Government as constituted, and would probably take an even firmer position if the Liberals and Monarchists were to be given Cabinet posts. Furthermore, it would require all of De Gasperi's adroitness to bring all three parties into the Government without weakening Italy's adherence to the NATO. A harmonious participation of these three parties in the Government would tend to offset the loss in prestige which the Government would be bound to suffer when it shifted its attention from socio-economic reform to national defense.

A

Should international tension continue to grow and World War III appear imminent, the Italian Government will be faced with the difficult task of timing and effecting the dissolution of the Communist Party (PCI). To outlaw the party at this time would unnecessarily increase popular reactions favoring the PCI. On the other hand, to delay such action until

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the outbreak of war, would confront the Government with the full Communist problem simultaneously with the problems of mobilization and military operations, and would seriously disrupt any Italian war effort.

As a consequence of Korean developments, even moderate elements have joined the political Right to demand that the PCI be outlawed. The Communists, consequently, have been careful to moderate their activity and statements so as not to encourage public support for such demands. The Government, for its part, has expressed the intention of dealing with any "fifth column" or subversive efforts within existing laws; at the same time the Government has been making preliminary moves toward the formation of a national front which would include all political elements save the extreme Left and Right (see article above).

Nevertheless, should the international situation continue to deteriorate, the outlawing of the PCI would become virtually a political and military necessity. With this eventuality in mind, the Minister of Interior has reportedly ordered the Rome Chief of Police to prepare secretly the documentation of Communist criminal actions against the Government preparatory to the presentation of charges to the judicial authorities. At the same time, Cabinet approval has been given to strengthening the Carabinieri.

It is probable that, in the event of dissolution, the PCI would not react with an all-out insurrectionary effort, preferring not to expose its paramilitary and underground organizations until Soviet military operations had begun, or were about to begin. Nevertheless, there would be widespread civil disturbances and violence, which the police, with some assistance from the army, would be able to contain.

The PCI leaders would probably attempt to escape to a Satellite state (possibly Albania) and conduct clandestine operations from there. The masses of the PCI would probably be ordered to join and support Nenni's left-wing Socialist Party (PSI), which the Italian Government might find impossible to dissolve as a whole.

It is likely that the dissolution of the PCI would improve Italy's internal security in case of war; nonetheless, the Communists and their sympathizers would still be able to hamper Italian war efforts considerably.

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