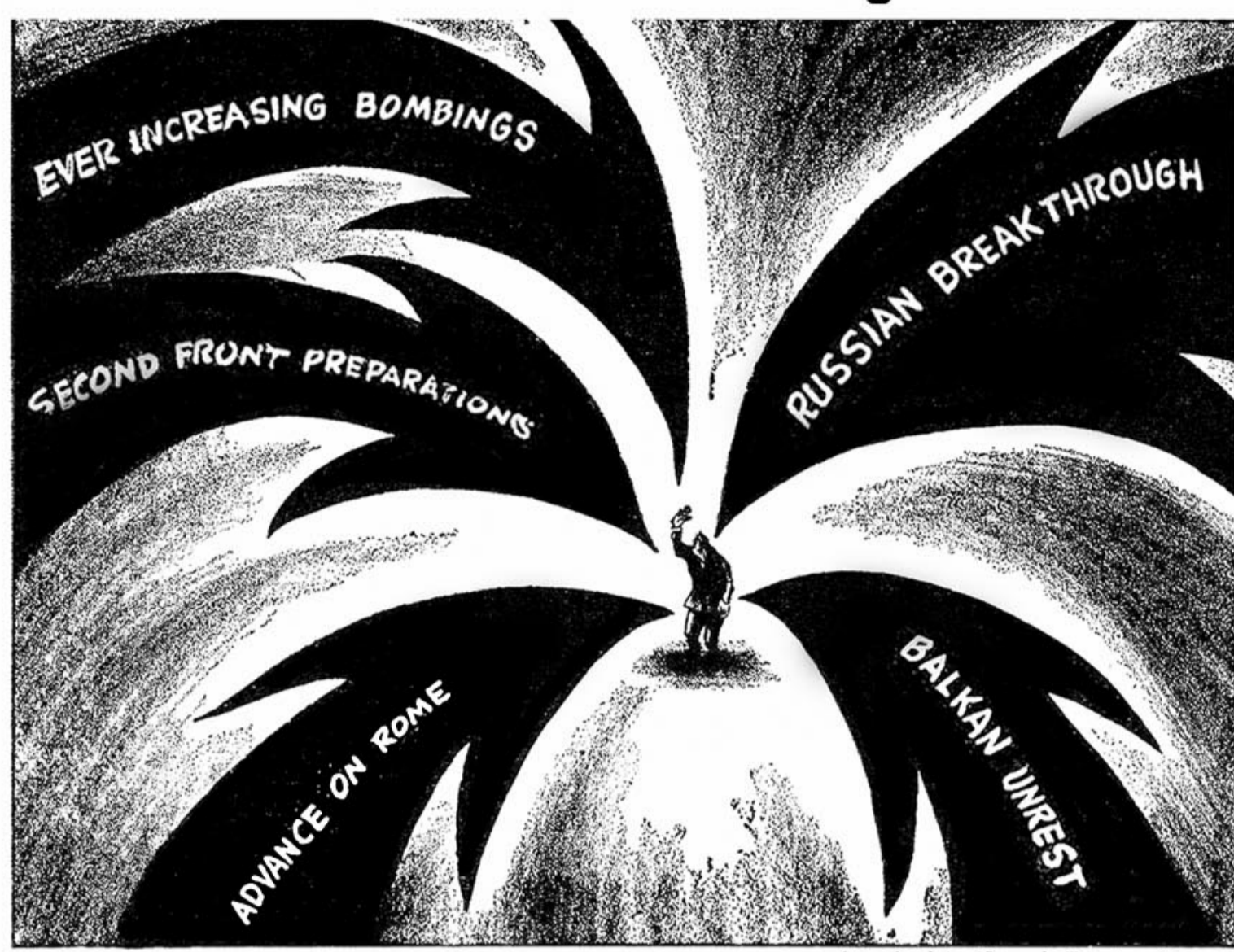


GERMANY'S CRACK-UP GROWING SIGNS OF DOWNFALL

Increasing Impact of Bombing, Russian Setback and Naval Losses

Task of Allies in breaking home-front morale and the will of Nazis to fight



—Crawford in Newark Evening News

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Germany is on the verge of a crack-up. Officials say that at times her collapse has seemed only weeks away. Until lately, American military authorities have been convinced that such a collapse might end the European war in February.

Suddenly, therefore, a new light is turned on the Allies' job of winning this war. True, the Germans have weathered immediate danger of collapse, and, as a result, officials now regard next month as too soon to expect the war to be ended. Nevertheless, Germany is revealed as hovering on the brink of disaster. The Allies' task is to push her over that brink. Here is the outward aspect of Germany's crisis:

On the land, her eastern front is split by the Russian armies. Those armies are driving into Poland and are threatening to trap large Nazi forces in the Ukraine and in the Crimea. Germany is facing possibilities of a military disaster.

On the sea, her surface fleet is smashed and her submarines are beaten.

In the air, she is losing, and America's all-out bombing offensive under Lieut. Gen. Carl Spaatz and Britain's heaviest offensive still are to come.

Thus, on its face, Germany's situation is desperate. She is encircled by powerful nations that are allied against her. Her chance of creating dissension to split those allies is gone. She is being beaten on every front and in every phase of the fighting. Her last chance to win has disappeared.

Yet, in spite of everything, Germany goes on fighting, in the hope apparently of a lucky break that might salvage something from defeat. The Allies have won every recent battle except one. They have not yet broken Germany's will to fight. To break that will is the Allies' real problem of winning this war.

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As the time for the invasion draws near, Russian armies press into Poland, and American and British forces advance in Italy and get set in England . . . the

Nazi defense ring will be reached, cracked . . . then the Allies will fight on whatever the cost until Germany surrenders in its ring of defeat.



Military men say that winter is the time to create despair that precedes surrender. Then, when civilians and soldiers are cold and in most need of food and shelter, the sufferings of war are most likely to paralyze the will and to turn courage into weakness. For those who are bold, winter can be a spur to mutiny and revolution. Officials recognize that, if Germany can hold out through the winter, she might fight on through months of great battles after warmer weather revives her strength in the spring.

American military heads have been convinced of the chance that Germany might be forced to stop fighting this winter. They have believed that reverse might be piled on reverse until Germany's will to fight would break under the strain. The war then might end in February or March. Here are blows that might be heaped on Germany in the weeks ahead:

Turkey might come into the war on the Allied side.

Rumania and Bulgaria might swing to the Allies from the Axis. Only the German Army and the Gestapo have been holding them in line.

Germany's whole Balkan front might collapse under pressure from Russia, Turkey and Allied forces in the Middle East.

A Russian winter offensive in the North might drive the Baltic countries out of the war, isolate Finland, cut off the Scandinavian Peninsula and tighten the encirclement of Germany. All these things might combine to demonstrate to the German people that it is hopeless for them to continue to fight.

A special reason for official conviction that a German collapse is possible in the weeks ahead is the bombing offensive, present and prospective. There is a home-front side and a military-front side to the bombing story.

Bombing and the home front. In the dead of winter, bombing, such as that now going on in Germany, strains the home front to the limit. Already the stoicism of the German people under bombing has been put to an unprecedented test. The

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Germans have stood much more than the British, whose stubborn courage in the blitz of 1940-41 aroused admiration of the world.

The Allied air offensive promises to exceed Germany's bombing of England many times over, and in fact has doubled it in the past year alone. The British smashed the German air offensive between autumn and spring, and quickly began retaliating with growing blows, whereas Germany's attack has dwindled and her power to strike back effectively seems gone. Germany's bombing of England last year was equal in weight of bombs to about one British smash at Berlin or Hanover. The British alone lately have been dropping 100 tons of bombs on Germany for every ton dropped on England.

The Allies' target is Germany's war spirit and many of her people already are unnerved by bombing. Berlin is only one of more than two score cities that have been attacked. The Allies' combined air forces now can knock out a small or medium-sized city in a couple of attacks.

Great numbers of homes have been leveled, still greater numbers have been blown out, and armies of people have been made jobless. Hitler's promise to build, or to rebuild, 2,000,000 to 3,000,000 homes in a year after the war tells much of the true situation inside Germany. Jobless and homeless people, packed in makeshift shelters, bomb shocked, sleepless, afraid and cold, with many ill from poor food and polluted drinking water, must long for peace. News from the front spurs such longings.

Germany's mounting losses. Word of huge losses of life, especially in the fighting in Russia, seems to have inflicted a hurt to Germany's spirits equal to that caused by bombings. Germany's losses in all fighting in the entire war now are estimated as high as 6,000,000 men. Because of those losses, Hitler now is taking 16-year-old boys with only six weeks of training instead of the usual 20 months'.

The fact that the German home front can expect no relief from bombings, or from life losses, helps convince officials that a winter collapse is possible. But to make that possibility come true, officials say it is most important that no lift be provided for the German hopes by dissension or slackening of war efforts in the Allied countries. That is the background of the concern expressed by high military authorities over recent encouragement they feel has been given to the Germans by American labor troubles. The Allies now are getting set for the next move if Germany's home front holds out.

The alternative—invasion. In America, in England, in Italy and in the Middle East, the preparations now are in full

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swing for the biggest action of this war, which will come unless the German home front collapses before spring. That action is to be invasion of Western Europe, and probably of new parts of Southern Europe.

The land invasions that now are getting set will bring the Allies into a head-on collision with a considerable part of the German Army. Forced landings by large bodies of troops will be required. The Germans are so thoroughly entrenched along the invasion coast, the beaches are so well covered and the hinterlands are so fortified that at times the Nazis have seemed to be virtually inviting an Allied invasion so as to be able to smash it. The Allied leaders know from experience at Dieppe and Salerno and Tarawa that landings under fire are very costly in casualties. Those leaders must reckon with the German Army.

The German Army. In spite of defeats in Africa, Italy and Russia, the German Army still is an extremely formidable fighting machine. The German soldier has proved himself an excellent defensive fighter. American officials are convinced that the German troops in the main will go right on fighting until they are ordered to stop. The best chance of a crack-up is not in the German lines, but behind them.

If the western-front invasion is launched in April or May, the summer and autumn may be required to force a deep penetration into Nazi Europe. The longer the invasion lasts, the greater the forces that are likely to be amassed. The closing phases may find an Allied army of more than 1,000,000 men fighting all the troops that Germany can spare from the eastern and southern fronts. That now is indicated to be possibly 44 combat divisions, or about 660,000 men. The Allies remember that, in the final months of the first World War, battle casualties were running at 6,000 killed a week, including heavy losses among American units engaged.

Before the showdown, the Allied bombing offensive will strive to cripple Germany's power to arm and to move her Army. The Allied air forces will try to smash German air power, so as to expose completely both the German home front and the German Army to air attack.

But, at best, the costs of an invasion and of land campaigns lasting until autumn or winter are expected to come high. That is the reason why American military leaders have been playing for a German home-front collapse in February.

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