

all made speeches. Mussolini also announced an amnesty for political offenders, remitting sentences up to three years' imprisonment, and a further amnesty for the military offence of evading the call-up for military service or compulsory labour—on condition that those concerned reported for service within eight days.

Celebrations took place, according to the Fascist radio, "in all towns and villages of Republican Italy," but the high light was put on Milan, the main town of the industrial north, where discontent and unrest owing to removal of machinery and workers to Germany have reached a high pitch, further aggravated by recent Allied raids. Mussolini visited the town during the day, and Pavolini, the Party Secretary, made a full-dress speech in which, after a glorification of Fascism, which he described as "a profounder and more vital reality than ever," he touched on some of the most outstanding causes of discontent. He assured his audience that "in the event of 'X'" (presumably meaning a forced evacuation towards the north) the Germans had no intention of destroying plant or factories. He also spoke of the danger of inflation, which would only be aggravated by a demand for higher wages. As to the true purport of the amnesty granted that day he was surprisingly outspoken, saying: "We Fascists have no particular love of amnesties. In fact, we have merely sanctioned—finally fixing a limit of eight days—that distinction between the wanderer who returns and takes his place at work again, and the infamous canaille of the bandits, to whom only bullets can speak."

Casualty figures for the Fascist Republican Army from January to August 1944 have recently been published in the Turin *Gazzetta del Popolo*. These are: killed—officers 122, n.c.o.'s 177, men 450; wounded—officers 59, n.c.o.'s 93, men 450; missing—officers 24, n.c.o.'s 55, men 379. While there is no check on the reliability of these figures, they go far to belie Republican Fascist propaganda, which in the past has tried to make the most of the alleged revivification of the Fascist Republican Army and of the part played by it side by side with the German forces.

#### THE VATICAN.

The European Division of the World Jewish Congress has asked the Pope to make a public appeal for the Jews now threatened in Hungary.

Months ago the Argentine Government wished to give food and medical supplies to the Vatican, and Franco offered to ship them. The scheme was held up for military reasons. Now that the war has moved far enough to the north, however, the Vatican is to receive the 4,000 tons of goods which they need for their works of charity.

*War and the Working Class* has called the Pope "Franco's godfather," a soubriquet which the Spanish wireless treats as a compliment. The *Catholic Herald* of the 27th October described the scene in these words: "Another anti-Pope outburst from Moscow this week is linked this time with snarls at Franco," and goes on to attack "some 4,000 Spanish thugs, ex-Red civil war fighters who have sheltered in Southern France." The current number of the United States magazine *Catholic World* maintains a similar theme, more outspokenly. Its editorial opens thus: "The greatest potential menace to permanent peace is Soviet Russia. Fascism is not and never was as dangerous as communism." In contrast the Vatican Wireless in Spanish defined the Holy See's attitude in this war as impartial but not neutral or indifferent, unable to take sides, or to intervene, since intervention is unfruitful if whole peoples do not accept Catholic discipline, bound by the Lateran Treaty to wait until both sides appeal to it. The Pope defends the principle of justice gives warning of the presence of sin, but remains the Father of all.

#### SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPE.

##### Hungary.

On the northern sector of the new front in Hungary, Soviet troops, advancing from the Upper Tisza, took successively Mukačevo, Užhorad and Čop, thus cutting off and remaining Hungarian and German forces in Ruthenia. By capturing Szatmár-Neméti they also cleared the enemy from the whole area east of the Trianon frontier with Roumania. Further south the fighting was stubborn. German communiqués claimed to have recaptured Nyiregyháza and to have encircled and destroyed Soviet formations which had advanced west of Szolnok. On the 30th October, however, the opening of a general offensive from the south-east was announced.

Budapest was raided heavily on the night of the 26th/27th October.

Szálasi and other members of his Government have exchanged telegrams of greeting with Hitler, Göring and Ribbentrop, promising them Hungary's loyal support to the last. Hitler in reply promised that "the German Reich would never leave Hungary in the lurch," and Ribbentrop promised her the most far-reaching support from himself and from the German Government.

The Lower House is to meet on the 2nd November. A series of sessions is to be held to decide, *inter alia*, the question of the Regency.

The Szálasi Government still seems uncertain as to the strength of its hold on the country, and the calling-up of several age groups in Budapest, including reserve officers up to their 48th year and men up to their 42nd, was cancelled and those already called up were actually sent back. Some curfew, &c., restrictions were, however, relaxed. Otherwise the Government has hardly passed the stage of announcing intentions, which include many measures of nationalisation. Only the Jews, male and female, have been mobilised to dig trenches, &c. There appear to have been many massacres and excesses, especially on the night of the 15th October; but the Government has agreed to allow Jews with protective passes to leave Hungary. Members of the German-speaking minority in Hungary are being evacuated to Germany as the front approaches their homes, mainly in Southern Hungary.

The bread ration has been reduced to 200 grammes per day.

##### Roumania.

During the week the political atmosphere has lightened. Nothing more has been heard of a transport strike, but in a manifesto accusing the Government of every sort of misconduct, a bid is made for Soviet support. *Universul* has been allowed to reappear, and there is at least a chance that a Government representative of all parties may be formed.

The press attachés at Helsingfors and Stockholm have been recalled in circumstances which suggest that the press department is to be subjected to a thorough overhaul.

The number of alleged war criminals under arrest increases. 1,356 Legionaries have been arrested in addition to 722 who are under accusation and are "now being purged in various prisons."

The Orthodox bishops of Transylvania have replied to a message from the Acting Patriarch of the Russian Orthodox Church. In this lengthy document, after recalling that the "Roumanian soldiers are fighting side by side with the brave soldiers of the U.S.S.R. to expel Germans and Hungarians from the ancient soil of Roumania," the authors give a sketch of the relations between the Churches of Russia and Transylvania in the past, and proceed to enlarge on the Hungarian atrocities committed after the Vienna Award. Like most propaganda it goes a little too far, and asserts that "young Roumanians were put into yoke to draw the plough."

The same mistake is made in another propaganda document, the articles on "Pathways of Victory" recently published in *Pravda*. The declared purpose of a good deal of this is to warn Soviet citizens whose duty takes them to Roumania not to be misled by the outward appearances of a colourful, joyous and carefree life, which is in reality far inferior to the solidity and worth of life in the Soviets. Some of the accounts of life in Roumania ring true, but the statement that a restaurant-keeper was "ashamed when he had to" serve Crimean wine will only provoke smiles from those who know that wine of all commodities is the one that Roumania has the least need to obtain from abroad, either by looting or in any other way.

Prospects of food shortage are debated but do not materialise. Meat, either fresh or tinned, can be obtained in Bucharest every day of the week except Wednesday. Visitors to Craiova and Braşov report that supplies there are plentiful. There is a shortage of wood for fuel, but oil stoves and fuel are to be had in place of wood.

Roumanian territory is now clear of the enemy, but just as in the war with Russia when the Dneister was reached, the Roumanian army proceeded to advance and occupy the country beyond it, so now the Roumanians continue to march into Hungary side by side with the Russians, no doubt justifying this by a convenient interpretation of one of the clauses of the Armistice agreement.

##### Yugoslavia.

With the partisan's occupation of Shabac all north-west Serbia appears to be cleared of the Germans. Kragujevac has been captured by Soviet and partisan forces; and the Germans are fighting hard to keep open their two lines of retreat