

the people of France to implement the Loi Tréveneuc as proof of their will to re-establish Republican legitimacy. General de Gaulle insisted that the new Central Power should be in the last resort responsible, for it was not advisable that the French Military Commander should be finally responsible for public order in French territory to a foreign Command or Government. He further proposed that a National Consultative Council, composed of all available representatives of French public bodies, should be set up as an organ of French opinion. Though he still insisted on the venue at Algiers, he again undertook to ensure that Fighting Frenchmen there should abstain from any "unsuitable" demonstration when the meeting between General Giraud and himself finally took place there.

SPAIN AND PORTUGAL.

The high-light of General Franco's speech-making tour of Andalusia was his renewal, at Almeria on the 9th May, of Count Jordana's recent plea for a compromise peace. His opinion that the war had reached a dead-end, and that none of the belligerents had strength to destroy the other, was perhaps unfortunately timed in view of the Axis collapse in Tunisia three days later. The evidence indicates that the collapse is emboldening the critics to a greater outspokenness than ever. To Spaniards with memories there is a familiar ring about General Franco's latest appeals for unity, the very iteration of which is eloquent of how little such unity exists. Sir S. Hoare has recently been able to observe how in Valencia, where he found a deeper division between public opinion and the Government than in any other of the great cities of Spain, the revolutionary feeling is as strong as ever. In Seville a proposed big official reception to the Caudillo had to be dropped when it became clear that many important people were unlikely to attend. The Papal Nuncio, who spoke openly to Sir S. Hoare of the Vatican's continuing grounds for dissatisfaction with the régime, feared the possibility of another civil war, since he doubted whether a sufficiently resolute lead was available to make a monarchical restoration successful. The two best political brains behind the movement for a restoration were, in his view, Sr. Ventosa and Sr. Gil Robles.

This being the political atmosphere at home, the report from Argentina—where, practically alone among the Latin American nations, Falangist Spain has enjoyed some measure of sympathy—that General Franco's plea for mediation had been received with scorn by all the leading papers must have struck a note of particular disillusionment (see "Latin America"). But General Franco must now be becoming increasingly conscious that, in his attempts to rally the nation around him and the Falange, he is battling on a very sticky wicket. The new Minister for Justice, speaking to the same theme of unity in Lérida on the 13th May, drew attention to one weighty preoccupation in his reference to General Franco as "the legitimate Caudillo," for the fact that the present headship of the State has no constitutional basis can clearly be used as a weapon against the régime. Count Jordana, for his part, is an undisguised Monarchist, who is stated to be no longer seeing eye to eye with General Franco, and to resent the latter's public incursions into the field of foreign affairs. The Vatican may well resent Count Jordana's own such recent incursion in Barcelona when, without authorisation, he linked the Vatican's name with that of Spain in putting out his tentative peace-feeler. General Franco again coupled the two in his Almeria speech. Opposition to Count Jordana within the Cabinet is becoming very active and is such, according to reports received by His Majesty's Ambassador, as to make it very necessary, if he is to retain his position, that the British and United States Governments should, if possible, present him with a success in the matter of aviation spirit (see *Summary* No. 187).

The Spanish Government has recognised a new Vichy representative at Tangier, with jurisdiction over matters affecting Metropolitan France. M. Giraud's representative continues in possession of the French consular residence, with jurisdiction over French North African interests. His Majesty's Consul-General in Tangier maintains the fight for the defence of British rights: the latest such right to be called in question is that of British subjects not to be punished for offences save in the form prescribed by the Mixed Court. The incident is one more aspect of the determined attempt being made by the Spanish Administration, particularly since the Allied landings in North Africa in November 1942, so to entrench itself in the zone that the end of the war may make difficult, if not impossible, any reversion to the former international status.

The Axis collapse in Tunisia has from this point of view proved a disturbing development to Spanish officials. It has perturbed the Italians in Tangier even more, and the Germans most of all. Germany, evicted from the zone in 1914 and deprived of her rights there by the Versailles Treaty, only recovered official representation in 1941, following the occupation by Spain, and Germans are reported to be fearing now an Allied demand on Spain for their expulsion anew from the zone.

The Axis has continued to play on ideological and other fears in the peninsula. While both the German and the Italian Ambassadors in Madrid have sounded their Portuguese colleague there on the alleged threat of an impending Allied invasion of the peninsula and on the fear of communism following Allied victory, Count Jordana has spoken of the "great nervousness" felt in Spain over the possibility of such invasion. A renewed assurance that we, unlike the Germans, did not break our word was gratefully received.

Meanwhile in Lisbon the Roumanian Minister is believed to have already presented to Dr. Salazar a note proposing on behalf of his Government the formation of a Latin Catholic bloc, though with no mention of the suggestion reported in last week's *Summary* of using this new channel for purposes of mediation in the war. Dr. Salazar is stated to have promised careful study of the proposal, and to have suggested as a fitting purpose of such a bloc the combating of the Communist peril.

The recent publication of a Portuguese company's balance sheet and report—that of the Cia. Portuense de Ferragens for 1942—in the *Diário do Governo* has focussed an unexpected spotlight on the economic discontent now rampant in Portugal. The report of the company's "conselho fiscal" was in fact a fearless indictment of the Government's whole economic policy and attitude, and its appearance over an official imprint created something of a sensation. As a consequence, the board of directors and other officials of the company have been imprisoned and its offices closed, while the offending issue of the *Diário do Governo* has been cancelled. The incident pays tribute to the increasing boldness and organisation of opposition elements.

ITALY.

Although the total loss of Tunisia had been foreseen by the Italian people, yet the suddenness of the final collapse and the enormous proportions of the catastrophe that befell the Axis armies have plunged Italy into the depths of consternation. The propagandists have, therefore, been called upon to continue and even to increase the doses of their soothing syrup. The overwhelming superiority of the enemy in men and material was progressively magnified. Emphasis was laid upon the Italian First Army having been the last of the Axis forces to surrender and having ceased fire only on Mussolini's orders. The significance of this gesture was explained as meaning that it symbolised the certainty that Italy would return to Africa. The same considerations probably contributed to King Victor Emmanuel's decision to promote General Messe to the rank of marshal, though this decision, it may be conjectured, was partly prompted by Mussolini's desire to have a cut at Hitler, some of whose henchmen had had the effrontery to speak as though the Axis defeat were entirely an Italian disaster. Mussolini, according to the somewhat curiously worded German *communiqué*, had played a prominent part in procuring the recall of the ailing Rommel. The supreme command of the Axis forces had then devolved upon von Arnim and not upon Messe, who, it will be remembered, claimed to have defeated the British Eighth Army on the Mareth line and disputed the wisdom of the order for his withdrawal. At any rate it has been Messe and not von Arnim who has received the same consolation prize as was bestowed upon Paulus at Stalingrad. There was a momentary attempt to depict all the talk about an Allied invasion of Europe as mere propaganda bluff, intended largely to check Russia's uncomfortably insistent clamour for the opening of a second front. When this line of propaganda became untenable it began to be suggested that the Allied victory in Tunisia would not facilitate a landing in Europe. The Allies would have to reorganise their forces for an entirely new enterprise which had nothing in common with desert warfare. Their special training and equipment would be valueless in the new phase of the war now about to open.

Some of the specious statements put out were even more grossly misleading. The great emphasis laid upon the value of the six months' reprieve won through the Axis forces having stemmed the original thrust of General Anderson's men has