

Vienna and leading SS-man, while on a working party in a Vienna street. A revealing statement by the Minister of the Interior on the escape announced that a number of police officials had now been dismissed, that the practice of employing lesser Nazis to guard leading Nazis was now to cease, and that leading Nazis would no longer be employed on work in the streets. From all accounts it would appear that the extent of manual labour done by Richter and his associates was more nominal than actual, and the comment of the official Austrian press agency that the ban on their future employment on such work would mean "a serious blow to the programme of rebuilding in Vienna" has evoked a good deal of satire in the Austrian press.

The Socialist nominee, Herr Wedenig, was elected Provincial Governor of Carinthia on the 25th April, with the Communist and People's Party members abstaining from voting. Herr Wedenig, who is of Slovene origin, has reiterated the firm intention of the Carinthian Government to preserve Austria's 1937 frontiers.

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

The Tiso trial has not, after all, been without its repercussions upon the Slovak political scene. Although the verdict pronounced against the former President of the former President of the Slovak Independent State is generally regarded as just, yet the abiding sympathy so frequently expressed on his behalf by many Slovak Democrats almost led to a crisis in the leadership of that Party. It would be a mistake, however, to suppose that the mere possibility of such a breach was due in the first place to the Tiso affair itself: political differences within the ranks of the Democrat Party have their origins in much deeper roots. There is, for example, the religious conflict between the Protestant and Catholic denominations and, as its logical off-shoot, the long-standing political rivalry between the Slovak separatists, who are mainly Catholics, and the "Czechoslovak-minded" Slovaks, who are chiefly Protestants.

The immediate reason for the threatened crisis was the attitude of the Catholic Right-wing group of the party towards various questions connected with the trial. This group is led by Canon Cvinček who, shortly before the general elections were held in May, 1946, attempted to establish a new party from among the dissatisfied Catholic elements. This dissident group

has now criticised the failure of the Commissariat for Justice (which is supervised by the Slovak Democrat, Dr. Ivan Štefánik) to secure a reprieve for the ex-President and has disapproved of Dr. Lettrich's absence (he is the Chairman of the Slovak National Council) in America during the earlier part of the hearing.

The situation became so acute that a special meeting of the party Præsidium was convened on the day following Tiso's execution. After a stormy session party unity was eventually restored on the ground that its disruption would irretrievably harm Slovak national interests and the democratic consolidation of the entire Republic, thereby enhancing Communist prospects at the next general election.

The Czechoslovak Parliamentary Delegation now in England is staying for two weeks by way of a return visit for that of the British M.P.s to Czechoslovakia last summer. The Delegation, which is led by M. Josef David, the Socialist President of the National Assembly, is representative of the four Czech and four Slovak parties; Mme. Hodinová-Špurna (Czech Communist) represents the 23 women deputies. Some of the deputies were members of the Delegation which visited the Soviet Union at the end of last year and some have recently attended the conference of the Inter-Parliamentary Union in Cairo. The party is visiting the Midlands and the North after a short tour of London and the Home Counties. They will be present at the Czechoslovak Film Festival to be held in London at the New Gallery Cinema between the 2nd and 7th May, when the leading Czech representative will be M. Fierlinger, the Social Democrat Vice-Premier. The Festival will help to develop still further the cultural relations which were fostered by the British Film Festival and the visit of the Arts Theatre Company in Prague last October.

Rudolf Beran, the former Germanophile leader of the Agrarian Party and Prime Minister after Munich, and General Syrový, his Minister of Defence, have been sentenced by the National Court in Prague to twenty years' penal servitude and loss of civic rights for the part they played in national events between 1938 and 1941.

POLAND

Polish official opinion has been much exercised, it appears, by the closing stages of the Moscow Conference, and particularly that part of it which first broached

the question of Poland's western frontier. The 13th April saw the beginning of "Regained Territories Week," which, organized by the semi-official Polish Western Union, has had as its object "to place again before the whole nation the main problem of the present day." Almost certainly, the "main problem" was intended to be placed before the whole world as well as the Polish nation, and the synchronization, conscious or unconscious, with the Moscow Conference has indeed been useful. Speeches throughout the regained territories have been made by important people, the most notable coming from the Prime Minister M. Cyrankiewicz, at Walbrzych (Waldenburg), and M. Gomulka, Minister for Regained Territories, at Szczecin (Stettin) and Gorzow (Landsberg). Both speakers strongly insisted that the present frontier with Germany must not be revised at Poland's cost, since it constituted the defence of Slavdom against German imperialism. M. Cyrankiewicz, however, whose speech was appreciably less polemical than those of M. Gomulka, also added that Great Power Unity was the "philosopher's stone in the strengthening of peace," and that he believed Great Britain and the United States to be fully aware of this. These countries were bitterly attacked by M. Gomulka, who directed his words against Mr. Marshall and Mr. Bevin personally, on the ground that they raised the frontier question merely "to send up their diplomatic stock," and, allegedly, with special reference to the Ruhr.

The theme of danger from Germany was also lengthily expounded by the Polish Foreign Minister, M. Modzelewski, in a speech before the Polish Parliament on the 16th April. The speech was devoted to the importance of the recent Polish-Czech treaty, which, like those signed by Poland with the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, was described as "a link in the system for ensuring help in the event of German aggression." France was also associated with such a system. M. Modzelewski said that Poland was discussing a treaty of friendship with France, and the French Foreign Minister, M. Bidault, was said to approve Poland's western frontier on the grounds of security. The argument for the present frontier was somewhat ingeniously used by *Robotnik*, the Socialist newspaper, in its statement that Poland intends to export 28 million tons of coal in 1948, and 35 million tons in 1949. European collaboration was Poland's

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desire in this matter, but to maintain such an export, it would need to be assured of Szczecin (Stettin) and the whole course of the Oder.

The execution on the 16th April of Hoess, the former German Commandant of the concentration camp at Oświęcim (Auschwitz), provides a grimly pertinent psychological background to Polish opinion as regards Germany. After a three weeks' trial the accused was found guilty of being responsible for the murder of four million people by methods of unequalled brutality. The scrupulous fairness and complete calm with which the trial was conducted, was very laudable, the more so in view of the reputation of the Poles as an emotional people. In the words of M. Cyprian, the Public Prosecutor, one purpose of the trial was to show that Hoess was "a willing link in the system" aiming at the total destruction of the Slav people. This system, M. Cyprian argued, began a thousand years ago, when the Poles were driven from the Oder and Western Neisse.

The Budget session of the Polish Parliament opened on the 15th April. A surplus of 11 million zloté is revealed, though this is more than cancelled by the reconstruction expenditure of 85,400 million zloté proposed in the separate State Investment Budget. According to Polish figures, expenditure by the Ministries of National Defence and Public Security, together with that on Foreign Affairs, amounts to 25.2 per cent. as compared with 39.9 per cent. in 1937-38. The army, 600,000 strong at the end of hostilities, now numbers 165,000.

SOVIET UNION

Contrary to the consensus of British and American comment on the disappointing results of the Council of Foreign Ministers, Soviet commentators have been at pains to be optimistic about the future of Big Power cooperation while deploring the so-called misrepresentation of the Soviet attitude in the West. Mr. Thomas Barman, the excellent B.B.C. commentator in Moscow during the Conference, got a personal bad mark for his blunt admission of failure. The high lights of the Soviet attitude were reflected in a recent Moscow lecture by the well-known Soviet publicist, Yermashev. Yermashev clearly aimed at preventing his audience from drawing pessimistic conclusions from the Moscow Conference and made as much as possible of Big Power cooperation. The Soviet Union, he said, saw no reason to expect

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