

The freedom proclaimed by the bloodless revolution of the 9th September in practice stops short, as might be expected, of political opponents. The freedom of the press has meant the suppression of almost all the old newspapers and the appearance of a number of new dailies which all conform closely with the policy of the Fatherland Front, carrying anti-Fascist slogans and indulging in robust anti-Hitler execration, in the true Soviet manner. Frequent promises are made that the specially constituted People's Courts will deal with the adherents of the old régime before the end of the year. It is stated that over 100 public prosecutors have been appointed and that twenty-five Ministers and more than 100 deputies are already detained for trial as well as some ninety officials charged with atrocities against Greeks and Yugoslavs. It is evident that with the knock-out blow dealt to the *bourgeoisie* by Allied bombing, with the purge of the army and administration already in process and with the impending operation of the People's Courts the Fatherland Front will make a cleaner sweep of its political opponents than is usual even in Bulgarian crises.

The Holy Synod under the chairmanship of Mgr. Stefan, the somewhat modernist Archbishop of Sofia, is reported to have decided that in future parish priests shall be elected by the parishioners, women voting as well as men.

Turkey.

If the results achieved at Dumbarton Oaks evoked no great enthusiasm in the Turkish press, at any rate they roused it to little criticism. The Moscow conversations, touching the Balkans as they did, were of more direct interest, and they were taken as indicating the success of an Allied determination to overcome all differences. The Turkish Government has sent as its new Ambassador to Moscow M. Selim Sarper, a protégé of the President, who in the course of a diplomatic career, and latterly as Director-General of Press and Propaganda, has made a reputation for considerable capacity. On the 19th October, the fifth anniversary of its signature, the press paid tribute to the Anglo-Turkish alliance, as having been no less decisive a factor in the war than it was likely to be afterwards in the preservation of peace. The recapture of Athens has been cordially welcomed, and the authorities in Angora and Istanbul have started funds for the relief of the population in Greece.

The Turkish Government proposes to send the 450 interned diplomats and other Germans by ship to Gothenburg and to exchange them there for the 450 Turks interned in Germany. It wants the same ship to carry to Sweden 3,000 tons of Turkish produce without strategic value, and to bring back 3,000 tons of cellulose which is urgently needed in Turkey.

According to Egyptian newspapers, there died in Paris on the 23rd August, the day of the Allied entry into the city, Abdul Mejid Effendi, who was made Caliph by the Kemalists on their abolition of the Sultanate in 1922, only to be expelled himself on their abolition of the Caliphate in 1924.

THE MIDDLE EAST.

Public interest in Egypt continues to be occupied with the activities, present and future, of the new Government. One of the Government's first acts was to retire some twenty officials, of whom no less than four were Under-Secretaries of State. Dr. Taha Hussein was another prominent official to be dismissed. He was for many years Professor and Dean of the Faculty of Letters in the Egyptian University at Gizeh. More recently he has held the post of Technical Adviser to the Ministry of Education, and some two years ago was nominated *ad interim* to the Rectorship of the new University at Alexandria. Many of the dismissed officials were open supporters of the Wafd, some of them being politicians appointed to Government posts by the Nahas Ministry. Vindictive action of this nature by a new Government is unfortunately a commonplace in Egypt, and in this case does not seem so far to have been unfavourably received in the provinces.

It is still too early to estimate the stature of the new Government, which has not yet had time to settle down. There are signs of dissension between the three parties, and it is by no means certain that the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Finance will pull together with the Prime Minister as members of the team. Also, it is not yet known what line the Wafd intend to take. While we can hope that things will not turn out too badly, it seems likely that we shall have no bed of roses for a while.

Ali Maher, the Prime Minister's troublesome brother, to whose case reference was made in last week's *Summary*, has been released from confinement on the understanding that the Prime Minister will himself stand surety for his good behaviour, his abstention from all political activity, and his remaining for the time being in his country house in the Delta.

The vacant post of Egyptian Minister to Syria and the Lebanon has been filled by the appointment of Abdul Rahman Azzam. Azzam formed one of the Egyptian delegation to the Palestine Conference in London in 1939, and was a member of Ali Maher's Cabinet later in that year. Though at one time closely identified with Ali Maher in his anti-Allied intrigues, he came out openly on the British side during the bad days of Alamein in 1942.

The rejection on the 6th October by the Council of Ministers in Paris of the demand made by the Levant States for the transfer to themselves of the *Troupes Spéciales* (see under "France" in *Summary* No. 262) has resulted in a personal appeal to Mr. Churchill from the President of Syria. In his message the President refers to Mr. Churchill's request that there would be no trouble in Damascus on the 5th October, when the Syrian Chamber was due to meet, and states that, in spite of great difficulty, he succeeded in persuading the Deputies not to press too strongly the question of the *Troupes Spéciales*. He goes on to say that almost immediately afterwards the French rejection of the Levant States' demand was published in Syria. This, he says, has made it impossible for the President to curb public opinion much longer, and he therefore urges Mr. Churchill to see that the Levant States are given their "just rights" in this matter.

The other question that has caused difficulty in recent weeks—that of the proposed treaty with France—has now advanced a stage. The Syrian President and Minister for Foreign Affairs have told Sir E. Spears that they are willing to discuss with the French the establishment of their mutual relations on an ordinary diplomatic basis, subject to three conditions: First the *Troupes Spéciales* must be handed over in their entirety before discussions begin. Second, the French must engage not to increase the number of their troops in the Levant States either now or in the future. Third, the Syrian Government must be free to grant to any other nation the same conditions as they might give to the French.

With regard to the statement by General Beynet to the Lebanese President that, owing to the Alexandria resolutions, the declarations of independence made by General Catroux might be invalidated (see *Summary* No. 263), we are informing the French that we could not possibly agree to the suggestion that Lebanese independence was subject to reconsideration. Meanwhile, the Lebanese seem to be taking a reasonable attitude in the matter; they have asked for the withdrawal of General Beynet's statement, and pending a reply will do nothing more for the moment. The Syrians, on the other hand, who, true to form, at once took up the cudgels on behalf of their neighbours, at first decided to form a united Arab front in the matter. Fortunately, wiser counsels prevailed, and the Syrian Government will now await events, confining itself to a further request for the transfer of the *Troupes Spéciales*. Nevertheless, the Iraqi Minister for Foreign Affairs, who seems to be acting on his own initiative in this question, intends to inform His Majesty's Ambassador and the American Minister at Bagdad of General Beynet's statement, adding that his Government will regard "as an unfriendly act" any attempt to weaken Lebanese independence.

Further steps are being taken by the Palestine Government to put an end to the outrages by Jewish terrorists. On the 19th October the Government issued a communiqué announcing that 251 persons, who had been detained for acts of terrorism under the emergency regulations, had been transferred to military custody and removed to a place of detention outside Palestine. This measure provoked strong protests from the entire Hebrew press. It was also announced that the Government had decided to use sirens to give warning of the occurrence of terrorist outrages. The system would be operated by the police, who would take action with the military to halt traffic within the town concerned. The warning would also be a call for increased vigilance on the part of the general public.

In *Summary* No. 262 mention was made of information reaching Saudi Arabia that Shia pilgrims from Iraq and Persia might again attempt to defile the Haram in Mecca. Enquiries in Bagdad, however, have failed to reveal any indications of Iraqi Shias being concerned in such a plot. Though some Shias from Iraq may attend the pilgrimage, it is difficult to believe that any of them is prepared to court certain death by openly defiling the Haram.

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