

While all but a few Roumanian regiments have now been withdrawn from the front, the Hungarian troops are still fighting: but the farther east they go the more completely does their enthusiasm evaporate, and their officers, finding the "Crusade against Bolshevism" to be an inadequate reason, have to shame them into fighting by references to their despised Slovak and Roumanian neighbours.

One Budapest newspaper tried to keep up its spirit by announcing that after twelve hundred years Hungarian troops had returned to the Bug-Donetz area! An official announcement on the Budapest radio, however, graciously disclaimed all territorial designs against the Soviet Union. At the same time it made a renewed attempt to justify Hungary's behaviour towards Yugoslavia. The Simovitch Government, it argued, had infringed unspecified "agreements between Yugoslavia and her neighbours," and the army had therefore joined with the German army in the task of "restoring order and security to 'Dévidék'"—the Magyar name for the Yugoslav Voivodina.

The Minister of the Interior forecast in Parliament the much-delayed measure of administrative reform, the need for decentralisation having been rendered necessary by the increase of territory. The Minister of Education, M. Hóman, made the interesting admission that, while the total population had increased to 14,500,000 only 11 million of these were Magyar (even this figure being a patent exaggeration). Thus, Hungary to-day admits that there are as many non-Magyars within her borders as the maximum figure of "unredeemed" Magyars ever alleged to have been incorporated in the three Succession States of 1918. In other words, Hungary, by her own admission, has abandoned the racial basis for her claims.

The full tragedy of the Greek situation is only now becoming apparent. From opposite ends of Europe come authentic impressions of horror: the editor of the Turkish paper *Vatan* expresses his dismay at the tales of refugees to Anatolia, while Stockholm papers treat Greek conditions as "the worst in Europe." An American observer, who escaped by boat, gave it as his view that a quarter of the entire population of Greece was likely to perish this winter. But all else pales before the story, from a seemingly authentic source, of a German officer requisitioning the scanty supplies of an Attican country house. There were too many Greeks, he told his victim, in polite and fluent Greek, and it was Germany's policy to reduce them by half, with the result that the rich would become poor and the poor would die. This surely deserves to become a symbol of Hitler's New Order. Meanwhile, a second relief ship has gone from Turkey to the Piræus and the Athens Government has concluded with Bulgaria a convention for the purchase of corn.

THE MIDDLE EAST.

Discussions are still taking place in Tehran between His Majesty's Minister and the Persian Government over various amendments which the latter wishes to make in the treaty. The Soviet Ambassador has not taken part recently in these proceedings, partly because he has not been authorised by his Government to consider any amendments to the original draft, partly because he is ignorant of the foreign languages involved. It would, in any case, have been impossible to discuss in the presence of the ambassador, who is very sensitive to criticism of his countrymen, some of the amendments put forward by the Persians, justified in themselves, but reflecting on the conduct of the Soviet authorities.

Some progress has been made towards a satisfactory solution, but there are still serious difficulties to be surmounted before agreement is reached. They include such matters as financial and economic assistance to the Persian Government; the fear of Turkish aggression; the Persian request for representation at the Peace Conference and at all other international conferences at which her interests are discussed; and the period of time to be fixed before the departure of Allied forces from Persian territory after the war. In assessing these difficulties, it has to be borne in mind that the very idea of a treaty is now unattractive to the Persians, who are particularly unwilling to become allies of the Russians at a time when the Germans are advancing on the Caucasus. The danger of a German attack on Persia is attributed, in Persian

minds, mainly to the presence of the allies, and there are undoubtedly many who would be pleased to see the Russians driven out by the Germans or by anyone else.

German as well as local propaganda has added to Persian suspicions. In a Persian broadcast from Berlin on the 12th November (the eve of the opening of the new Majlis by the Shah), the speaker accused the allies of keeping Persia weak by withholding supplies, and asserted that the whole Persian nation, and especially the army, were becoming restive and impatient. Thanks, however, to precautions and warnings by the police on the day of the opening, except for some anti-British and pro-German shouts at one place on the Shah's route, the ceremony passed off without incident, and the Shah had a good reception. With the exception of one speech by the Prime Minister, there has been no attempt in Persia at counter-propaganda in favour of the allies, who are thus at a disadvantage; though it may be assumed that, once the treaty is signed, the Persian Government will take up a stronger line, if only to defend its action before the public.

The general situation in Persia continues to show some slight improvement, but cases of brigandage are still reported, and the distribution of wheat still encounters difficulties.

It is stated in Tehran, on good authority, that the voice of the Mufti (who is reported to be now in Berlin) was heard in an Arabic broadcast on the 11th November, speaking from some "free Arab" wireless station. An earlier broadcast from Rome, announcing the Mufti's arrival in Italy, excited no comment in Egypt, and fell remarkably flat.

During his recent visit to Iraq, the Amir Abdullah did not discuss the question of Syria with His Majesty's Ambassador; nor, so far as is known, did he attempt to gain Iraqi support on behalf of his alleged aspirations to the Syrian throne, although an article urging the union of Syria with Transjordan appeared in a Bagdad newspaper during his stay. On the other hand, the Amir openly condemned Rashid Ali and his régime, and was at pains to stress the importance of closer ties between Arabs and Great Britain—thus undoubtedly strengthening his position among the moderate elements of Iraq.

The Iraq levies are to be increased. Ever since the last war, when they were first raised, these levies have given loyal service to the R.A.F. in Iraq; the most recent occasion being at Habbaniya, during the Rashid Ali revolt. Recruits will be drawn partly from the Assyrians resident in Iraq, for which General Nuri's consent has already been given in principle; and partly from those in the settlement of the Khabur, in Northern Syria, from which area General de Gaulle has agreed to the recruitment of 1,000 Assyrians. The levies will include a quota of 500 Iraqi Arabs and Kurds, to whose recruitment General Nuri has also consented.

The Iraqi Government has decided to sever relations with France and Japan, on the ground that the Governments of those countries encouraged Rashid Ali's movement.

A recent examination of the finances of Saudi Arabia shows a most unsatisfactory state of affairs. Expenditure has increased, owing mainly to greater distribution of money and food to tribesmen and townsmen alike; while revenue has dropped owing to the diminished pilgrimage, reduced customs and serious drought. In spite of loans and gifts, amounting to £1,400,000, from His Majesty's Government, there will be, by the end of the current year, an estimated deficit of over £1,000,000. The position for 1942 is no more encouraging. The Minister of Finance has asked His Majesty's Government for £250,000 to be made available at once, or at least to be at his disposal for the purposes of raising a loan from the bank. Ibn Saud has informed His Majesty's Minister at Jeddah in strict confidence that for reasons of economy he has decided not to perform the pilgrimage this year.

Discussions are still taking place between the Free French authorities and ourselves regarding the proclamation of Lebanese independence, which General Catroux is anxious to announce at an early date. Apart from the actual wording, about which there has been some difference of opinion, now on a fair way to settlement, certain points have arisen in the interpretation of the document. It is believed that General Catroux wishes to proceed, as soon as the proclamation has been made, to the conclusion of a treaty with the Lebanese Government, and possibly also of another with the Syrian Government in Damascus. In