

the Allied forces who, though Allies, were nevertheless foreigners; but it was an essential part of their programme to establish a Consultative Council through existing elective assemblies, &c., which could express the opinion of the French people. Asked whether he intended to "test" French opinion in North Africa, he replied that a test had been made there (in Algiers) which had shown clear results—presumably a reference to the demonstrations of wild enthusiasm of a crowd of some 5,000 when he had laid a wreath at the war memorial.

General de Gaulle's subsequent reference to local press censorship and to the difficulties of expressing opinions publicly had been answered in advance the day before by the announcement that General Giraud had abolished restrictions imposed on the press in Africa by the Vichy authorities and that, henceforth, all criticisms and reasonable complaints would be published without restriction.

This decision had been preceded by the announcement in the North African papers of the 27th May that General Giraud had decided to forbid exhibitions of posters carrying portraits of living persons; in future the only emblem which might be displayed in official or public places was the Tricolor without any additional symbol. This decision has to be understood in the light not only of the powerful "Gaullist" agitation which has been so much in evidence in Algiers, Morocco and latterly Tunisia, but of the cult of Pétain. The removal of the Marshal's portraits had caused much bad feeling, particularly among the French forces in Morocco; and the reference to symbols applies not only to the Croix de Lorraine, but to the "Francisque" or Gaulish battle-axe, which, as Pétain's emblem, was commonly used in decorations; while a winged Gaulish casque and sword figured on the Tricolor badge of the Légions des Combattants, the North African section of which was recently abolished as such and reorganised as a purely ex-servicemen's body by General Giraud. The announcement has also involved the removal of many portraits of General Giraud himself which had been displayed in various parts of the French North African Empire over the legend "Un seul but, la Victoire." The idea was to put a stop to any tendency to personal rule or partisan politics. The same idea was expressed in a letter to General Giraud from the Presidents of the three Algerian "Conseils Généraux" calling for representation on the new committee: they thanked him for his (earlier) declaration "tending to reject any form of personal power now or in the future."

The first meeting of the nucleus of the Central Executive Committee was held on the 31st May and lasted for six hours. General de Gaulle brought MM. Philip and Massigli, and General Giraud M. Jean Monnet and General Georges, whose arrival in Algiers from France was announced at the same time as the arrival of General de Gaulle. General Catroux was also present. No communiqué was issued, but it was announced in the evening by Algiers wireless that M. Maroselli, a Radical Senator who recently joined in with de Gaulle, had been chosen as a common representative to Washington to deal with all questions affecting French prisoners of war.

Owing to the difficulties which arose at the first meeting, there was no meeting on the next day, but that evening M. Peyrouton sent in his resignation as Governor-General of Algeria and the expression of his wish to serve as a Reserve Captain in the Colonial Infantry in two distinct letters addressed to General de Gaulle and to General Giraud, who are to be alternating Presidents of the Executive Committee when it is formed. General de Gaulle, who in his reply at once accepted the resignation and asked him to hand over his functions to the Secretary-General of Algeria and to consider himself mobilised under the Commander-in-Chief, Levant, at once gave the news to the press. General Giraud only received the resignation after this had happened. General Giraud, in his reply, while accepting the resignation, requested M. Peyrouton to remain in office provisionally until the Executive Committee is formed. He then made his point clear that until then he is the sole legal authority and that resignations are to be made to the new committee. M. Peyrouton has, however, upheld his resignation. General Giraud subsequently appointed Admiral Muselier to be assistant to him as Commander-in-Chief to maintain order—an action generally understood to be an answer to General de Gaulle's own action. Thus M. Peyrouton's resignation, which it was hoped would seal agreement, has resulted in an unfortunate difference which remains to be settled.

Of General Giraud's two nominees, the one, M. Jean Monnet, has had long business and other connexions with this country, where he received part of his education. He already served the French Government on various inter-Allied organisations in London during the last war; and from 1919 to 1923 he was French Under-Secretary in the Secretariat of the League of Nations. As

chairman of the Anglo-French Co-ordinating Committee early in this war, and later as a member of the British Supply Council in Washington, he has enjoyed the confidence of His Majesty's Government, and it is understood that he has played an important rôle in encouraging General Giraud to liberalise his régime and programme.

General Georges, who is 68, and is, like M. Boisson, the son of a primary school-teacher, and, like M. Philip, a Protestant, was in 1939-40 in command of the forces in the North-East France Theatre of Operations, which included the B.E.F. He was associated at various stages of his career with Lyautey, Foch, Degoutte (the Ruhr) and Pétain, whose chief of staff he was in the campaign against Abd el Krim in 1925. In the spring of 1940 he was very widely considered as a likely successor to General Gamelin. He was placed on the reserve on the ground of age in August 1940.

Another distinguished senior soldier who has turned up in Algiers is General Vuillemin. He was Commander-in-Chief of the French Air Force prior to the French collapse and retired from the force in October 1940. He was received in Algiers shortly after his arrival by General de Gaulle, to whom he had written offering his services. After their interview General de Gaulle announced that General Vuillemin (who is 60 years of age) would take over the command of a fighter formation with the rank of lieutenant-colonel.

On the day that General de Gaulle reached Algiers the Vichy wireless announced that the French squadron at Alexandria, under Admiral Godefroy's command, had gone over to General Giraud, having been forced to take this step under threat of starvation due to the cutting off of food supplies. The French High Command at Algiers thereupon issued a statement to the effect that the squadron had in fact rallied on the day of the fall of Tunis, but the announcement had been held up for obvious military reasons. In a statement in the House of Lords on the 2nd June the Lord Privy Seal emphatically refuted the Vichy allegation that the crews had been starved into surrender, and made it clear that Admiral Godefroy had come over of his own free will.

Admiral Godefroy's squadron had been operating under the command of Admiral Cunningham, Commander-in-Chief, Mediterranean, before the Franco-German armistice. After the armistice, when it was clear that the squadron intended to accept the authority of the Pétain Government, the ships were immobilized in virtue of an agreement between Admiral Cunningham and Admiral Godefroy, whereby the latter undertook to refrain from any hostile action against British interests in return for provision being made for the maintenance of his ships and the payment of their crews. This agreement was renewed with small changes when Admiral Harwood succeeded Admiral Cunningham as Commander-in-Chief, and it governed the position of the squadron until the total Axis occupation of France in November 1942.

The events of last November, in effect, destroyed the basis of the agreement, and since Admiral Godefroy persisted in maintaining his connexion with Vichy even after it had lost its last semblance of independence, His Majesty's Government would have been justified in taking forcible measures in order to secure the services of his ships. They refrained from doing so, however, since they were anxious to give the new French authorities at Algiers every opportunity of bringing the squadron over of its own free will. The first approaches to Admiral Godefroy were made from Algiers a few weeks after the Allied landings, and negotiations continued throughout the winter and spring. The British authorities were kept fully informed of their progress and gave every facility for their conduct. At first the practice was continued whereby Admiral Godefroy was advanced a monthly sum out of British funds for the maintenance of the ships and their personnel, but these payments were discontinued in February, for His Majesty's Government were not prepared to finance the squadron indefinitely while it persisted in maintaining its link with Vichy. After the decisive Allied victories in Tunisia in April and May, it became clear that Admiral Godefroy had at last realized the futility of holding aloof from the High Command at Algiers, and he gave it to be understood that he would in fact come over as soon as the Axis were expelled from French North Africa.

#### SWITZERLAND.

The prospect of the invasion of Italy and the heavy bombing of German munition centres are both having their repercussions on Switzerland. On the one hand, the Swiss may find themselves confronted at any moment with a demand

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