

It was evident from what General de Gaulle has told Mr. Macmillan, when he asked to see the Resident Minister on the 8th, that he took a highly critical line about the present French commanders. He was not in favour of the French units fighting as a single army, but favoured their being put as small units at the disposal of the Allied High Command; similarly with the Fleet and Air Force. It has not transpired whether he put his proposals in these terms to General Giraud, nor whether he is disposed to fear the development of an anti-Gaullist (if not a Pétainist) *esprit de corps* in a united French force. But, in any case, the different equipment of the Fighting French (armed by the British) and the Giraud forces (armed by the Americans), which is also reported as being an important element in the problem, might be held to argue for his proposal. It is evident, however, that General de Gaulle has also been insisting on his claims, as the author of the prophetic *Vers l'Armée de Métier* (1934), to control the reorganised French forces, as against the older generals who held high commands in 1940. Of these, General Georges is one, and it is not without significance that he has already been several times attacked in the Fighting French London weekly, *La Marseillaise*. His Majesty's Minister reports that there is much mutual suspicion between the entourages of General de Gaulle and General Giraud, and this suspicion is echoed in the numerous press reports, which also bring out the moral claims of the two groups—claims which have become entangled with what are more strictly technical questions. Thus the Fighting French forces, whose merit as having been the first in the field is always stressed, are relatively small in number but fully equipped. The (much more numerous) Giraud forces, whose merit is to have trained "in the dark" and then held on and fought back in Tunisia with a modicum of old-fashioned equipment, have only gradually been armed and are as yet far from fully equipped. Thus General Giraud, though he has publicly expressed himself in favour of rejuvenation and reform, is much concerned with the fighting army as it exists in Africa; and General Georges, who speaks for disbanded army cadres of the disbanded Armistice Army working for the underground resistance movement in France, is, like Giraud, opposed to brusque dismissals and sudden revolutionary changes, which would unsettle the troops.

The informal conversations, which followed in the last formal meeting of the full Committee on the 9th June, finally resulted in a proposal which had obtained the assent of Generals Giraud and Georges being put by General Catroux and M. Monnet before General de Gaulle on the 14th June. According to this proposal a "Commission" would be set up for "the reorganisation and rejuvenation of the army." General Giraud would, as Commander-in-Chief, be its President, and General de Gaulle its Vice-President. But as General Giraud would be concerned principally with the planning of operations, General de Gaulle would be the effective chairman of the Committee. This would be composed of the commanders of the three arms, viz., Generals Juin and Bouscat for Army and Air Force and Admiral Michelier for the Fleet. It would also include as many young tried high-ranking officers as the Committee chose to co-opt. It is this Committee, which would of course come under the high authority of the Committee of National Liberation itself, which would decide about further dismissals.

In the meantime, His Majesty's Government and the United States Government are suspending consideration of the Committee's request for recognition pending the outcome of the present crisis.

In French West Africa the general political situation would seem to have steadied; and whereas the relations between the very co-operative Admiral Collinet and the French army commanders had not been cordial, it can be counted that the nomination on the 7th June, of General de Bois-Boissel, who is, like Collinet, strongly pro-Ally, will rectify this and further improve the situation. Of the two Generals who were at the same time relieved of their commands, General Barrau, while keen on sending as many troops up to North Africa as possible, was not generally found helpful by His Majesty's Consul-General; while General Falvy was under the suspicion of having been sent to Dakar to pave the way for German infiltration, which, on the other hand, Governor-General Boisson had opposed.

M. Boisson, who found the ban on Pétain loyalties difficult to stomach last March, realised none the less the desirability of the Giraud-de Gaulle reconciliation, and on returning from Algiers on the 20th April launched the slogan "Travail—Victoire—Libération de la patrie," though he would not appear as yet to have overcome the hostility of the Gaullist elements in the population. His personal relations with both the British and United States Consuls-General

would appear to be good; and he made a point of asking Mr. Meiklereid on the 27th May whether the British authorities concerned approved his proposal for the construction of a dam for electrification purposes on the Gambia at Mayre, 10 km. upstream from the British frontier.

On the 26th May President Roosevelt appointed Admiral Glassford as his personal representative in French West Africa. The Admiral is due to arrive on the 15th June at the head of an American mission established at Dakar, to co-ordinate and supervise American activities in that area. This is his second appointment at Dakar, since he spent some months there as head of an American liaison mission after the rallying of French West Africa last November.

A *coup* organised at Guadeloupe by Admiral Battet with the connivance of a number of officers of the *Jeanne d'Arc* but without Fighting French participation, has failed. The leaders, who were coloured, obtained control for a short time of a wireless station, but when the *Jeanne d'Arc* fired some shots from the air they appear to have scattered, and Admiral Battet has returned somewhat crestfallen to the United States. In the meantime, however, M. Fernand-Laurent, the French Right-wing Deputy, who went to United States early this year after having escaped from France to this country, has been on a separate mission to Admiral Robert, with the approval of the United States Government—but with what results is not yet known.

In France, Laval's speech of the 5th June has now been followed up by a meeting at Vichy on the 12th June of the Council of Ministers, which adopted a law on compulsory labour service. Its purpose was to penalise those who provoke or facilitate disobedience or evasion, ever more cases of which are reported. In the Haute-Savoie region many more youths—this time belonging to the 1942 class—are reported to have fled to the hills.

SPAIN AND PORTUGAL.

The clumsy and ineffectual Spanish attempt to influence the Allies' strategic bombing of Axis industrial targets has petered out. After the publication by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of the official statement (which, it is now known, was issued as a result of a misunderstanding) Count Jordana, in a personal letter to Sir S. Hoare, tried to save the situation by justifying the Spanish attitude, which appears to have been forced upon him, and in a subsequent interview with His Majesty's Ambassador assured Sir S. Hoare that the anti-bombing campaign had been stopped. Count Jordana also informed Sir S. Hoare that in future the Ministry for Foreign Affairs would be responsible for the censorship of all war news and views in the Spanish press. If control is thus to be taken away from the Falange Bureau of Press and Propaganda we should see a further improvement in the Spanish press which, in spite of blunders such as the publication in *Informaciones* of the German report of the destruction of the British Airways' machine over the Bay of Biscay on the 1st June, is much more impartial in its presentation of war news than a few months ago. Some good, therefore, should come of this episode, which has been of no profit to Spain's reputation in the world.

Count Jordana also promised Sir S. Hoare that he would endeavour to persuade the Minister of the Interior to instruct the police and other authorities to cease the petty persecution inflicted upon both British subjects and Spanish Anglophils. The police and Falange authorities, probably at the instigation of the Germans who, failing all else, are trying to frighten the Spaniards about Allied landings in the Peninsula, have been treating British subjects and friendly Spaniards as if they were conspirators engaged in plots to stir up internal revolution and to organise a foreign invasion. The Minister for Foreign Affairs told the Ambassador that both he and General Franco held that British subjects and Anglophils should not be treated as potential enemies. But a rapid improvement should not be expected, because, in spite of General Jordana's goodwill, he has little influence outside his own Ministry.

The appointment of eight bishops to the hitherto vacant sees of Almería, Astorga, Cuenca, Guadix, Cadiz, Lérida, Palencia and Vitoria, carries another step forward the improvement in the position of the Church in Spain (see *Summary* No. 170). The procedure was the same as in December 1942, when five bishops were appointed, and follows the interim agreement, the *convenio* of June 1941. There is still, however, no Concordat between the Spanish Government and the Vatican. Should General Franco not outlast the war, that will be one of the tasks of the new régime.

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