

will probably be very much to the liking of the Soviet Government; the Soviet press on the 28th November had, indeed, given prominence to an article in a London newspaper demanding a declaration of war against all three countries.

On the 25th November, M. Molotov sent a note to all Governments with which the U.S.S.R. has diplomatic relations, protesting against the treatment accorded by the Germans to Red Army prisoners. He gave a series of instances of brutality ranging from the stripping off of clothing to mutilation of soldiers and rape of hospital nurses. The German Government was also accused of flagrant violation of the provisions of The Hague Convention, a charge which it will be difficult for Germany to brush aside, since, as was noted in *Summary* No. 102, she announced in September that food inferior to that received by other nationalities would be received by Russians. Berlin seems to have been stung to action by such accusations and immediately produced at the microphone a person purporting to be a son of Molotov, who had been captured and had neither experienced nor seen any ill-treatment of Red Army prisoners. However, Moscow radio was able to point out that, whoever it was that spoke, was illiterate and spoke very bad Russian. Moreover, "in staging this idiotic performance Hitler's minions did not take into account that Molotov has not got a son and never had one."

The Germans have, in addition, presented the Soviet Government with a first-rate case for any allegations they may make in the future of German atrocities against the civil population of occupied territory by announcing on the 29th November that they had withdrawn from the centre of Rostov in order to carry out reprisals on civilians in their rear who had attacked their troops. The Soviet press and Moscow radio have already commenced to take advantage of this; references to the 16th November as having been "bloody Sunday" in a certain village in the Rostov area have already been made, and *Tass* information for the provincial press stated on the 1st December: "One truth has got through among the German lies—that is the admission, in the communiqué, of the brutal Fascist atrocities, when leaving the town. The people of Rostov were, for several days, mercilessly massacred."

Moscow radio of the 28th November broadcast for insertion in the provincial press a laudatory notice of the conduct in action of members of the Royal Air Force, who have recently been taking part in operations in the Murmansk area. The names of Wing Commander Isherwood, Squadron Leaders Rook and Miller and Sergeant How were given prominence, and in conclusion it was stated that "for exemplary execution of the orders of the command at the front, and for showing gallantry and courage, the Præsidium of the Supreme Council of U.S.S.R. awarded to these four British airmen the Order of Lenin. We salute these gallant British airmen."

SCANDINAVIA.

While the Governments of Finland and Denmark have been doing their utmost to persuade their peoples and the world that their signatures of the Anti-Comintern Pact were a bare formality involving no substantial modifications of policy, the Reich has continuously emphasised the importance of the agreement as indicating a united European front in support of the German "New Order." The Swedish press has been quick to point out that the significance of the step taken by Denmark and Finland cannot be confined to the superficial implications of the Pact. Thus, *Social Demokraten* for the 25th November describes the German initiative as a "demonstration against the United States," and the Berlin correspondent of *Dagens Nyheter* simultaneously states that it is not so much aimed at Russia as at England and the United States. On the 29th November the latter paper returned to the charge with an article contrasting the implications of the public signature of the Pact and those of the private conversations accompanying the ceremony. It hints that the peoples of Denmark and Finland may find to their surprise that the private conversations were the feature of decisive importance, and that these have, in fact, committed them to alliance against the enemies of the Axis.

So far as Denmark is concerned, there is every reason to believe that the Government was well aware of the importance of its action. It is reported on very good authority that a majority in favour of signature was only secured by very strong German pressure on the 22nd and 23rd November, previous to which only Scavenius and Gunnar Larsen were prepared to adopt the course eventually

followed. Germany is said to have threatened the abrogation of the agreement of the 9th April, 1941, and consequential steps treating Denmark as a hostile occupied country. It is considered that the crisis may not yet be over, and that further German demands might even lead to the abdication of the King.

Public feeling in Copenhagen has declared itself even more emphatically against the action taken. Though the local press affords no clearer confirmation than allusions to unexplained traffic delays and interruption of tram services, it can no longer be doubted that the mass demonstrations on the 25th November were impressive in numbers and character, necessitating strong, but not wholly effective, counter-measures by the police, who are said to have charged the crowd on more than one occasion, and to have made a considerable number of arrests. The demonstrators are reported to have made perhaps significant use of the *Norwegian* national anthem as a marching song, and there were cries of "Down with Scavenius! Down with the traitor!" A reassuring broadcast on the 28th by the Secretary of the Co-operative Committee of the Rigsdag, seeking to minimise the importance of the Anti-Comintern Pact and enjoining calm and discipline, confirms by implication the disturbing effects of Scavenius's action on Danish public opinion.

M. Kauffmann's action in severing relations with the Danish Government has now been imitated by Count Reventlow, the Danish Minister in London. His decision, made public on the 2nd December, has been known in certain circles for several days, and is directly connected with the latest proof of subservience to German wishes afforded by the Danish Government's accession to the Anti-Comintern Pact.

As has been hinted in the American press, the signature by Finland of the Anti-Comintern Pact was followed on the 26th November by the despatch of a note from His Majesty's Government acquainting the Finnish Government of their intention to declare war if Finland's active share in the hostilities did not cease by a specified date towards the end of this week. The note is said to have come as a shock to the Finnish Government, but there seems little hope that Finland is prepared to desist from military operations. M. Witting's absence from the banquet attended by signatories of the pact in Berlin at first aroused some optimism, but, since that event, the utterances of Finnish statesmen have shown no signs that their policy is likely to be modified. President Ryti's reply to Hitler's congratulations, in which he wished "happiness and success to the heroic German people," might be explained as an exchange of courtesies, but on the 29th November, in the Diet, M. Rangell, the Finnish Prime Minister, stated that his country could not deviate from the principles laid down in the recent reply to the United States, and insisted that the territories captured beyond the frontier must still be occupied, and the occupation even extended. He also claimed the security of Eastern Karelia as a Finnish interest which would have to be satisfied. On the same date a message published by Field-Marshal Mannerheim stated that not much remained to be done before Finland reached her strategic aim, but that army and people were faced with a winter full of trials and sacrifices. On the 1st December the Diet approved legislation dealing with the incorporation of territory annexed in the war.

Though there has been some comment on the fact that the Diet was not kept informed of so fateful a step in Finnish policy, the Government seems able to rely on very general support. The only important parliamentary critic appears to have been Dr. Furuholm, leader of the Swedish Party group, who asked for a clearer definition of Finnish war aims, criticised the annexation of territory beyond the frontier, and desired an indication that Finland's share in the war would soon terminate.

A recent speech in Stockholm by the Swedish Foreign Minister, M. Günther, stressed the two ideas of rigid neutrality and intensified provision for defence. His condemnation of those who disapprove of Sweden's abstention from the world conflict has been interpreted in some quarters as a reply to German criticism, but was expressed with his customary ambiguity. Swedish Government sources, however, profess to see a deterioration in Swedo-German relations and to consider a German attack in the spring as not unlikely; they represent that the limit of their concessions to German demands has now been reached. These representations are coupled with requests for the facilitation of supplies of oil and rubber needed for the defensive preparations of the country, but there seems a genuine desire to improve relations with Great Britain.