

few weeks every sort of propaganda has been used in the attempt to ensure order in the country and among the practical steps to destroy possible nuclei of opposition have been an increase in the number of executions and the transfer to Germany of more Czech police; the latter are being increasingly replaced by Gestapo and S.S. men.

In Slovakia the Bratislava Government has clearly lost all independent significance and is now no more than a German mouthpiece. The controlled press and radio are still zealously conducting an inquest on the revolt and accusations and denunciations are rife; a new demand is being made for a purge of those Czechs still living in Slovakia and there are signs that the rising has given a fresh fillip to the dissension between Catholics and Protestants; the one positive step taken in the mobilisation of all available labour for the building of fortifications in the Bratislava area. Meanwhile Karmasin continues to complain that the Government had not, in the past, sufficiently safeguarded the rights of the Volksdeutsche and to demand still greater self-administration for the German minority.

The Czechoslovak Brigade in the west is engaged in the siege of the Germans in Dunkirk. Two sharp actions have been reported and in each the Czechoslovaks inflicted casualties and took prisoners without serious cost to themselves. The major difficulty of this unit has been its lack of reserves and it is worth noting that these have recently been increased by the arrival of a number of Czech soldiers from the "Autonomous Protectorate Army" who had contrived to make their way to the Allies from Northern Italy where the Germans had been using them as lines of communication troops. Czechoslovaks in liberated France have also been instructed to report themselves to the Czechoslovak Embassy in Paris with a view to their enrolment for military service.

Moscow radio on the 13th November broadcast an article from *War and the Working Class* commenting acidly on an interview given by Jan Masaryk to the English magazine *Illustrated*, in which the Minister is reported to have spoken of Czechoslovakia as "a valuable link between the East and the West." The "link" idea is sarcastically ridiculed and the Minister labelled "incautious."

On the 7th November the citizens of Mukačevo and Užhorod in Ruthenia sent messages of congratulation to Marshal Stalin. It is noteworthy that neither message contained any reference to Czechoslovakia and the Užhorod greeting spoke of "our dream to live in a single harmonious family with the Ukrainian people."

SOVIET UNION.

During the past week there has been little change in the military situation. The Red Army has been held outside Budapest, and appears to be developing an outflanking movement to the north-east. On the 9th November the Soviet Information Bureau issued a communiqué on the fighting on the Second Ukrainian Front (Transylvania and Hungary) between the 6th October and the 6th November. In this it was claimed that over 100,000 German and Hungarian officers and men had been killed, and 42,160 captured.

Colonel-General Golikov, the recently appointed Representative of the Council of People's Commissars of the U.S.S.R. for matters relating to repatriation (see *Summary* No. 265), made a statement to a *Tass* correspondent which was published in all the Soviet papers and broadcast on the 11th November. In this he announced that "tens of thousands" of Soviet citizens had already returned home from Finland, Roumania and Poland; "the first 10,000 have returned from Britain; extensive preparatory work for repatriation of Soviet citizens has been conducted in France, Belgium and Luxemburg." He complained that in some cases Soviet citizens in liberated territory were still treated as prisoners of war, and even held in the same camps as Germans, in unsatisfactory conditions. In a number of instances the authorities on the spot even put obstacles in the way of the speedy return of these persons to the U.S.S.R. "There are also quite a few instances when people hostile to the Soviet State try by deceit, provocation, &c., to poison the minds of our citizens and make them believe the monstrous lie that the Soviet motherland had forgotten them, renounced them, and no longer considered them her citizens." General Golikov declared that there would be no reprisals even on "those Soviet citizens who, submitting to German violence and terror, committed actions against the interests of the U.S.S.R. . . . if upon their return to the motherland they honestly discharge their duty." This is the first occasion on which there has been a clear statement of the attitude of the Soviet authorities to those Soviet citizens who,

under duress, have assisted the Germans. The decision to let bygones be bygones is a wise one. It should greatly facilitate an early return to normality in the U.S.S.R. after the end of the war, both by preventing political bitterness and by securing the early and willing repatriation of the millions of Soviet citizens scattered all over Europe, whose labour will be so essential to the work of reconstruction. At the same time notice is given to the Allies that the Soviet Government is impatient of delays in returning captured Soviet citizens, and is jealously observing the treatment which they receive. Two days earlier Moscow Radio had criticised the "shocking living conditions" in certain camps in France, notably in the Marseilles area, in which liberated Soviet citizens were confined together with German prisoners of war. Some of the former were even being recruited for the Foreign Legion, "under conditions of terror." The Soviet Ambassador in France was stated to have protested to the French Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

The Bulgarian armistice delegation which left Moscow on the 31st October brought home interesting impressions. The Minister for Foreign Affairs stated on his return that no one should imagine that communism was to be introduced into Bulgaria at the instigation of the Soviet Government, despite the impression which might have been conveyed by the eulogies of the U.S.S.R. and the October Revolution filling the Sofia press. On the contrary, all the Soviet Ministers whom the delegation had met at Moscow had insisted that on no account should Bulgaria become a Communist State, and had advised the maintenance of the Fatherland Front, "which truly represented the new democratic Bulgaria." M. Molotov even deprecated excessive witch-hunting for Fascist-minded officers, urging that good service at the front should be taken as the sole test. The delegates, in particular M. Tarpeshev, the Communist Minister without Portfolio, appear to have been genuinely chilled by their interview with the great Dimitrov. Refusing to speak anything but Russian on the ground that he was a Soviet citizen, Dimitrov sternly reminded his compatriots at an official meeting that the Agrarians and not the Communists were the majority in Bulgaria, and in private spoke even more severely than in public. The impression left by his words on the abashed delegates was increased by their astonishment at finding their revolutionary comrade living in a style never enjoyed even by King Boris. Evidently hints of the Soviet attitude had got round even before the return of the delegation, for a story recently current in Sofia had it that Stalin had threatened to have Tolbukhin's head if he allowed the Bulgarians to bolshevise the Red Army. Paradoxical as the line taken by the Soviet authorities may have appeared to the Bulgarian delegates, it is only a further illustration of the general Soviet attitude towards the new Governments now emerging in liberated Europe. The Communist Parties themselves in all European countries support "Governments of national unity" with mildly reformist programmes. It is interesting to note that even in Bulgaria, probably the country where the Communist Party is strongest, and during occupation by the Red Army, the Soviet authorities directly discourage the local Communists from abandoning this policy. The Tito-Subasic agreement, smiled on by Moscow and confusing to many of the faithful in Yugoslavia, is a further illustration of this general trend.

M. Molotov gave a luncheon on the 10th November in honour of the Norwegian Minister for Foreign Affairs, M. Trygve Lie, and his mission. The Soviet guests included MM. Dekanozov and Maisky. In his speech M. Molotov urged the development of the existing friendly relations between the U.S.S.R. and Norway now that the two countries once more had a common frontier.

The resignation of the Saed Government occasioned a fresh outburst of vituperation in *Pravda*. The charges mainly followed the now familiar lines, but included a new and apparently unfounded allegation that Saed had "armed tribes and instigated them against the Central Government." It was also alleged that the Tehran radio had been "converted into an instrument for slanderous anti-Soviet propaganda," while attempts had been made to suppress Moscow Radio reports on the situation in Persia. In fact, the Soviet authorities have done everything possible to prevent the Persian case reaching the outside world. In reporting the release of the Trade Unionists arrested by the Persian military and police in Tehran in connexion with the proposed meeting in honour of the October Revolution anniversary, Moscow Radio quoted a Persian paper as demanding the prosecution of Saed for these arrests. (See also under "Middle East.")

The refusal of the Soviet Government to attend the World Aviation Conference has again been discussed, in an article in No. 21 of *The War and the*