

Slovak-German Society, of which Dr. Tuka is the chairman. The meeting was the occasion for the customary pledges of mutual friendship and loyalty and telegrams were exchanged with Hitler, Ribbentrop and Goebbels.

A curious sidelight on the notorious corruption in Slovak official circles is the expulsion from the Slovak Parliament of the Deputy Martin Morháč "for serious offences against the war economy in the first half of 1942." According to *Gardista*, political reasons had nothing to do with his expulsion.

POLAND.

With the consent of the Soviet Government the Australian Government have taken over the protection of Polish interests in the Soviet Union. On his arrival in Tehran from the U.S.S.R., M. de Romer, the Polish Ambassador, gave an interview to the Reuter correspondent there, in the course of which he expressed his appreciation of the immense military effort of the Red Army and of the Soviet nations: he was convinced, he said, that the desire for collaboration and understanding would triumph over all difficulties, and show the way to a just and honourable solution which would serve the interests not only of Poland but also of Russia and of the Europe of to-morrow. The fact that Poland and Russia were both still in the same camp and still fighting brought to nought of itself the German plans based on the difficulties between the two countries. M. de Romer has since arrived in Cairo, where General Sikorski has conferred both with him and with General Anders, the commander of the Polish forces in the Middle East.

According to the *Official Gazette* of the General Government of the 1st May, Governor-General Frank has issued regulations, coming into force on that day, for the reintroduction of private landed property in the part of the General Government known as Galicia, that is to say, in what has hitherto been generally called Eastern Galicia. The new regulation only applies to farms not exceeding 50 acres in extent. Jews and "citizens of the former Polish State" who do not live in the General Government do not benefit under it.

Very disquieting news has been received of late by the Polish Government concerning the internment camp at Majdanek, near Lublin, in central Poland, the conditions in which appear to be now at least as bad as those in the Oświęcim camp have been for the last two years. The Majdanek camp has been constructed to hold 80,000 prisoners, and the evidence goes to show that its population is rising rapidly. The health conditions are said to be particularly bad.

During his recent visit to Scotland, President Raczkiewicz personally decorated the Rector and two other professors of the Edinburgh University in consideration of the great services rendered by them in connexion with the Polish Faculty of Medicine at that University.

SOVIET UNION.

Fighting has been in progress in the Novorossisk area and on the Taman Peninsula, but it is difficult to form a very clear idea as to its scale or, indeed, to be certain as to which side initiated it. Fighting has also been reported north-west of Moscow, but on no part of the front has the general situation altered. Approval and optimism continue to be shown as regards the war effort of the Allies, and a recent article in *Krasny Flot* ("Red Fleet"), dealing with the results hitherto achieved in the struggle on the Mediterranean and Atlantic sea routes and the prospects there for the future, emphasised that a turning point had really been reached in the Atlantic, in that German and Italian submarines were unable to oppose adequate means of attack to the growing quantity of Allied shipping and its increased means of defence.

On the 25th May, apart from messages exchanged between the Secretary of State and M. Molotov, a message of greeting was sent by M. Kalinin to His Majesty The King, on the occasion of the first anniversary of the British-Soviet Treaty of Alliance, to which message a reply was duly despatched. The People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs also gave a luncheon party on the 26th May to mark the occasion, at which Sir Archibald Clark Kerr, Admiral Standley and Mr. Joseph Davies were among the chief guests. Both *Pravda* and *Izvestiya* published leading articles on the subject of the treaty, and Viktorov, foreign editor of *Pravda*, dealt with it in a commentary broadcast to the U.S.S.R. All these articles made the point that the treaty had successfully answered the tests so far imposed on it. "To-day, when we look back on the events of the past

year, we can confidently say that the treaty did what it was meant to do." Reference was made by Viktorov to Stalin's pronouncement that the treaty marked the historic turning-point in the relations between the U.S.S.R. and Great Britain, and *Pravda* went so far as to say that it had determined the line of action of the Soviet Union for the war and also in the post-war period, in collaboration with England. All three articles underlined the fact that this collaboration would continue for twenty years after the conclusion of hostilities, and *Izvestiya* struck a new and important note by referring to the mutual interest of the two countries in establishing close and friendly co-operation after the restoration of peace for the organising of Europe's economic prosperity.

M. Stalin has once again employed his favourite device of answering a questionnaire posed by a foreign journalist for the purpose of making a personal pronouncement for universal consumption. The subject was the dissolution of the Comintern, which he described as proper and timely, because it facilitated the organisation of the common onslaught against Hitlerism. The dissolution of the Comintern exposed the lie that Moscow intended to intervene in the life of other nations and to "bolshevise" them; it exposed the "calumny of the adversaries of communism within the Labour movement to the effect that Communist parties in various countries were allegedly acting not in the interests of their people, but on orders from outside"; "it facilitated the work of patriots of all countries for uniting the progressive forces of their respective countries, regardless of party or religious faith, into a single camp of national liberation." It is difficult to escape the thought that the British Labour party may have figured very high up on the list of addressees for whom the message was composed, and that M. Stalin was doing his best to facilitate entry for the British Communist organisation into a new home in the precincts of the Labour party. Meanwhile, Sir Walter Citrine and other representatives of the T.U.C. are shortly to take advantage of an invitation to return the visit to this country last year of M. Shvernik and his party, and, should a decision have been taken in the meanwhile against admission to the Labour party of Mr. Pollitt and his colleagues, the T.U.C. delegates may find this subject cropping up only too frequently in the course of their journeys and conferences in the U.S.S.R.

The statement to the press on the 28th May by the chairman of the Soviet delegation at the United Nations Conference on Post-War Food Problems has once again focussed attention on the food situation in the U.S.S.R. M. Krutikov emphasised that the Soviet Union occupied a special place among the nations united against Germany, firstly, because it required food *now* to supply the immense army which it was maintaining in the field, and, secondly, because food was needed to secure the life and health of the plundered and impoverished people whom the Red Army had liberated from the invader. There seems to be no particular reason to fear that there has been any special deterioration of late in the position, but it must be recognised that the general population of the U.S.S.R., apart from the fighting services and personnel engaged in war industries, has been existing on a low standard of nutrition for a very long time now and that its power of resistance to climatic extremes and disease must necessarily have become considerably impaired. The bread ration in the Soviet Union remains at the same level, but meat and fats must be very scarce for those consumers who are not classified as being essential to the war effort. On the other hand, there is no evidence that the fighting services and essential workers are not being adequately nourished; indeed, this seems to have been sufficiently disproved by the performances of the troops in the field and by the industrial and other production figures claimed in official statements. The main food demands from abroad have been for concentrated commodities suitable for despatch to armies in the field—tinned meat, fats, &c.—and the only difficulty encountered in satisfying them has, of course, been that of shipping. At the same time, although the rate of despatch has for this reason not kept pace with demand, the Soviet authorities have not found it necessary so far to alter the priority schedule so as to give food a higher priority than munitions. *A propos* of this, President Roosevelt recently reported to Congress that the United States, between March 1941 and the 31st March, 1943, had shipped 283 millions of dollars' worth of food-stuffs to the U.S.S.R. So far as grain supplies are concerned, the Soviet Union has been compelled to make withdrawals from its reserves, but appreciable stocks are probably still available. Large additional areas were sown last year in Central Asia and Siberia to compensate partially for areas in Europe overrun by the enemy. The winter campaign of 1942-43 recovered the Kuban and Don areas and immense efforts have since been made to re-equip them with farm machinery, seed and livestock, more fortunate districts