

Russia could spare the oil; and it has been indicated to Moscow that no more practical means of winning Turkish confidence could be devised than to send a further instalment. Europe is full of rumours—quite unconfirmed, but highly plausible—that Turkey has been offered various pieces of non-Turkish territory if only she would revise her attitude towards Germany. She has agreed to the British proposal for the construction of the missing link of railway between Diarbekir and Arada, but subject to two interesting conditions. On the one hand Britain was asked to undertake some other railway contract at the same time—preferably between Antalya and Burdur—in order to make it more difficult for the Germans to criticise the other scheme; and, secondly, a somewhat vague claim with a view to improving railway communication with the East was pegged out for territorial rectification in Syria at the end of the war. The other direction in which the Turks may some day seek a rectification is the Turco-Bulgarian frontier.

From Bulgaria come a few scattered items. The Commander-in-Chief, General Lukash, has paid a visit to the Eastern Front and to Berlin, but nothing is known of his impressions. The Cabinet has decided to cut down the ordinary daily bread ration from 400 to 300 gr., and the special categories to a proportionate amount, the Minister of Commerce, M. Zagorov, explaining that the original ration was fixed before the exact amount of wheat reserves had been ascertained, and that it was now necessary to curtail it in order "to guarantee the existence of the non-productive urban population."

Information regarding the military situation in Yugoslavia remains necessarily fragmentary: but it is known that travellers between Germany and Turkey find it expedient to avoid the precarious route between Sofia and Belgrade. Colonel Mihailovitch is denounced by the Belgrade High Command as a "leader of outlaws and rebels," and the Prefect of Belgrade has issued a proclamation against communism. The Minister of the Interior, M. Achimovitch, has met the German Military Commanders of Nish and the more southerly districts, in order to discuss methods of administration in the Kosovo district. This, it appears, is to remain part of Serbia after all, and not to be assigned either to Bulgaria or to Albania (the latter solution had been favoured by the Italians). It was laid down that the Serbian and Albanian inhabitants should be assigned their due proportion of officials, and that both languages should be taught in the schools—an improvement on the practice in Yugoslavia.

A further stage was reached in the tragedy of Slovenia on the 16th December, when the Reich Minister, Dr. Frick, inaugurated Dr. Rainer as Statthalter of the new "Reichsgau" Carinthia. Rainer's main task was defined as the complete incorporation in the Reich of Southern Carinthia and Upper Carniola—in other words, the overwhelmingly Slovene districts lying between Ljubljana and the old Austrian border. This is, however, merely intended as the first step towards the "racial incorporation" of the territory south of the Karavanken Mountains. Ever since the Carlovingian Emperors a thousand years ago, said Frick, Bavarian colonists had been trickling into these lands, and the predominance of the German element throughout these centuries "gives us a clear legal claim to this country: when therefore the Führer in the near future reincorporates this territory conquered by German troops, he will merely be undoing an injustice done to the whole German people in 1918." Behind these grandiloquent phrases is concealed a policy of ruthless extermination directed against the whole Slovene nation, which by Frick's own showing has by dour endurance in the face of every difficulty withstood ten centuries of foreign enslavement, and must now be totally evicted from the soil of its fathers. Not even Poland provides such an example of totalitarian tyranny as unhappy Slovenia to-day. It is already known that over 100,000 people have been transported to Serbia, and to a lesser degree to Bosnia, after the confiscation of all their possessions: and in the districts not yet depopulated all Slovene schools have been closed, all cultural institutions wiped out, libraries and even historical archives deliberately destroyed, and, above all, the Catholic clergy subjected to every imaginable indignity and either interned or expelled. The Archbishop of Zagreb alone has made himself responsible for 500 penniless evicted Slovene priests. All this has been accompanied in case after case by desecration of the Host and unreproducible insults: another outrage is the removal from one district of all the children under 12; their whereabouts has been concealed from their parents.

Italy's behaviour in the small "Provincia di Lubiana" (Ljubljana), which she has been allowed to annex, compares favourably with that of her ally: for the clergy have been left unmolested, the schools and even the university remain open, and the Slovene language has not been suppressed as in the neighbouring province of Venezia Giulia. But Trieste has just been the scene of a monstrous trial, mentioned under "Italy" in last week's *Summary*, of over 60 Slovene and Croat irredentists, before a special tribunal of the Fascist Militia. It is the third time (the two previous occasions were the Gortan trial of 1929 in Pola, and that of Vidovets Marushits and 85 others in 1930 in Trieste) that this tribunal, composed not of jurists but of Party members, has been transferred from Rome to the Slav districts of the north-eastern frontier of Italy. The accused fell into three quite distinct groups, which it was the deliberate policy of the Public Prosecutor to identify with each other. Of these the smallest but most dangerous group were the terrorists, accused of numerous acts of sabotage since Italy entered the war. Their three main achievements were the blowing up of factories at Piacenza (where 90 persons were killed), Bologna and Klama in Istria, and railway bridges near Tarvis: and the Prosecution adduced a mass of material intended to show that the explosives had been supplied by the British Intelligence Service. The second category were Communists, whose main object was to infiltrate the much larger and more reputable "Edinos" organisation, round which for 80 years past under the old Austrian régime the entire political and cultural life of the Slovenes of Trieste and Istria has centred. Mixed up with the general charge, but in reality quite distinct from it, is an abortive attempt upon the life of Mussolini in September 1938, which one of the accused had planned but abandoned at the last moment under pressure from his family. Among the accused was the entire Executive Committee of "Edinos," which never dabbled in terrorism, and first on the list figured Dr. Lavoslav Chermel, long known as one of the leaders of the Slovene exiles in Yugoslavia, and author of an authoritative book on the fate of the Slav minority in Italy. Nine men were sentenced to death and five of them immediately shot, Dr. Chermel being among the four reprieved. All but four of the remainder received savage sentences varying from 3 to 30 years. There can be little doubt that Italy's aim in staging this trial has been to eliminate the leaders of the Slovene minority (as many as 2,000 were arrested as soon as Italy entered the war) and by identifying "irredentism" and terrorism (an attitude which is far from justified) to discourage the growth of sympathy either inside or outside Italy for one of the most oppressed minorities in the pre-war world.

THE MIDDLE EAST.

Japan's entry into the war has directly affected at least four countries of the Middle East. Egypt at once broke off diplomatic relations, and the Japanese Legation is to be expelled, though how to get its members to Japan is a problem still to be solved. Other Japanese nationals in Egypt will be repatriated or interned. In Iraq the Japanese Chargé d'Affaires and his party, who were in any case due to leave on the 11th December by Dutch aeroplane, cancelled their passage on the declaration of war; but the Iraqi Government has prevented their proceeding to Turkey, as they proposed to do, and, pending their departure by a more suitable route, is keeping them in Bagdad under surveillance. The Iraqi Government has also agreed to apply the equivalent of Trading-with-the-Enemy legislation to the Japanese Empire and Japanese-occupied territory. General Catroux has been asked to apply like measures in Syria, and to expel therefrom Japanese consular officers.

In Persia, where it is clearly desirable to take similar steps, we are handicapped by the fact that a state of war does not exist between Russia and Japan. This precludes joint Allied action regarding Japan, since even under the treaty (which was initialled by the Persian Government on the 15th December) Persia will be bound to break off relations with any Power only if both her new Allies have done the same. A way, however, may be found round the difficulty. Though the Japanese Legation at Tehran can no longer send cypher telegrams, there is strong suspicion that it possesses a secret wireless transmitter. In other ways, too, it exercises a pernicious influence, and the sooner it leaves Persia the better.