

an honourable collaboration, free from ulterior designs . . . united, we small peoples of the Balkans will as a single unit be great. To-day a new hour strikes for the Balkans." The reference in King Peter's speech to "two Unions"—that is, "beside the Balkan Union, a Central European Union, on the basis of a Czechoslovak-Polish Agreement"—obviously implies, in Yugoslav eyes at all events, that the newly-signed agreement, like the earlier agreement signed by MM. Sikorski and Benes, is intended as the first step to a much wider and comprehensive union, and that the two unions, even though geography may keep them distinct, are conceived as linked together by ties only less close than those which link the individual unions. But there is nothing to show that the Greek Government's ideas have yet progressed thus far.

It must be borne in mind, as a possible complication, that in Yugoslavia there exists another current of opinion, specially strong in the Serbian and Croatian Peasant parties, which, while desiring close friendship with Greece, attaches capital importance to re-establishing friendship with Bulgaria, and believes that this can best be attained by transforming the two kingdoms of Yugoslavia and Bulgaria into a Southern Slav Federation of four equal units, which would then face the outside world as a single unit in the wider Balkan confederacy. It is, however, obvious that the moment is not ripe for such a policy, with Bulgaria tied hand and foot to the Axis under a German King, and experimenting in rabid denationalisation at the expense of Greece and Serbia. It is also obvious that His Majesty's Government could not actively countenance a policy of putting the cart before the horse, but warmly welcome any action calculated to strengthen the joint position of its two heroic Balkan Allies, though at the same time it would discourage any action or pronouncement likely to prejudice the formation of a wider union at the right moment. This attitude of restrained benevolence is reflected in the British press. It is still too soon to estimate the effect in South-East Europe, though the open annoyance of the Germans at such "incredible audacity" on the part of two conquered peoples suggests that both Yugoslav and Greek opinion, though completely muzzled by an alien censor, read into the London Agreement clear proof that their friends in exile are confident of the future. The first reactions of the Turkish press are distinctly interesting. In *Aksham* M. Sadak assumes that Turkey must rejoice "at any step towards Balkan collaboration," while M. Yalchin in *Yeni Sabah* waxes eloquent about the ideals of moral justice which underlie the pact.

At Belgrade General Neditch, so far from throwing in his hand, as certain circumstantial rumours had suggested, has issued an Army Order assuming supreme command in Serbia, and demanding strictest unity and discipline under direst penalties. At the same time the whole tendency of the German-controlled Belgrade wireless is to indulge in ecstatic talk about the birth of a new Serbia on the narrowest possible Serbian nationalist lines, and "to pray for absolution" for all the faults of twenty "inglorious years"—in other words, to recant the Yugoslav heresy, and to revert to the tiny land-locked peasant State of thirty years ago.

If Neditch's resignation has proved to be false, the explanation offered for the story is now known to be true: Bulgarian troops have, at Germany's demand, occupied a further section of the Morava Valley between Nish and Belgrade, their main function being to guard this vital line of communication against the persistent raids of the guerrillas. In some quarters it is alleged that King Boris is desperately trying to keep down the number of troops supplied for this purpose, and is anxious to avoid action which will still further envenom relations between the two estranged kinsmen. But there can be little doubt that his main reason for caution lies in the growth of anti-war sentiment in Bulgaria, which keeps pace with the recrudescence of Russophilism and confidence in Russian victory in the teeth of a police terror against "Communists," real or alleged. Sofia may also be impressed by the appointment of the guerrilla leader, General Mihailovitch, as Yugoslav Minister of War, as a gesture in favour of Yugoslav unity and a disavowal of Neditch's Pan-Serbism. Indeed, there may at last be dawning upon some obtuse Bulgarian minds a consciousness of what Bulgaria has lost by turning away from Russia.

There are many indications that all is not well in Croatia, where passive resistance to Pavelitch is growing, and where an acute shortage of raw materials is holding up industrial effort. *Transocean* reports the arrest of General Maritch, the Croat Chief of Staff, the public being allowed to infer that he was reverting

to his original Yugoslav allegiance. Stories from a suspect but well-informed Italian source quote the satisfaction of a German journalist at getting out of Zagreb, where there are constant bomb outrages and street attacks by desperate Serbs. They also quote the clamour of the Ushtashi, who do not like to be hoist with their own petard, and who find to their vexation that the Germans no longer approve of their efforts to exterminate the Serb race, and that Göring himself has still not lost his sentimental attachment to the Serbs, as the best of a bad Balkan bunch.

Official Turkey seems to be recovering from its initial suspicion of the Moscow conversations despite the elaborate whispering campaign organised by Herr von Papen. Circumstantial accounts of what was said at Moscow have been passed on from Berlin to Angora, but there are various conflicting versions. On the one hand, Britain and Russia have agreed to keep the post-war settlement of Europe in their own hands, while, on the other, Mr. Eden has "offered Europe to the Bolsheviks as a purchase price," presumably for some vast Asiatic drive. In more concrete form, the Turks are reminded of the incident (of which Hitler has made such play) when Molotov is alleged to have demanded a foothold for Russia on the Straits. Now, the story goes, Russia has not only been promised a voice in the settlement of the Straits question, but a common frontier with Germany, and "the decisive voice" as to the fate of the Balkan States and Hungary; and we are asked to believe that, not satisfied with this, she has demanded the possession of Varna and Constantza. In view of the jittery state into which all these whisperings seem to have thrown the Turkish Foreign Minister, His Majesty's Ambassador was authorised to give certain frank and specific assurance—first, that the Straits question was not even mentioned, and that Stalin never of his own accord referred to Turkey, but adopted a friendly tone when it was mentioned; second, that the story of a Russo-British monopoly of post-war decisions was totally incorrect; and, third, that no decisions had been taken affecting the interests of Turkey or the Balkan States, and that Stalin had not demanded "a decisive voice." The Turks were pleased with this willingness to share the secrets of a fighting ally with one who is still an ally only on paper, but took the line that, if the Straits were not mentioned, they should have been. Another instance of the same mentality, but with more justification, was displayed in their reaction to assurances that the Soviet attitude in the Kurdish question was merely cultural, not political; "cultural," came the answer, was "far worse than political."

In order to deprive the Turkish Government of the last excuse for nervousness, instructions were sent to Angora to give to the Turkish President a categorical assurance that the British Secretary of State would never consent to discuss either the Straits or any other Turkish frontier without first informing the Turkish Government. More than this could not reasonably be demanded, especially as it must by now have become clear to Angora that the main aim of Moscow is the destruction of German military power, and that a strong and flourishing Turkey fits into this picture of a future Europe.

It seems more than ever certain that Ribbentrop's blundering efforts to square the Hungaro-Roumanian circle are near to final failure. Roumanian opinion, already horrified at the losses sustained on the Russian front, in an enterprise which goes far beyond the original aim of recovering Bessarabia, and now faced by disaster for their armies in the Crimea and Transdnistria, is rendered still more restive by the manifest wooing of Hungary by the Axis, as shown in the recent visits of Ribbentrop and Ciano to Budapest (for the latter, see under "Italy")—soon to be followed by that of Field-Marshal Keitel, who obviously would only leave the Eastern Front for a reason of the first importance. Of lesser importance, but highly significant, is the reception accorded to M. Tasnady-Nagy, President of the Hungarian Chamber, in Berlin; he was welcomed by the Reichstag (save the mark!), by Ministers, Party leaders and high officers, and, in reply to speeches on Hungaro-German cultural relations, declared that the time for half-solutions and compromisers was past, and that Hungary was happy to fight at Germany's side for "a common destiny." There is good reason to suspect that Germany is pressing Hungary and Bulgaria, but especially the former, to throw their whole military weight into the German scale, first by making the sacrifices in blood which Roumania has already made, and, second, by providing garrison troops in the Western Balkans, with a view to releasing the Axis armies of occupation for possible use in a Mediterranean