

enemy and managing and defending French interests abroad. The Governments of the United Nations have been officially notified of the formation of the Committee and requested to accord it recognition. His Majesty's Government have not yet replied to this request, and are in consultation with the United States Government as regards the terms of their reply.

On the 7th June the Committee, while adopting an idea originally put forward by General Giraud of a small War Cabinet or Committee, the membership of which was not announced, proceeded to allot a certain number of Commissariats, seven of the new Commissaries being drawn from outside the ranks of the Committee. Of the new nominees, MM. Plevin, Diethelm, Adrien Tixier have held important posts in the Fighting French organisation, MM. Couve de Murville, René Mayer and Abadie have served General Giraud, while M. Henri Bonnet, former Director of the League of Nations Institute of Intellectual Co-operation, who came to this country from Bordeaux in June 1940, and then went to the United States, and who may be classed as a "neutral," takes over Information. Thus both M. Soustelle and M. Labarthe, who performed this duty respectively for Generals de Gaulle and Giraud, cease to hold office.

General de Gaulle addressed several meetings of his supporters in the course of the week; and both he and General Giraud made friendly references to one another on the same platform. They both addressed the Algerian *Délégations Financières*. General de Gaulle's many pronouncements and his call on the 6th June for "a Fourth Republic—that of national renovation," as well as the speeches of M. Philip and M. Capitan, leader of the de Gaullist movement in Algeria, suggest that issues of internal politics may henceforth be taken up vigorously. General Giraud's broadcast of the 4th June, which was singularly elevated in tone, maintained a balance which may henceforth not be so easy in its triple tribute to Fighting France, to those who are suffering and resisting inside France itself, and to others "who must be included in the same salute"—men "faithful to discipline and to the principle of obeying orders"—the Armies of Africa, who "waged an incredible struggle against the Italian and German Armistice Commissions," pending the Allied landing in Africa.

Laval, having at least temporarily got the better of "high-up" opposition, which assumed (so it would seem) the dimensions of a plot, broke a seven months' silence, by a long broadcast on the 5th June, after it had been further postponed as a result of Italian objections. The Italians are reliably reported to have scouted his announcing an even symbolical reconstruction of the French army and fleet. He therefore at the outset stressed France's helplessness: without army, fleet, empire, gold. It had been painful for him to go on his recent trip "abroad." He had had to bear all the weight of the "errors" and "betrayals" of others. He then went on to record his own (somewhat specious) claims to speak on behalf of France in the matter of reconciliation with Germany and Italy, with both of whom "we must first of all live in peace and maintain trusting and friendly relations." But while the Axis Powers were "giving their blood to stem Bolshevism," France must "by her work take her share of the common effort and sacrifice." She could not remain indifferent. "She can and must become a country freely associated, instead of continuing to maintain the status of a dependent country. That is the essential aim of the policy pursued by the Government." The Axis Powers appreciated this; and he had thus "just succeeded in obtaining the formation of the First Regiment of France. . . . In it lies promise and hope for our new army" (an army, be it noted, already promised by Hitler to Pétain last November). He had also been promised that they should not have to suffer along the Rhône from a demarcation line "such as we already know and which divides our territory." But (no doubt with his Axis listeners in view) Laval did not omit to mention the "all-too-numerous" Frenchmen who awaited deliverance from Britain, the United States and Russia, and rejoiced over "military events which took place recently in Tunisia," though he declared that passion prevented them from seeing that an "invasion of Europe" was a "probably hopeless enterprise." In any case it meant the ruin of their country from the skies. They should also realise that "Bolshevism cannot for any time remain the ally of Anglo-Saxon capitalism. . . . If the Allies were to win, the Anglo-Saxon world would very soon have to face the Soviets," and the result of the struggle could not be open to doubt: a Soviet Europe; whereas what he propounded was an organisation (on a popular basis) of the peoples of the Continent such that "neither the victorious nor the defeated nations will ever again feel tempted to rise against each other." France had nothing to fear from this competition.

These hints and references to the international situation were carefully dove-tailed into a speech which was also an apologia for labour conscription and an explanation of the situation at home. Laval made the most of the "100,000" prisoners who "have been or are in course of being released"; 250,000 others "are about to change their status . . . into that of free workers." He had decided to call up the 1942 class; the younger would be the first to leave. "They belong to all walks of life; thus the principle of equality would be respected." By an agreement reached before his last visit to Germany "220,000 workers must leave for Germany between the 1st April and the 1st July." He promised an improvement in the wages situation, consequent upon negotiations with the occupation authorities, and made it clear that these authorities had at least received "orders" to co-operate in suppressing the Black Market (as is well known, the occupying authorities have long been recognised to be the worst offenders here). At the same time he gave figures to disprove the charge that "the Germans take everything." Discipline was necessary: the workers must leave for Germany when designated; producers must deliver their quotas of food-stuffs; officials must be reliable and not "ask themselves questions." He would not hesitate to use force and to act in accordance with his responsibilities, even at the cost of unpopularity. His policy had "its roots in the permanent necessities of our country."

The opposition to and evasion of labour conscription, to which Laval also referred in his speech, have been widespread; but evasion has had two aspects, since though it meant in the case of the workers that they might "go underground," and in the case of sons of middle-class families that they might escape to the countryside or abroad to join Fighting France, it also might mean mere "dodging"; and attacks on *embusqués*, on cases of class discrimination, of parents buying off their sons have been widespread. The Catholic Church had for the latter reason shown itself all the more anxious not to appear to be supporting the bourgeoisie against the masses; though Cardinal Liénart already sought to reconcile this need with the defence of those who evade the obligation for patriotic reasons. (See *Summary* No. 185.) Evidence now shows that seminarists have protested against exemption; and corroborating the protest of the Cardinals and Archbishops at Lyons on the 5th February, the President of the Council of the Protestant Federation himself protested to Laval, while early in May a message was read in all Protestant Churches in France against a measure which destroyed or dismembered thousands of homes while their heads or sons had to work in exile "among dangers faced for a cause which they had not chosen." These protests and those contained in the inspired "open letter to the Marshal" by students of Paris University, declaring that "a true Frenchman can only refuse absolutely to obey the order to work for the triumph of Germany," revealed the moral helplessness of Laval's position. Indeed, it is by now evident that the deportations have done more than any other single act of the Germans to create unity among all French people.

Laval thus becomes the obvious scapegoat; and this circumstance contributes to explain the "plot against Laval." This would appear to have been forestalled by a letter from Hitler to Pétain on the 1st May (see *Summary* No. 189), but reports of it were revived by Déat in a series of recent articles in the Paris *Œuvre* corroborated by Luchaire's *Les Nouveaux Temps*. Behind the plot are high Vichy circles, who attack Laval's internal programme in the name of "progress" and "socialism," soldiers "furious at not having been able to use the dépôts of clandestine arms they have made," "synarchists" and other big business elements, Churchmen and "attentistes du vieux syndicalisme." Déat claims to have inside knowledge that the scheme—inspired by the *Action Française* ideal of *la France seule*—is to get rid of Laval, now impossibly unpopular, and set up a strong government which would be in a middle position *vis-à-vis* the Germans and the invaders. Generals Giraud and de Gaulle are viewed as playing a useful rôle *conservatoire* despite their "mediocrity." Other rumours, reaching Madrid from Paris, point to a plan whereby Pétain would remain Head of the State but with the title and powers of Regent—though this did not necessarily imply monarchy. It is even suggested that among those behind the latter scheme are some of the small number of volunteers who fought in Tunisia on the Axis side, on whom new information is available. Rahn and other German envoys found the French officials in Tunisia so hostile that they had to engineer an S.O.L. and Doriotist "Putsch" which took place on the 25th November last. This prepared the way for the arrival of a group of officers led by Lieut.-Colonel de Jonchay, who were forced upon Admiral Estéva in the name of the Marshal. By February they had succeeded in getting together some hundred volunteers to fight "the