

There exists, however, a serious probability that the Swedish Communist organ reflects the suspicions of Moscow, which has been quick to reproduce the substance of the article in its propaganda. It is clear, in any case, that the refugee problem is one to which, in present circumstances, the Swedish Government will have to devote very great care, if its relations with the U.S.S.R. are not to be compromised.

On the other hand, the military attaché and his subordinate at the Hungarian Legation in Stockholm have been called upon to withdraw, and their further treatment is under consideration. The Swedish Foreign Office also confirmed on the 15th October the total cessation of ball-bearing exports to Germany.

A Swedo-Russian Society was recently formed in Göteborg, though the list of its leading members is not impressive, except for the inclusion of Professor Segerstedt. A more promising step has been the inauguration in Helsinki on the 15th October of a Finland-Soviet Union Society, under the presidency of M. Paasikivi. It sent a cordial message of goodwill to Marshal Stalin, to which he replied on the 23rd October, expressing confidence that friendly relations would be established between the two countries.

Soviet opinion does not appear as yet to be wholly satisfied with the manner in which Finland is discharging her obligations under the Armistice agreement. Moscow radio broadcast a *Tass* report of the 15th October from Helsinki, which, while commending the Finnish Government for the evacuation of Porkkala and the severance of relations with the remaining Axis satellites, and expressing satisfaction with the suppression of Fascist organisations, tempered by regrets at the delay in suppressing *Ajan Suunta*, criticised the delay in handing over war material and in liberating Soviet prisoners of war and civilians in accordance with the agreement. The main count in the indictment, however, was that Finland had been dragging out the disarmament of German troops on her territory, that she had not started operations against the German forces in the north until the 1st October, and that even then she had only used an inconsiderable part of her army.

On the 21st October the more moderate members of the Finnish Social Democratic Party made an attempt at a purge, which only served to demonstrate their feebleness and futility, and the continuing dominance of M. Tanner. Forty-three leading party members appealed on that date to the party council to procure the resignation of those who had opposed a separate peace and advocated territorial aggrandisement in the war. At the meeting of the council on the following day, however, M. Tanner succeeded in inflicting a crushing defeat upon his opponents.

As the expectation of early liberation increases, the interest of all quarters in Norway, whether German, quisling or Home Front, shows signs of shifting from the political to the military field. The Germans have recently shown great activity in making arrests—one estimate is as high as 2,000 in the course of the last fortnight—but in a great proportion of cases no charge of subversive activities has been made, the persons taken being selected for their prominence as suitable hostages, whose detention may deter a national rising in the event of active hostilities. There is little or no sign of any intention on the part of the occupying forces to withdraw; on the contrary, it is reported that energetic preparations are being made to facilitate the rapid transference of reinforcements to the north. At the same time, Quisling and his supporters have been continuing their attempts to construct out of the Hird—under colour of a compulsory factory guard—a body trained in the use of arms against the day when fighting may be the only alternative to surrender. Similarly, the Home Front has been devoting most of its attention to preparations for the final struggle for liberation, sabotage against the German war machine and the elimination of informers appear to have been more frequent than published reports would indicate, and there is an increased sense of discipline, though the events leading to the recent state of emergency at Hønefoss seem to have been something in the nature of premature guerrilla fighting, instigated by the self-styled "Freedom Council," which is the Communist or activist rival to the orthodox Home Front leadership. On the whole, however, the authority of the latter has been decidedly increased.

In spite of the ostensible revocation of the state of emergency in Denmark on the 15th October, there is reason to believe that recent German arrests have included some of the leading figures in the resistance movement, such as Professor Mogens Fog. It is also authoritatively stated in Danish circles that there have been a large number of executions not yet officially acknowledged.

In Iceland a new Government consisting of members of the Conservative, Communist and Socialist parties was formed on the 21st October, under Olafur Thors (Conservative) as Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs.

LOW COUNTRIES.

The present state and prospects of the Belgian economy have been examined by Professor Baudhuin, a distinguished economist of the University of Louvain. In his opinion Belgium has sustained less damage during the recent Occupation than during that of 1914-18; he notes that the mines and most of the factories have remained undamaged. He also praises the courage and patriotism shown by the working class during the last Occupation, but is at pains to add that the big industrialists, so far from collaborating with the Germans, carefully avoided assisting them and only kept their works going in order to prevent the deportation of their hands to Germany, and to enable Belgium to pay for necessary imports. Professor Baudhuin thinks that Belgium's long-term economic prospects are good, but severely condemns the policy of the present Government; in so far as they are planning at all they are planning badly; in particular, they have completely failed to improve the supply of food.

On this last point the great mass of Belgian opinion would agree with Professor Baudhuin. Hunger and discontent appear to be increasing in exact correspondence. Nor is adequate allowance made for the very great difficulties that confront the Government, which is generally taxed with weakness and inefficiency. Even its financial policy, which on the whole has been well received, has not given it commanding prestige. It is significant that men of so widely differing opinions as the Catholic Professor Baudhuin and the veteran Socialist Senator de Brouckère refer to it with contempt.

The Government, however, is resolved that order must be maintained and has announced its decision to enforce the law which prohibits the holding of open-air meetings without the consent of the Burgomaster of the Commune concerned.

FRANCE.

It was announced on the 23rd October that Great Britain, the United States and Russia had recognised General de Gaulle's administration as the Provisional Government of the French Republic. The same step was taken by Australia, Canada, New Zealand, South Africa and Brazil. Recognition had already been granted in recent months by the other European Allies.

The statement announcing the British Government's decision said that, the Supreme Allied Commander having reached agreement with the French authorities regarding the transformation of the greater part of France into an interior zone as provided for in the Anglo-French Civil Affairs agreement of the 25th August (see *Summary* No. 256), the central French authority now effectively exercised the powers of government in that area. This circumstance made it appropriate that His Majesty's Government should recognise the present French administration as the Provisional Government of France and henceforth treat with it on that basis.

Mr. Stettinius, in announcing the similar American decision in Washington, said: "To-day the vast majority of Frenchmen are free. They have had opportunity during recent weeks to demonstrate their desire to have the duties and obligations of government assumed by the administration which is now functioning in Paris, and which has been reconstituted and strengthened by the inclusion of leaders of the valiant forces of resistance within France. . . . Pending the expression of the will of the French people through the action of their duly elected representatives," the Provisional Government, in its efforts to prosecute the war until final victory, and to lay the foundations for the rehabilitation of France "could count on "the continued full and friendly co-operation" of the United States (see also below under "United States"). The Moscow announcement was equally friendly (see above under "U.S.S.R.").

The simultaneous recognition by the three Great Allies which had been hoped for in France as an outcome of the Moscow discussions, was warmly welcomed by M. Bidault, who declared that France would now go forward with a new will to war and could return with her head high into the concert of nations. The decision is generally taken to involve the release of French assets "frozen" in the United States and France's inclusion in the European Advisory Commission; while it further gives a special interest to the proposed eventual inclusion of France among the five Great Powers to have a permanent seat on the Security Council of the international organisation devised by the Dumbarton Oaks Conference, a decision soft-pedalled in France at the time.

The new delimitation of zones had actually been announced by the French Council of Ministers on the 20th October as effective from the 21st. The French

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