

decisions proceeded from "an unmistakable distrust of the people," and that the alleged need to collect all arms for the soldiers was a mere pretext, since the army needed heavy arms, not the light arms of the Patriotic Guard. "Conscious of the seriousness of the situation created by the Government's decisions," the Political Bureau appealed to "all patriots to be very much on their guard and to foil all provocative acts" which might be taken against them. It directed its representative on the C.N.R. to obtain the suspension of the Government's measures, invited the Communist members of the Departmental Committees of Liberation to stimulate the committees "to safeguard the rights of the Resistance movement" and instructed the Communist members of the Consultative Assembly to express "the misgivings of the people, who do not want to be delivered defenceless to the treacherous blows of the Fifth Column."

Fortunately the C.N.R. has proved more conciliatory. After a meeting on the 3rd November, it announced that it had unanimously decided to do away with the name "Patriotic Militia" and to apply instead to all groups under its supervision the designation of "Civic and Republican Guards." It had also approved a plan to give these Guards a legal status, and it published a communication which it had sent to the Government, expressing its desire to collaborate with it loyally and suggesting that its plan, which had been adopted unanimously, should form the basis for further discussions. The plan proposes that the Civic Guards, who are to exercise "patriotic vigilance throughout the country" should have depots of arms in places supervised by the municipalities and for which the local Committees of Liberation would be responsible. In the ordinary way these arms would be used only for specially defined purposes and only a few responsible officers of the Guards would carry arms regularly, but in certain cases of urgency the Guards might use their weapons first and account to the public authorities afterwards. It remains to be seen whether a compromise on these lines will be acceptable to the Government. In the meantime some attempts are being made to force its hand. Thus a mass meeting organised by the Paris Committee of Liberation to glorify the rôle of the Patriotic Militia was held in the Vélodrome d'Hiver on the 4th November and among the speakers was the President of the C.N.R. himself, who said that the Militia had now reached the second stage in their career, the stage of "total integration in the defence of the Republic" under the name of Civic Republican Guards.

On the 31st October, the Council of Ministers approved an ordinance setting up a High Court of Justice to try members of the "so-called Government of Vichy." This Court will be composed of the five highest French magistrates, the President of the *Cour de Cassation* and the presidents of the different Chambers of that court. It will have 24 jurors chosen from a list of 100 names drawn up by the Provisional Consultative Assembly and comprising 33 Senators, 33 Deputies and 34 non-parliamentary members of the Assembly.

The appeal of Georges Suarez against the death sentence recently pronounced by the Paris Court of Justice has been rejected by the *Cour de Cassation* and he has made a final appeal to General de Gaulle. Recent sentences include that of penal servitude for life on General Pinsard, former Inspector-General of the Vichy Legion of French Volunteers, and recent arrests that of Sisley Huddleston who became a French citizen after the Armistice of 1940, and distinguished himself by the fervour of his Pétainist and anti-British sentiments.

The creation of factory committees, which was decided in principle by the Government on the 29th September, was the subject of a draft ordinance adopted by the Cabinet on the 31st October. This provides for the establishment of committees representing workers and management in all factories with over 100 employees. Their functions will be not only social but economic, since they must be kept informed of the financial and general situation of the factory, they must be shown all documents normally communicated to shareholders, and their reports must be laid before the general assembly of shareholders. They have the right to suggest means of increasing production in the factory.

The financial measures adopted by the Government on the 3rd November close a period of tension when many eyes were focussed on the Belgian financial experiment and the fear that similar measures might be applied in France was causing a flight from the currency and a run on notes of small denomination. Press comment on the Belgian measures has not been favourable, and they were violently attacked by the Communists for penalising the peasants. The French Government has instead decided to issue a 3 per cent. long-term loan at par, to be called the Liberation Loan, in order to mop up surplus currency. Upon the success of this loan will depend the decision whether further measures should be taken. Meanwhile, the severe measures directed against those who profited

by the occupation (see *Summary 261*) form a complement to the new loan. The Treasury situation is satisfactory and the "rentes" are rising, while the comparatively low rate of interest offered on the new loan, the first ever to be issued at par, indicates the strong position of the Government at present.

(See also under "Spain" and "Middle East.")

SPAIN AND PORTUGAL.

Everything goes to show that the military phase of the activities of the Spanish *maquis* along the Pyrenees is definitely over. The clearing of the Val d'Aran by Spanish regular troops reported last week, and since confirmed, is probably the last operation of any consequence before winter prevents even guerrilla fighting in those high, windswept passes. The political phase, however, is by no means over; indeed, the Congress of the *Unión Nacional* in Toulouse, which ended on the 5th November, not only excited the delegates themselves, as was natural, but, thanks to Reuters and the B.B.C., attracted a world-wide publicity which neither its merits nor its significance deserved. But, even here the atmosphere was calmer: *Radio Toulouse* no longer incites the Spaniards to rebellion, and there are indications that counsels of prudence from General Miaja in Mexico, from Dr. Negrín, still in London, and not improbably from Moscow, too, have persuaded the Spanish men of the *maquis* that the moment has not yet come for Franco to be driven out. The immediate threat, never very grave, has receded, but the future situation will not be comfortable for the Falange régime. The probable infiltration of hostile men and propaganda into Barcelona, with its large, restless, industrial proletariat, may have serious results in undermining Franco's position during the winter months.

The Caudillo on his side has not been idle, and in order to get full publicity for an explanation of his political position—which was certainly overdue—he has given an interview to the B.U.P. correspondent in Madrid. The purpose of this unusual step was to stake a claim to be heard at the peace table. Undeterred by modesty or by apprehensions of misunderstanding, General Franco proceeded to justify his claim by painting a picture of Spanish policy since 1939 which the epoptic commentator can describe only as amazing in its impudence. By a play on words he claimed a voice in the peace settlement on the specious grounds that Spain had shown a desire for peace (as if that was a major virtue) by remaining at peace. He took credit for not having stabbed France in the back in 1940, an act forbidden by "our traditional chivalry." But the cream of his remarks is in his description of Spain as an "organic democracy." In the sense that anything organic is potentially putrescent, this is perhaps a defensible definition. When we remember that nowhere in the world is the gulf between words and their meaning deeper and wider than in Falange Spain, there is still room for astonishment at the Caudillo's Alice-in-Wonderland description of the Spanish State as based upon "the popular will and purest Christian tenets." The phrase "the popular will," which at first glance seems hardly applicable to Franco Spain, would doubtless be justified by its author in the recent syndical elections of which much has been made in the Spanish press. These elections to choose the delegates for the several corporations have been held with the sole idea of impressing foreign opinion that a free, popular election has taken place in Spain. In fact, the candidates for each corporation were limited to two or three, and were nominated by the Falange Syndicates themselves. Since it was important for propaganda that the greatest number of voters be brought to the polls, or at least be registered by their vote, certain devices were practised to this end. First, all blank papers counted as a vote for the first candidate on the list who was, of course, the Falange first choice. Secondly, employers were made responsible for their workers going to the polls and defaulters were to be heavily fined for their anti-democratic attempt against the liberty of the vote. Thirdly, each voter received a paper which he had to have stamped at the polling-booth and which he was told to keep, the implication being that he would be called upon to produce it next time he wanted a ration card or identity papers. So much for the expression of "popular will." As to "the purest Christian tenets," General Franco, of course, would have to exclude from their application the sanctity of human life and liberty, for there are still nearly 150,000 political prisoners awaiting trial or under preventive arrest, and it was admitted confidentially by the Director of Prisons that 70 political executions took place in September and that 1,137 persons were then lying under sentence of death.

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