

Air-raid precautions are being speeded up in Roumania. Special institutions (for severe surgical cases and for gas casualties) have been opened in Bucharest.

It has emerged clearly enough from their recent utterances that the main purposes for which the Lieutenant-General of Albania recalled Ekrem Libohova to the puppet premiership early this month were, firstly, to maintain order and, secondly, to obtain recruits. Various other scraps of information show that General Pariani is still seeking to attain these ends by a policy of conciliation. More technical schools are being opened, more public expenditure is foreshadowed and more pensions have been granted to Italophil officials. At the same time, however, the local Fascist organisation is being overhauled, a new prefect of Shkodra, a new chief of police and more policemen have been appointed, and at Tirana a curfew has been started. General Pariani certainly seems to have reason for anxiety, for, according to a reliable report, the so-called "Communist" guerrillas joined forces last autumn with the so-called "Nationalists," and all are now fighting under a council of national liberation, while two clandestine newspapers circulate throughout the country. The Italians sent the gendarmerie and certain tribal chiefs against the guerrillas, but with little success, and in at least one recent instance when Italian troops have been employed the guerrillas are reported to have defeated them. Latterly, however, there appears to have been a lull as both sides were tired of fighting.

In Bulgaria, the most demonstrative emphasis was laid on friendship with Roumania; the most real importance probably attached to the conversations with Hungary reported last week. General Lukas returned to Bulgaria after a visit lasting three days. A second attempt has been made on the life of a wireless engineer who has been active in detecting secret Communist radio transmitters. Three of the seven assailants, said to be Jewish Communists, were shot as they fled.

There has been severe fighting in the mountains of Montenegro, Hercegovina and the Sandjak, where the German punitive expedition, supported by Ustashe and Bulgarians, is attempting to destroy resistance in an area hitherto regarded as peculiarly Italian-occupied. The Partisans state that amongst their prisoners are Czechs and Italians, who had been in German formations under German officers. By occupying Biotche, the Partisans claim to have cut the enemy communication between Podgoritza and Kolashin in Southern Montenegro.

The position of General Mihaylovitch and his chetniks is obscure. His Majesty's Government sent Mihaylovitch a note, which had the personal approval of the Yugoslav Prime Minister. The note held out the prospect of more material help, but only on condition that the General should devote his activities to opposing the Axis and endeavour to collaborate with other Yugoslavs against the common enemy. In a proclamation calling for general resistance to the latest enemy offensive, "Tito," the Partisan commander, made no mention of opposition from Mihaylovitch's chetniks. The only Yugoslavs mentioned as collaborating with the enemy were Croat Ustashe and Domobrantzi, "all dressed in German uniforms." On the 28th May Radio "Free Yugoslavia," after a long silence, mentioned Mihaylovitch again, merely to state that he had had no share in the recent resistance to the Axis. The Belgrade press reported that bodies of insurgents were surrendering to the Germans, amongst them "Jurishitch and Popovitch, well-known followers of Mihaylovitch," who had stated that, in the absence of British help, they had seen the uselessness of further resistance.

The Hungarian press continued to report fighting in the hills of Northern Srem in mid-May. A deputation of local inhabitants to Dr. Pavelitch was assured by him that the present "unpleasantness" would soon be ended.

Sabotage continued to be reported from Slovenia (where, "Free Yugoslavia" ambiguously said, the Slovene women were revolting); and a Russian source on the 17th May reported the meeting of an Italian battalion near Novo Mesto.

The Allied success in Tunisia evidently caused much rejoicing in Belgrade. *Novo Vreme* took the Serbian friends of Britain and America to task for trying to spread the belief that an Anglo-American invasion of the Balkans was imminent.

Transocean reported a curious decree by the Croatian Government, on the 22nd May, abolishing collective punishments for acts of terrorism. It suggests that the only effect of such punishments had been to unite the population against the Government.

The Yugoslav Government in London have still been prevented by internal dissension from making any declaration of future policy. Negotiations are proceeding between the Prime Minister and Dr. Shubashitch, the Ban of Croatia.

who was so infuriated by the pan-Serb attitude of the Yugoslav Embassy at Washington that, while in the United States, he repudiated the authority of the Yugoslav Government. The Yugoslav Prime Minister is hopeful of an early settlement, and King Peter is exercising his influence in favour of harmony.

On the 29th May, the second anniversary of the battle of Crete, M. Sophocles Venizelos, now Greek Minister of Marine, broadcast from Egypt to his compatriots, paying a special tribute as a Cretan to the valour of the Cretans, assuring the Greeks that the day of liberation was not far off and urging them all to organise themselves so that when it came they could make a valuable contribution to victory. Besides more reports of resistance—and reprisals by the Germans and Italians—in Thessaly, a press report states that a band crossed the Corinth Canal and successfully attacked Italian posts in the northern Peloponnesus. Though the puppet government seems in most places to have given up trying to mobilise the population, it is stated that in Corfu three classes have been called up and sent to Albania, and that after working on their own land peasant men and women between 18 and 60 are now ordered to put in two spells of five days every month helping landowners who are short of labour. An eloquent indication of the living conditions of a bread-eating people is that their meagre bread ration has been further reduced.

Although Moscow has never made real efforts to propagate communism on the unfavourable soil of Turkey, and the Turkish authorities have always taken good care that it should not take root there, the formal dissolution of the Comintern has probably caused more relief in Turkey than might be supposed from the guarded comments of the Turkish press. The papers refrain from any suggestion that the event may favour the development of Turkish relations with Russia, and most of them expatiate on the gain for the Allied cause which it represents. The Germans are no doubt holding a threat of the occupation of European Turkey over the heads of the Angora Government, and German propaganda tries to play upon Turkish susceptibilities by pointing out how the abandonment of neutrality would jeopardise the evolution of modern Turkey, leave her too weak at the end of the war to enforce her rights and be a stab in the back incompatible with her honour. It is indeed not impossible that the desire to have the relative strength of the Turkish army at its peak when the time comes for peace-making is a potent factor at Angora. At any rate, official pronouncements have again been laying much emphasis on Turkey's neutral intentions. Meanwhile the Grand National Assembly has been passing the budget, and if it introduces increases in taxation which are explained as merely temporary, it in any case provides a generous addition to the vote of education. Rains have fallen at the right time for the grain crops, and we are supplying 20,000 tons of wheat to help the Turkish Government to tide over the interval until the harvest.

THE MIDDLE EAST.

After occupying three days of the Chamber's time with his interpellation on the probity of the Egyptian Government, Makram Ebeid was refused further time, and the next two days were taken up with the Government's reply. The debate ended with a unanimous vote of confidence in the Government, all but two members of the Opposition withdrawing in protest against the decision not to give Makram a further opportunity to speak.

A day or two later His Majesty's Ambassador took the opportunity of conveying to Nahas the necessity of his resuming correct relations with the King, and also of his putting the Government house in order. Lord Killearn pointed out how dangerous it was for the Prime Minister to show favour to his relatives, and to cause discontent by exceptional treatment of officials. Moreover, certain Ministers who had shown xenophobic tendencies should be replaced. Nahas took this advice well. He agreed that he should see the King as soon as possible, and would tell him that he had never had the slightest intention of saying anything derogatory to His Majesty. In this way he hoped to explain away the incident at the Turkish Legation, when he was alleged to have spoken offensively to the First Chamberlain. On the other hand, he was anxious that the Palace should not interfere in the internal administration of the army, or in the appointment to the vacant post of vice-Rector of the Azhar University. Nahas felt strongly that the King should only appoint such functionaries on the Prime Minister's advice; if not, there was grave danger of a new vice-Rector being appointed of the same