

In Slovakia, the third anniversary of the Vienna Award (which restored the southern fringe of Slovakia to Hungary) was the occasion of a very outspoken criticism, even in official circles in Bratislava: and this criticism culminated in anti-Hungarian demonstrations and press articles, some going so far as to treat the recovery of Košice (Kassa) as a national demand. The Budapest Government has taken this agitation quite seriously, and is believed to have made diplomatic representations. An interesting storm in a tea cup has been aroused by the mild sentences of imprisonment, in no case exceeding one year, imposed upon about thirty alleged *saboteurs* by the District Court of Banská Bystrica. On this the Minister of the Interior, M. Mach, showed his zeal for Germany by declaring that the judge ought to be dismissed for not imposing death sentences. Mach has latterly been much in evidence, and made a statement to the effect that all allegations of Slovak reluctance to fight against Russia were grossly untrue. It may have been under his influence that *Gardista*, the organ of the Hlinka Youth, on the 4th November, announced that independent Slovakia had become dear to Hitler's heart.

POLAND.

The written answer which the Polish Ambassador at Kuibyshev eventually received from M. Molotov to his official note of protest against the non-implementing by the Soviet authorities of the agreement of the 30th July was not regarded as satisfactory by the Polish Government, although it gave consent to some 15,000-20,000 Polish soldiers being sent to the United Kingdom or the Middle East. The Polish army in the U.S.S.R. was, however, to be limited to the figure of 30,000 mentioned in Protocol No. 2 of the 19th August. This is an interpretation which the Polish Government are not disposed to accept, and Professor Kot has since expressed their views on the matter to M. Stalin in a personal conversation. Although full information regarding this conversation has not yet come to hand, the attitude of Stalin was sufficiently favourable to persuade M. Kot to recommend General Sikorski to proceed with his visit to the U.S.S.R. He is expected to leave Egypt on the 22nd November. The General recently visited the Polish troops at Tobruk. Cumulative evidence from several sources, including that of a neutral nutrition expert who in September last visited personally four of the five provinces composing the General Government, goes to show that the food situation in that part of Poland is now worse than it has been since the beginning of the war. This year's harvest in Central Poland, though better than that of 1940, was not a bountiful one. The long and cold winter, lasting till May of this year, destroyed many fruit trees, while the consequent late sowings, followed by continued rains in July and August, which greatly delayed the harvest, are said to have reduced the yield by 20 per cent. During the past summer and up to September the daily soup ration in the Warsaw relief kitchens was below 200 calories, as against over 400 in the winter of 1940-41. In September the rate in other parts of the General Government was between 200 and 300. In Warsaw the kitchens are seldom able to issue bread together with soup, and potatoes are not always available. Prices on the open market are so exorbitant that the Polish Central Relief Committee cannot supplement from that source the slender supplies it receives for ration cards. A suit of clothes now costs over 1,000 zloté (£40 at the pre-war rate of exchange), coal costs 1,500 zloté and wood 800 zloté a ton. As the wages of working men and clerks have remained practically unchanged since 1938, thousands of persons belonging to these categories are obliged, like the numerous unemployed, to apply for relief—and only too often to wait for it in vain. In August 80,000 persons in Warsaw alone were thus waiting for relief. About 20 per cent. of the Polish population of Warsaw, including 50,000 children, are at present dependent on charity. In the Lwów district the food situation is reported to be at least as bad as it is in Warsaw, in consequence partly of bad agriculture during the Soviet occupation and partly of the destruction of tractors by the retreating Russians. Eggs, poultry and fish are extremely scarce—in a district where two and a half years ago food-stuffs were abundant and in great variety—and clothing is almost unobtainable, even with permits. The Polish Central Committee is opening numerous soup kitchens in Eastern Galicia, and there are reports from Ukrainian sources of the organisation of a local Polish relief committee in Lwów, which is

already distributing gratis 5,000 meals daily from eight kitchens. The Roman Catholic parishes in the same city have also organised fourteen similar kitchens, through which they have been maintaining very large numbers of the poorest inhabitants. All this local relief work in Lwów is financed by the voluntary contributions of Poles, and rendered possible by the patriotism of the Polish peasants of the neighbourhood, who have sent the kitchens gratis large supplies of food-stuffs. There cannot be any doubt that, in Warsaw especially, but also in other parts of the General Government, famine is imminent, and immediate relief in the form of milk, fats, cod-liver oil and clothing is urgently required if the children are not to succumb wholesale. Meanwhile, the German authorities continue to requisition for the use of their armies in the east large quantities of the food-stuffs produced in the General Government, and also to prevent the passage into it of food-stuffs from the Incorporated Territories, such as Posnania. Of late there has been a great shortage of sugar in Warsaw: a special court sitting at Wloclawek (on the Vistula, below Warsaw) recently sentenced to terms of from three to twelve years' imprisonment a number of Poles and Jews who had organised the clandestine export of sugar from Posnania to the General Government. The German authorities have chosen this moment, when the cold weather has already begun, to enlarge the boundaries of the Warsaw ghetto, in order to make room for the Jews recently deported from the Reich and from Czechoslovakia: the non-Jewish inhabitants of the streets newly incorporated in the forbidden city have to turn out by the 20th November and find themselves new homes.

SOVIET UNION.

In accordance with their long-established technique the Soviet press and radio have been busy explaining, expanding and exploiting the salient points of M. Stalin's two speeches of the 6th and 7th November. In the process, no matter what may be the inner feelings of the Kremlin as to the adequacy of the British contribution towards achieving victory, the Soviet public was for obvious reasons given no cause for doubt or suspicion of its Ally. The *Izvestiya* published a leading article on the 13th November dealing with the Prime Minister's recent speech and underlining with warm approval his rejection in advance of the threatened German peace offensive. "Churchill's courageous speech will undoubtedly meet with the sympathetic response of all honest people, for whom the struggle against Hitlerism means the struggle for the freedom and independence of nations." "The Prime Minister's words regarding Hitler's 'peace offensive' sounded the death-knell for the hopes entertained by the Nazi bandits." The article twice over emphasises that "the brunt of the struggle is now borne by the Soviet army. Britain now takes advantage of the breathing-space obtained, thanks to the resistance of Soviet troops, in order to consolidate and prepare her armed forces." In conclusion, "the peoples of the U.S.S.R., filled with the firm determination to fight, and with confidence in final victory, can assure the British people that it will not remain alone in its courage and its readiness to bear any sacrifices for the final defeat of Hitlerism." The above may be taken to be intended not only as a message to this country, but as representing the official party line to be taken in the U.S.S.R. Meanwhile, according to a Polish general officer, just returned to Kuibyshev from Moscow, morale there was excellent, and large reinforcements of both troops and tanks were present.

Considerable pleasure and emulation must have been occasioned in the Red Army by the remarkable order signed on the 11th November in the City of Moscow by the People's Commissar for Defence, Comrade Stalin, counter-signed by Marshal Shaposhnikov, Chief of the General Staff, and addressed to "all Fronts, Armies, Tank Divisions and Tank Brigades." This order, after a laudatory commendation of the action of the 4th Tank Brigade between the 4th and 11th October in fighting the 3rd and 4th German Tank Divisions and a motorised division and putting out of action 133 enemy tanks, 49 guns, 8 aircraft, 15 tractors, &c., goes on: "(a) in view of the gallant and skilful operations of the 4th Tank Brigade that the name of the 'First Guard Tank Brigade' be conferred on it: (b) That the commander of the First Guard Tank Brigade, Major-General Katukov, shall commend those officers and men who have particularly distinguished themselves: (c) That the First Guard Tank Brigade