

Communists. Ustasha and Italian propaganda alternatively state that Britain has recognised Yugoslavia as a Russian sphere of influence or that the Yugoslav Communists are determined that the British must be kept out of Yugoslavia.

Small-scale fighting and considerable sabotage are reported from Slavonia, Lika, Slovenia and Serbia. The chief claim of "Free Yugoslavia" is that Knin, in North Dalmatia, was captured by Partisans on the 3rd June.

Reports emphasise the increased German police control of Croatia and the submissiveness of the Ustasha Government. The autumn recruits will be sent to Germany for their training. A strip, 30 km. wide, along the Dalmatian coast is stated to be being cleared of its population, who are sent inland. In Bosnia the male population is being rounded up for military or labour service, to avoid which many are taking to the hills again. The desolation of most of Croatia is terrible. Early in June the Volksdeutsch Press stated that from Germany had come not only the 40,000 tons of potatoes, 10,000 of sugar and 6,000 of seeds originally promised, but 5,000 more of potatoes, 2,500 more of sugar and 18,350 of flour and grain. A confession of economic chaos was the announcement, 21st May, that the compulsory purchase of crops had been removed from the State Cereal Centre to the Co-operative Associations.

The Italians are reported to be clearing the Trieste district of Slovenes; but to be attempting conciliation in the province of Ljubljana. Many Slovenes interned in Italy are returning home. The Provincial Advisory Council of Slovenes, attempted in June 1941, is being re-established. It is to consist of the mayor of Ljubljana, the rector of the University, the president of the Academy and the presidents of professional and economic organisations.

There has been an effort from Hungary to get into touch with the Allies through General Mihaylovitch, and to do a deal with the Serbians. The gist of a message from a Hungarian General was that, if the Allies attacked the Balkans in the spring of 1943, the Serbians would receive help from Hungary, if they stopped at the present Hungarian frontier; though it was added that Hungary must remain with the Axis in order to fight Bolshevism.

The effort of M. Bobitch to form a Yugoslav Government in London (see *Summary* No. 194) met with the refusal of Dr. Krnyevitch, the Croat. The King then tried Dr. Banyanin, a Serb of Croatia. He was refused by most of the leading Serbians. The King then demanded two agreed names from which to choose. He received those of Dr. Grol, the Serbian Democrat, and M. Trifunovitch, the Serbian Radical. He at once chose M. Trifunovitch, on condition that General Zhivkovitch was made Deputy Minister for Defence. (Zhivkovitch was Premier in the first years of King Alexander's dictatorship and is most unpopular in Yugoslavia. Dr. Budisavlyevitch refused to co-operate with him, and resigned.) The new Government was a surprise. If the Croats considered Dr. Yovanovitch as King Log, they are likely to find that M. Trifunovitch, an emphatic critic of Croat aspirations, is King Stork. Dr. Banyanin has already resigned, expressing doubts whether the new Government could ensure Yugoslav unity. The new Government are said to intend issuing the agreed statement on Yugoslav policy. Nevertheless, they cannot be said to show promise of stability.

An official German communiqué mentioned Bulgarian troops as participating in the fighting in Montenegro. More than the usual number of affrays with "bands" in Serbia and Macedonia were also reported.

The Prime Minister, after touring Thrace, reported his satisfaction with conditions. Many of the 150,000 Bulgarian refugees had returned, either to the land or to towns. Dedeagatch has now an overwhelmingly Bulgarian population. Relations with the local Turkish population were excellent.

Reliable sources report considerable discontent on the South Dobruja among both the indigenous Bulgarian population and the evacuees from North Dobruja, owing to the inadequacy of the financial and administrative arrangements made in connexion with the transfer.

A new decree announced further compulsory requisitioning of grain from farmers: but a hitherto unconfirmed report states that, owing to the favourable harvest prospects, it has been decided to increase the bread ration from 400 gr. to 800 gr. for heavy workers and from 300 gr. to 600 gr. for the rest of the population. The quality is also to be improved.

While the Allied air forces have subjected the airfields at Salonica, Athens and Eleusis to heavy bombardment, guerrilla activities in Greece have continued unabated. The Salonica-Athens line, it is reported, has been cut and a transport column of German lorries wiped out on its way south. Further north at Kozani the guerrillas are reported to have disarmed the Greek gendarmerie, seized the

Government cash, burnt the archives and urged the population to disobey the Italian garrison. According to another report twenty-five hostages have been executed at Athens as a reprisal for sabotage in an Italian liner. In addition to the damage done to the Greek chrome mines already recorded, sabotage at the bauxite mines near Parnassus is believed to have been such that Germany will at any rate not be able to obtain any extra supplies from them. All such activities are dubbed "Communist" by the Axis authorities, but, though particularly active politically, the Communist faction is by no means responsible for them all. In this welter of guerrilla doings and Axis reprisals the Greek clergy appear to have made courageous use of their intermediate position and to have tempered the wrath of the Axis against their flocks. Under the guise of "rehabilitating" Greece by mutual trade, the Germans are evidently making great efforts to extract supplies from her by means of a new clearing system for goods and by forcing Greek importers to open irrevocable credits in Germany. But the Germans admit that the transport situation is extremely grave, so much so that old sailing vessels are being brought into use again to relieve it.

Semi-official Turkish comment on the war has recently taken the line that the Anglo-Saxons are at present unable to carry an offensive beyond the islands of the Mediterranean, that neither the Russians nor the Germans will move first, and that for some time there will accordingly be stalemate. Some such considerations, coupled with the fear that after victory Great Britain and the United States will leave Turkey to face Russia alone, and a wish to keep the Turkish forces intact, and even to increase them, until the brunt of the fighting is over, may go to explain the attitude of particularly strict neutrality which the Turkish Government has latterly seen fit to assume. In certain matters, even if they have not turned the bias against us, the Turkish authorities have been distinctly less inclined to collaborate than previously. This independent attitude was, for example, clearly seen in a relatively minor matter when in spite of firm representations by His Majesty's Embassy two substantially British concerns were summarily closed down for failure to pay an arbitrary assessment of the "tax on wealth." Nor was it for the first time that on the 19th June the Government failed to deny passage of the Straits to a small number of German barges which, being obviously designed for military purposes, it should have stopped under the Montreux Convention. Moreover, General Toydemir, who has taken a military mission to Germany in response to Hitler's invitation, is by no means a nonentity.

#### THE MIDDLE EAST.

Relations between the Palace and the Egyptian Government remain at an improved level, but the question of army promotion has not yet been settled, and the King is still anxious to get rid of the Ministers of Defence and Education. A military order issued by the Government forbidding public political meetings is presumably aimed at the Opposition, which had been hoping to arrange further visits to the provinces, and perhaps to repeat the experiment of making violent speeches as was done during the visit to Menoufia on the 1st June.

The new Minister of the Interior has made a good beginning, and is believed to be cleaning up his Ministry by ridding it of certain undesirable officials. He has also created a favourable impression by a promise to relax the political censorship of the press.

The question of Egyptian-Soviet relations still seems to hang fire. It appears that the Soviet Government turned down the proposal of the Egyptian Government that there should be an exchange of notes concerning non-intervention in each other's affairs, Moscow feeling that this was unnecessary in view of the suppression of the Comintern. The Soviet Government also refused a further suggestion made by the Egyptian Ambassador in London to M. Maisky, that notes should be exchanged alluding to the suppression of the Comintern. Amin Osman, the newly-appointed Minister of Finance, who still keeps in touch with His Majesty's Embassy, holds the view that little is to be gained by Egypt or by her neighbours by hastening the establishment of relations with the Soviet Union, and it will be interesting to learn what comes of the discussion of this matter by the Council of Ministers on the 23rd June.

The British military authorities in the Lebanon have been a good deal concerned over the case of a certain Rashid Mokaddam, a notorious gangster and narcotic smuggler of Tripoli. Together with some of his associates, Mokaddam was arrested in April by the British military authorities for suborning British soldiers to transport narcotics across the frontier. He was