

A Reuter report of the British draft of the (unagreed) Article in the draft Treaty concerning compensation for United Nations property in Austria has caused considerable apprehension in that country and has been compared unfavourably with the United States attitude. The Austrian Minister for the Safeguarding of Property and Economic Planning has estimated that a sum of between one and a half and two milliard schillings would be involved. This would be beyond Austria's capacity to pay. Ernst Fischer, speaking for the Communists, has used the occasion to urge more friendly relations with the U.S.S.R. and to assess, as the sole result of the "one-sided policy of Western orientation," mistrust of Austria by the U.S.S.R. and her neighbours, on the one hand, and "milliard-demands" by the West, on the other. The Chancellor has sought to allay apprehensions by holding out prospects of a satisfactory compromise solution.

The Austrian Minister of Agriculture has given details of the "emergency contribution" recently announced by Chancellor Figl to maintain the 1,550 calory ration for the next two months. Some 16,000 tons of grain must be collected, and, to meet the fats ration, 20,000 pigs are to be slaughtered. This measure will also release food for human consumption which would have been used as fodder. When a British official recently pointed out to the Minister that Austria's pig population had been allowed to increase by nearly 50 per cent. in the past year in defiance of the Emergency Economic Committee for Europe agreement signed by Austria in 1946, the Minister remarked simply that it was the will of the Lord. Ultimately it is of course the British and U.S. taxpayer who pay because the Austrian Government allows grain and potatoes to be fed to pigs instead of to the semi-starving population of the towns. The policy of the Peasants' League in this respect has been condemned by the Socialist *Arbeiterzeitung*, which has called for a re-orientation of Austria's agrarian policy.

The trial for high treason of Guido Schmidt, Austrian Foreign Minister at the time of the *Anschluss*, opened in Vienna on the 26th February. Articles in the Socialist and Communist press have portrayed the trial as evidence of the guilt of Herr Schuschnigg's régime.

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

During the past few days public attention throughout the Republic has been focussed principally upon foreign affairs—more

particularly in respect of Czechoslovak relations with those countries which repeatedly have fallen prey to German expansionist designs. The fear is prevalent in Czechoslovakia, as elsewhere upon the Continent, that Germany will again emerge as a powerful nation, intent upon revenge. The uncertain international situation and the clash of Eastern and Western ideological conceptions has added to, rather than detracted from, this growing apprehension. In this conflict the Czechs see a golden opportunity for a German revival. Hence they are determined that no loophole shall be left through which German nationalism can again escape to wreak fresh havoc.

Since the end of hostilities the Russian *bloc* has been impelled—partly as a consequence of its suspicious reaction to "Western" policy where Germany is concerned, partly from its conviction, justified or not, that the Slav nations have always suffered the most when Germany has embarked upon a war of conquest—to fall back upon its own exclusive system of alliances. In this defensive pattern there was, however, one serious deficiency: the absence of any such agreement between Poland and Czechoslovakia. The traditional friendship between the Republic and Yugoslavia, based upon similar experiences under the old Austro-Hungarian Empire, and the realisation that the Soviet Union is Czechoslovakia's natural defender against German aggression eliminated any obstacles to a Czech-Yugoslav or a Czech-Soviet agreement. Relations with Poland, on the contrary, were not on such a happy plane. Different historical backgrounds, frontier disputes, and the narrow chauvinism of the Polish Communists made it difficult for any satisfactory compromise to be effected. Nevertheless the Soviet policy of presenting the Moscow Conference with a united Slav front has now led to the signature of a Twenty-Year Pact of Friendship and Mutual Assistance against any aggression on the part of Germany or other satellite country. (See under "Poland".) It is to be hoped that a new era has thus dawned in Czechoslovak-Polish relations; but the agreement to leave in abeyance the Czechoslovak claims to parts of Polish-occupied Silesia, and the Polish claim to Czech Teschen, is extremely unpopular with all the non-Communist parties.

Czechoslovakia, in view of her Western gravitation, is not prepared to seek security from the East alone. Indeed, she has tried to avoid, at least in the case of the Yugoslav

Pact, anything but very limited commitments with the Slav *bloc*. Cultural, historical, and economic reasons still incline the Republic to keep a door open for Western influences, even to the extent of seeking military co-operation. Prospects of a Franco-Czech military alliance have again been revived, whilst M. Spaak—during his visit to Prague a cultural agreement was signed last week between Czechoslovakia and Belgium—expressed the hope that a Czech-Belgian Alliance would be concluded as a stepping-stone to a future Soviet-Belgian Agreement. Incidentally a Cultural Agreement is being prepared for signature between the United Kingdom and Czechoslovakia.

The first transports of some 400 Slovaks, descendants of those who emigrated to the Bukovina about 150 years ago, have returned to the Republic. So far about 70 factories have been transferred to Slovakia under the plan to industrialise that province.

(See also under "Hungary".)

POLAND

As a result of the conversations held at Moscow between the Polish delegation and various Russian leaders (see *Summary* No. 383), an agreement was reached on a number of political and economic questions, chiefly the latter. On the political side, the governments of Poland and Russia are described as being at one in their views on the German problem. They have also agreed to accelerate the repatriation to Poland of Polish nationals now in the U.S.S.R. as a result of the War, including former German citizens. The following are the economic clauses:—

- (a) A loan to Poland of 27,875,000 dollars in gold.
- (b) The settlement of mutual financial obligations as at the 1st January, 1947, and the establishment of a basis for the regulation of future financial claims.
- (c) The reduction by half of deliveries of Polish coal to the U.S.S.R., according to the agreement of the 16th August, 1945.
- (d) Compensation for damage caused by German occupation.
- (e) Transfer to Poland of railway rolling stock from Soviet war booty. The railway line Katowice-Krakow-Przemysl is to be changed to the Central European gauge, before the 1st November, 1947.

- (f) Scientific and technical collaboration in the field of industrial production.
- (g) The supply to Poland by the U.S.S.R. of arms and war equipment on a credit basis.
- (h) The transfer to Poland of that part of the German merchant fleet which is due to it before the 15th May, 1947.

A twenty-year treaty of friendship and mutual assistance between Poland and Czechoslovakia was signed at Warsaw on the 10th March. The treaty, which resembles that signed a year ago between Poland and Yugoslavia, is designed to render impossible aggression on the part of Germany or any other country. The two countries promise the widest cooperation in the cause of international peace and security and bind themselves to give immediate military aid, should one of them be involved in a struggle with Germany or any ally of Germany. The protocol attached to the treaty states that all territorial questions are left in abeyance, and that solutions will be found within two years. The problems of the Polish minority in Teschen and the Czechs in Poland are to be settled on a basis of reciprocity, the fullest rights being accorded to each.

The treaty marks a very important and welcome change in Polish-Czech relations. For some time after the war they remained difficult, partly owing to the old problem of the Teschen district, and partly to the new conflict of claims to Silesian territory taken from Germany. There was also the Polish feeling that Poland, as a nation, had suffered more than Czechoslovakia at the hands of Germany, and that this gave all the less justification to Czech territorial claims. A settlement seemed unlikely because of the obstinacy of the communists in the two countries, especially in Poland. Gradually, however, it was realized that danger from Germany was the fundamental reason for unity, in relation to which questions of territorial extension and national pride assumed a very small importance. Economic and cultural pacts were made, and a general atmosphere of reconciliation was introduced, chiefly owing to the activities of M. Fierlinger, head of the Czech Social Democratic Party, and M. Wierblowski, Polish Ambassador to Prague. To such a sequence the present treaty is a logical conclusion, the Czechs having made a great contribution to the cause of unity by their willingness not to insist on their claims to those areas of Silesia, notably Kladzko (Glatz) and