

taken virtually no account of the men, tanks, guns, aircraft, war material of all sorts and shipping lavishly sacrificed in the long run on what is now written off as a mere side-show. The loss of the Afrika Korps, in particular, is a heavy blow, since it not only robs the Axis of some of the best men and most modern equipment that Germany could put into the field, but it must inevitably lower German prestige in Italian eyes and so react unfavourably also upon Italian morale. The much-trumpeted and allegedly impregnable fortifications said now to girdle the coasts of Europe must, indeed, have been in a primitive condition six months ago if their strengthening has exacted such a heavy toll. Another ridiculous thesis has been that the loss of Tunisia will not open up the Mediterranean to British warships and convoys since before the Allied landing in North Africa Italian aircraft had practically closed the Sicilian Narrows. The Italian public were told nothing about the protection which our vessels will now enjoy from our possession of airfields all along the North African coast from Spanish Morocco to the Levant.

When one remembers how fond Italians are of proclaiming their superior intelligence it is difficult to understand what good purpose is expected to be served by the dissemination of so much arrant rubbish and fustian. All the more so because the Government has now taken a number of precautionary measures in view of the acknowledged probability of an Allied invasion. The threshing of corn is being accelerated. Schools are being closed earlier than usual. The police is further increased and better armed, "so that it will be able to cut short any attempt on the part of enemy propaganda to destroy the structure of the Italian people." Evacuations are being carried out from coastal towns. There is no confirmation whatsoever of such sensational reports as that the King had abdicated in favour of his son; or that the defence of the country had been entrusted to six marshals headed by the King and Mussolini. The seriousness of the situation was, however, admitted in the Senate by the Under-Secretaries of the three Service Departments, and it is noteworthy that the *Stefani* report of their speeches omitted certain disquieting passages given in the Home Service broadcast. *Stefani*, for instance, did not reproduce Admiral Riccardi's lament that the enemy forces were "aided by an uninterrupted 24-hour air reconnaissance service, which forced us to play an open game, without the advantages of reciprocity." Nor did it reproduce his statement that his praise of the fleet's untiring work in maintaining communications between Italy and Tunisia did "not mean that the Italians have all the forces they would like to have to oppose eventual enemy attempts against their forces." Again General Fougier had stated that the losses of the Air Force amounted to 12,500, of whom 2,000 were officers, and that to this total must be added 700 other officers and about 3,000 n.c.os. and specialists of other ranks killed or wounded as the result of the feverish preparation for ensuring the efficiency of the Air Force. This *Stefani* account watered down the declaration that the feverish preparations which led to so many accidents "were necessary to replace losses suffered in operations and to ensure the efficiency of the line."

Another point worth remarking is that in the appeals for calm and courage an increasing mention is being made of the Royal Family. The new Party Secretary, Scorza, sounded this note about ten days ago, and now Cianetti, the new Minister of Corporations, has declared that the people are rallying round the escutcheon of Savoy and the Fascist emblem. Reports from South Italy say that the cry "Long live the King" has replaced "Long live the Duce." All this, however, does not as yet warrant the assumption that the Fascist régime is disintegrating, and that Italy would fall like ripe fruit into the hands of Allied invaders. Italy is better equipped than was Great Britain after Dunkirk, and the best and latest evidence is that an invasion would be resisted, at least until a severe defeat had been inflicted upon the metropolitan army.

His Majesty's Government has now offered through the Holy See to the Italian Government a list of names of Italian prisoners, from among whom three may be chosen of ranks corresponding to the ranks of the three British airmen who escaped into the Vatican (see *Summary* 186). The list contains nine names, subdivided into three categories, so that the British Government has gone a long way towards meeting the wish of the Italian Government to have a free choice. The Italian acceptance is still outstanding. The Secretariat of the Holy See has informed our chargé d'affaires that before the British compromise proposals had been received the Italian Government had stated that, while it was favourable in principle this time to the exchange of our men for three Italians whose names it wished to choose, it would not in future be prepared to consider any exchanges of this kind.

SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPE.

Reports from Swiss, Swedish and even German newspapers, confirmed in their general lines by an official article in a Hungarian Government paper, show that the immediate cause of the adjournment of the Hungarian Parliament lay in demonstrations by the extreme Right, which accused the Government of "a Left Oppositional and philosemitic attitude"; in particular, of tolerating the "propaganda in favour of the enemy" by the Left-wing Opposition, especially the Social Democrats. Speeches had been made in the session of the 30th April, which were "intended for the ears of National Socialist countries abroad" and two members of the Imredy Party had put down questions directed against a particular Minister which would, it was said, have raised wide issues. The official comments in the Hungarian article in question, as well as Kállay's own statement, quoted last week, made it fairly plain that, for the present at least, the Government does not propose to take a severer line towards the Left-wing and pro-Allied Opposition; the article argued that the Left-wing agitation was not important or dangerous, and did not imply a real change in public opinion. This does not, of course, mean that the Government might not at a later stage use the situation thus created against the Left wing also, if it so desired. For that matter, the Left-wing Opposition showed no signs of being intimidated; the Socialist *Népszava* celebrated the 125th anniversary of the birth of Karl Marx by a six-column article. Both the Socialists and their advocates in the "progressive bourgeois" Press have continued, however, to emphasise their patriotic and non-revolutionary feelings. One of the chief *bourgeois* writers even indicated that there was a place for Conservatism also in the national front. Apart from this, the Front which an opponent likened not unaptly to a football forward line passing the ball backwards and forwards—seemed, like some other football teams, to be more interested in the process of passing, and perhaps in avoiding being fouled, than in advancing towards the goal; although *Népszava* reported that its readers were asking how long the exchange of messages regarding co-operation was going to last, and suggested that "the best people of the three working classes ought to meet and openly create a programme of co-operation." The Smallholders' Party, at a conference, decided to reorganise its party organisation and increase its activity.

Roumania's National Day, on the 10th May, was celebrated by a parade in which the prominence given to anti-aircraft units "showed the population how well it was defended." The occasion was hailed in the press of most Axis-controlled countries. It was marked by Italian and Bulgarian decorations for Marshal Antonescu and a German decoration for General Steffea, his Chief of Staff, by the signing of a Slovak-Roumanian cultural agreement and the foundation in Berlin of a German-Roumanian Society. The Croat leader sent a telegram.

More interesting to Roumanians than these formalities was Marshal Antonescu's rather sensational statement to an Italian correspondent of the figures for Roumanian casualties. No casualty lists have been published since October 1941, and the only previous published figure was 350,000 killed, wounded and missing by July 1942. The Marshal said: "I will stake the whole of Roumania in this war, all her reserves and her raw materials. I am convinced this is a good, just and necessary cause. Including prisoners, we have lost 500,000 men already in this war" (i.e., but not including wounded); "but, when I consider that Roumania with a total population of 8½ millions lost 800,000 men in the last war, I can demand further sacrifices from Roumania with her total population of over 16 millions. I am leading the Roumanian army against Russia. I know well that there are other problems which, as a result of special circumstances and regrettable propaganda, have become burning questions, but they are problems which have no sense except in the event of victory." A Budapest report describes Roumania as deeply stirred by this announcement, and a German source takes it to imply that the Roumanian Army will now be reorganised and sent back to the front.

Antonescu's omission to mention those responsible for the 800,000 Roumanian casualties in the last war was surpassed by a lapse of memory on the part of M. Crainic (ex-Minister of Propaganda) concerning Germany's part in the dismemberment of Roumania in 1940. "With a curse on our lips, we Roumanians recall the tragedy of our country in 1940, when our land was torn into shreds under cover of the hypocritical and cowardly guarantee given by Britain."

The Roumanian wireless has issued daily warnings against the spreading of rumours and public comment on military or political news. A German-