

The self-appointed builders of the new régime (confidently assumed to be the Monarchy), are busy with their preparations for the decisive *coup* which will restore Don Juan to the throne of his fathers. They are confident of the support of the Army, of most of the present Government and of the people, and make light of the reasonable objection that the approval of the politically-minded among the workers, for whom the Monarchy is only a *pis-aller*, is likely to diminish as the Allied victory draws nearer. They count on forcing General Franco's hand to accept the restoration which, however, will have nothing of the Falange about it, and so achieve a peaceful change. This operation will need for success not only careful planning and co-ordination among the interested groups, but exact timing. It will be surprisingly un-Spanish if the first conditions have yet been brought about. As to the second, the soundest of the Royalist leaders said last month that the moment for the change would be after the African campaign; but they will probably wait until the next stage of the Allied operations is further advanced. It will be most interesting to see how much skill and statesmanship can be summoned up to deal with this approaching crisis in Spain. The past does not encourage optimism.

The progress of the war is followed with deep interest in Portugal where, for historical reasons, internal politics are strongly influenced by external events. Ever since Dom Pedro's victory over his brother Dom Miguel in 1834, the Right and the Left have tended to identify themselves with similar parties in other countries, and the Salazar régime has not eradicated this habit of mind. Hence the attachment of the Portuguese Right to Fascism generally, and in particular to the Franco cause in the Spanish Civil War. The triumph of the Republicans in Spain would have been tantamount to a political victory of the Left in Portugal. Hence, too, the sympathy of the Portuguese Right for the Axis, not because they like the Nazis, but because they hate their rivals at home who from the outset have hoped for an Allied victory.

Dr. Salazar is in a difficult position. He has a profound hatred of war—although ultimately his power rests on the Army, he enjoys no popularity there because of his dislike of soldiers—and a strong belief that Portuguese neutrality during the war will be a guarantee of a specially valuable objectivity in peace discussions. But there is an increasing anxiety among thinking Portuguese whether national interests would, in fact, be best saved by remaining neutral, and in the Services in particular, who are naturally better informed about colonial affairs than the ordinary citizen, there is outspoken comment that it is high time Portugal came into the war. Now that Dr. Salazar is convinced of an Allied victory, which will inevitably lead to some ebullition among the Portuguese Left, he, too, may be asking himself if the consolidation of his own position in the post-war crisis would not be furthered by an abandonment of a neutrality which, however cherished, may be becoming out-moded.

#### ITALY.

Although the Italian public had been carefully groomed to expect the fall of Pantelleria and Lampedusa and the reports of their capitulations were soon accepted in broadcasts to abroad, official confirmation was in each case pedantically withheld at home until the next issue at the customary hour of the daily communiqué. Italian propaganda sought to deaden the blow by assurances that the capture of the islands would not materially benefit the enemy, and that the heroic garrison of Pantelleria had only surrendered owing to the water supply having failed. It was further contended that while such small islands might be blasted into surrender, these tactics would never succeed with islands of the size of Sicily or Sardinia, and that the enemy would meet with a stubborn resistance if and when he ventured upon an invasion. That one or the other or both of these islands may soon be called upon to defend themselves is generally accepted as a foregone conclusion, the balance of opinion apparently being that Sicily in any case will be attacked. A proclamation by Mussolini militarising the territory of Sicily and the adjoining islands was promulgated in the *Official Gazette* of the 4th June and came into force on the day following its publication.

The capitulation of Pantelleria eliminates a troublesome air and E-boat base lying in the direct route between Malta and Cape Bon, and nowhere has its capture been welcomed with greater enthusiasm than in Malta. Its fall on the third anniversary of Italy's active entry into the war has been hailed there with deep satisfaction, and Italian boasts that Malta would be seized within a few weeks are recalled.

This fresh blow to Italy has, in fact, descended upon her at a moment likely to make an additional impression upon the superstitious, since neutral correspondents in Rome had agreed in reporting that the anniversary of Italy's declaration of war had been "celebrated" in an atmosphere of gloom. Gayda published in the *Giornale d'Italia* a long article restating Italy's position in the history of the second World War. He maintained that the policy of "conciliation and European collaboration" pursued by Italy for twenty years proved that she did not want war. He further advanced the astounding thesis that, since Great Britain, France and the United States had rejected Hitler's offer of conciliation at the end of the Polish campaign, Italy was compelled ultimately to intervene because she "found herself between two gigantic blocs which, in order to make contact, would necessarily have hurled themselves on to the territories separating them so that they could find more ample and favourable fronts."

The fall of these outlying bastions has also given an unpleasantly and ominously realistic touch to the ceremonies marking the fifth anniversary of Navy Day. There has obviously been criticism of the failure of the Navy to rescue any of the Axis army from Tunisia, since Admiral Riccardi was compelled to make a broadcast pleading that the Italian Navy was now weaker than that of its adversaries. The struggle across the seas, he said, was thus waged in conditions so disadvantageous that it was not humanly possible to protract it indefinitely. But the men of the larger units had never ceased, even during periods of apparent inertia in the naval bases, to make "severe preparations," which at any moment could become the prelude to battle, and the start of the fourth year of the war "finds our Navy at its post, ready to oppose and hold the enemy attack." Rome Radio held similarly encouraging and warlike language, and Admiral Ubaldo degli Uberti published an article in the *Lavoro Fascista*, in the course of which he claimed that "by forcing British shipping to take the Cape route the Italian Navy has inflicted upon Britain a greater defeat than she could in any naval battle, equivalent to the loss of 8,500,000 tons of useful merchant shipping." Mr. Churchill's congratulatory message to Admiral Sir Andrew Cunningham enumerating the tonnage of enemy vessels sunk in the Mediterranean by the Royal Navy and the Air Force showed that Admiral Riccardi had not been merely melodramatic when he declared that the motto shared fraternally by the crews of Italian merchantmen and naval units had been "Get there or die! Africa or death!"

It must, therefore, still be presumed that any invasion of Italian metropolitan soil is going to be resisted with all the forces available on land, sea and in the air. It may well prove that any invasion, when once it has actually been launched, will, in fact, be met in the same spirit in which a patient submits to the extraction of a tooth or a major operation, and is even relieved that the horrors of anticipation are at an end. Italian morale, according to many reports, is at the moment suffering from just such nerve-racking imaginings. A Swede recently returned to Stockholm from Italy is reported as saying that he would not be surprised if the Italians collapsed at any moment. They have, he declared, lost all faith in themselves, and they hate the Germans like the Devil for several reasons. The Rome correspondent of *Der Bund* writes that there has been a recent political crisis in Italy, and "for the first time the press mentions opposition to the Italian régime," but that since the malcontents had not proceeded from words to actions the Fascists had refrained from taking counter-action and the Government had continued as before. To judge, however, from the volumes of abuse now being hurled at the head of President Roosevelt, there seems to be some nervousness lest his appeal to the Italian people, following so closely upon the recent similar advice offered by Mr. Churchill (see *Summary* No. 191), may cause trouble. In a message to the army chaplains with the forces in the field, Mgr. Bartolomasi pointed out that the morale of soldiers in the battle zones was higher than that of soldiers in quieter areas, and that the morale of all soldiers was higher than that of civilians. "It is necessary," he said, "to keep up morale, because among all evils—and they are numerous in these days—despondency and pessimism are the worst." Meanwhile, further steps are being taken to alleviate grievances. It is reported that Mussolini has agreed to the proposal of Pareschi, Minister of Agriculture, that the amount of grain legally withheld by farmers and certain other persons should be increased by 50 per cent.; that exports of agricultural produce have been temporarily suspended owing to difficulties of transport and distribution in many parts of Italy, and that goods confiscated on the Black Market are to be distributed amongst the needy. The Fascist Party directorate has submitted to Mussolini a list of measures which it