

August 1939) was coming to an end in North Africa. On the 13th, the twenty-six surviving Communist Deputies in North Africa issued a manifesto, declaring that the French people had had enough of personal power and wanted a young republic with an energetic and democratic programme of social reform. They complained, however, that they had not been consulted about the formation, composition and programme of the French Committee. The French Communist Party as a whole has, of course, associated itself both directly, via M. Grenier, and also indirectly through the newly-formed Council of Resistance inside of France, with General de Gaulle and Fighting France; but, apart from the just-mentioned manifesto, its attitude towards the Committee for National liberation constituted on the 3rd June has not been defined. That Committee itself, however, on the 25th June made an important move towards conciliating the French Communists as a whole when it resolved to abrogate the above-mentioned *décret-loi* of M. Daladier's Government of the 26th September, 1939. The Committee at the same time annulled all the charges made and penalties imposed for acts committed "against the interests of France" since June 1940, and decided to restore to their posts all civil servants penalised because of their national activities or in execution of measures imposed by the enemy.

SPAIN AND PORTUGAL.

Whether conducted between individuals or nations exaggeration is one of the silliest and commonest weapons used in dialectic. Recent Anglo-Spanish relations are an example of this political pursuit. The very sharp reaction in this country to the Spanish attempt to persuade us not to win the war undoubtedly brought home to the Spaniards that they had stepped off on the wrong foot. First there was General Jordana's peace speech at Barcelona in April; then in June the anti-bombing campaign in the press, followed by the official statement of the Spanish view. All these moves were received with increasing contumely and irritation by the Allies, and the Spanish Government, by then uneasily on the defensive, felt that somehow or other they must recover the ground lost. So the Spanish Ambassador called on the Secretary of State to say that his Government were concerned about Anglo-Spanish relations; they considered that, were it not for the definite nature of British undertakings towards Spain and Spain's complete confidence in British good faith, they would have been greatly disturbed by the recent attitude of the British press which gave Spaniards the impression that we had unfriendly intentions towards them. This diplomatic non-sense crumbled before Mr. Eden's vigorous assertion that His Majesty's Government had not the least desire to hurt Spain. Our quarrel was with the Axis, and all Spain had to do was to keep out of it. The Duke of Alba then fell back on a suggestion that this affirmation should be repeated in a speech by the Prime Minister or Mr. Eden; in view of the violently anti-Spanish attitude of the United States press, which was much worse than our own, such a statement would help Count Jordana, who was always trying to improve relations between the Spanish Government and the Allies.

Talking of internal affairs, the Spanish Ambassador gave his personal view that the restoration of the monarchy was the only possible solution of Spain's problems, and he suggested that with the approach of an Allied victory the demand for some constitutional settlement of Spanish affairs would become more insistent. It is a fact, of course, that General Franco's position is not buttressed by any constitutional authority, and the creation of the Cortes has done nothing to give legality to a régime owing its existence to force of arms, mainly foreign. Mr. Eden said that Spanish internal affairs were not our business, but that we should regret to see a restoration under German auspices. The Ambassador denied that this was possible. He went on to say that General Franco, while admitting now that we could not lose the war, did not yet see how we could win it. The Duke was told by the Secretary of State that it would be a mistake for any country to base its foreign policy on any other calculation than an Allied victory.

German dissatisfaction with Spain (discussed under "Germany") is given some point by an article in *A.B.C.* on the 1st June. This reported a lecture on Sea Power given by Captain Carrero Blanco, Under-Secretary of the Presidencia, who is considered to have much influence in the Caudillo's circle and is mentioned as a possible future Minister of Marine. The lecture, which was given unusual prominence in *A.B.C.*, stressed the importance of sea power to Spain and illustrated this thesis by reference to Axis and Allied fortunes in the war. Captain Carrero Blanco made the point that the Axis, robbed of its sea traffic from the first

day of the war, had "attempted to secure a sort of negative sea dominion by aircraft and submarines, in which it had not succeeded, despite the heavy losses caused to the Anglo-Saxons." It is not surprising that the Germans who, in spite of the fluctuations of the war, have never lost their grip on the Spanish press, should be indignant at what must seem to them most un-non-belligerent language. Read in conjunction with an article in *Arriba*, the Falange organ of the 23rd May, which, behind the transcendental verbiage which in the Falange passes for Castilian prose, hinted at a change of foreign policy, this is certainly interesting. The *Arriba* article is supposed to have been drafted as a directive at General Franco's headquarters and sent forthwith to *Arriba*, which had no choice but to publish it. The first step in a new orientation of policy, which could only be gradual, would probably be shown in a changed press. It was reported in *Summary* No. 193 that censorship of war news and views was being transferred from Falange control to that of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, and it may be that the above-mentioned articles are other symptoms of change.

More than a year has passed since a deputation of Portuguese workers petitioned Dr. Salazar for a general rise in wages in order to meet the increased cost of living, which was then about 45 per cent. and is now 65 per cent. above the pre-war level. As reported in *Summary* No. 147 they received little more than moral exhortation, though a system of family allowances was promised. Since then, partly owing to the November strikes in Lisbon, some progress in improving the lot of the workers has been made. In certain trades and industries collective contracts, with family allowances and insurance schemes, are functioning; in March last Dr. Trigo de Negreiros, Under-Secretary for Corporations, was able to claim that in the past year 47 collective labour contracts had been signed, from which 100,000 workers were benefiting from sickness and old age insurance schemes; 300,000 workers were drawing higher wages, and 60,000 workers were receiving family allowances. In May last agricultural workers, who make up two-thirds of the working population, but who had hitherto not been included in social legislation, were given a substantial increase in wages, and further collective contracts were signed. On the 28th May, the 17th anniversary of the corporative State, Dr. Negreiros made another speech reporting progress and claiming credit for solid achievement in this sphere.

Portugal is far from being a workers' paradise, however. Compared with their fellows in other countries, the Portuguese proletariat live miserably; large sections of the population are suffering acute distress which is tending not to diminish, but to increase. And it is doubtful if the Government's programme of social legislation will produce the fair results envisaged by the planners, for in Portugal the gap between paper and practice is very large. It is not likely that the hopeless incompetence which is the mark of all Portuguese administration will be absent from the working of the social insurance schemes. Moreover, the average Portuguese labourer, normally illiterate, finds it hard to understand the principle of insurance, and the idea of voluntarily suffering present loss for future gain, is quite foreign to him. A cement worker recently voiced the opinion of many of his fellows when he complained that the new labour agreements had merely docked his monthly £4 10s. for the benefit of the insurance fund, and that he would never see the colour of his money again. Efficient administration is the only cure for such natural scepticism.

ITALY.

Warnings that an Allied landing on Italian soil may be made at any moment and exhortations to the nation to stand firm and fight it out to the last have now become the dominating theme of the Italian Press and Radio services. The Italian army is declared to be well-equipped and ready and the lines of defence are said, with very dubious veracity, to have been perfected. The Rome correspondent of the Falangist newspaper *Arriba* has been allowed, or prompted, to send the improbable report that the Italian fleet had put to sea for offensive operations. The example of France is pointed to in illustration of what happens to countries which want to back out of the war before its end. This reference to the fate of France is interesting because the issue of the *Daily Telegraph* of the 24th June contained a message from a special correspondent suggesting that Germany is beginning to envisage an Italian attempt to get out of the war as a serious possibility. The Rome correspondent of the *Münchener Neueste Nachrichten* is quoted as remarking that any such attempt "leads one to realise

[25657]

c 2