

Yugoslavia

The Italian exodus from Pola before the ratification of the Peace Treaty has had its counterpart in the area of Zone B which is to be incorporated in the Free Territory of Trieste. But, whereas the removal of property and plant from Pola was entirely voluntary and unaided by A.M.G., the Yugoslav authorities in Zone B have been confiscating Italian property, ships and even hospital installations, and transferring them elsewhere without the consent of the owners. His Majesty's Government, in a Note to the Yugoslav Ambassador in London on the 24th March, pointed out that the occupation authorities would be responsible to the Security Council for the injury caused to the economy of the future Free Territory by this sequestration of Italian property, which was, in effect, contrary to international law as applied to territory under military occupation.

The inhabitants of British-controlled refugee camps in Italy are to be transferred to the British zone of Germany. Although the influx of some 11-12,000 Yugoslavs into an already over-populated zone will undoubtedly raise fresh problems, this transfer seems to be the only alternative to leaving these people to their fate in Italy. (It is considered undesirable to send them to Egypt or North Africa.) It will, at least, facilitate the process of screening and the search for war criminals. There will still remain several thousand Yugoslavs in Allied-controlled camps, who will become the responsibility of the Inter-Governmental Committee for Refugees after the ratification of the Treaty, and a large number outside the camps. While these refugees remain in Italy there will always be a danger that the Yugoslav Government may obtain their repatriation by applying pressure to the Italian Government. Nevertheless, H.M. Ambassador in Belgrade was recently informed that the Yugoslav Government do not intend to deal harshly with all Ustaši as such, but will punish only those convicted of war crimes. Of all the Ustaši captured since the end of the war, they say only a few hundred have been condemned as war criminals, the remainder have been released after a few months in prison—having been subject no doubt to suitable "re-education." Little reliance is placed on this assurance.

The old bogey of I.M.R.O. has reappeared in Macedonia. A trial of separatists, all allegedly connected with Vanče Mihailov who was last heard of in Zagreb in 1944, began on the 25th March. According to the indictment the accused,

many of whom only recently joined the conspirators, were planning to establish an independent united Macedonia which would be under the protection of a Western Power. Only last November Metodi Andonov Cento, President of the Macedonian National Liberation Assembly until April 1946, was sentenced to 11 years' penal servitude on a similar charge.

The appearance of a "Radio Ravna Gora" purporting to broadcast from a "free mountain in Yugoslavia," indicates that the spirit of the četnik movement is not dead.

Greece

King George II of the Hellenes died of heart failure on the 1st April. His brother Paul has been sworn in as his successor and has asked the Maximos Government to remain in office.

Independence Day was celebrated throughout Greece on the 25th March. This year the celebrations were accompanied by a real feeling that, with the help of the American loan, there were solid grounds for hope that Greece would soon recover.

The United Nations Commission moved to Sofia on the 26th. Its most important session there seems to have been that at which the U.S. delegate raised the whole question of Macedonia (see under "Bulgaria"). The team which visited the Bulgarian border area examined the incidents which occurred last year near the village of Ljubimec. It has not yet been decided whether any representatives of the Commission will remain in Greece while the report is being prepared in Geneva.

Meanwhile there has been little news of raids by the bandits. Counter-operations by the Greek Army and Gendarmerie continued, though on a reduced scale, in the areas of Nigrita, Xanthi and Lamia. In the Grevena area gendarmerie and army units gave ground under bandit pressure and withdrew towards Krania.

On the 31st March the British Military Administration in the Dodecanese handed the islands over to a Greek Military Administration. Sovereignty over the Dodecanese cannot, however, pass to Greece until the Italian peace treaty has been ratified by all concerned. In the meantime the Greek Military Administration will govern the islands under the authority and orders of the Commander-in-Chief, Middle East Land Forces.

In the memorandum on "United States relations with Greece" published in the press, the U.S. Government were described

as being "in favour of the cession of Cyprus to Greece," but this paragraph was later withdrawn from the documents and it was explained that the memorandum "was not intended to be a final statement." Meanwhile Lord Winster, the new Governor of Cyprus, reached Nicosia on the 27th March. The Greek Cypriotes received him coldly and there were shouts for "Enosis"—"Union" (with Greece). One right-wing journal was reported as saying that the Greek Cypriotes would celebrate the departure of the new Governor, not his arrival.

Albania

Hardly any mention seems to have been made in the Tirana press of the Security Council's debate on the Anglo-Albanian dispute, and—oddly still—very little appears to have been said on the momentous subject of United States assistance to Greece. Turkey, on the other hand, came in for some hearty abuse when it was learnt that American help was likely to be given in full measure to her as well. Nor was the abuse confined by any means to the destined recipient. The richest nation in the world is pictured as being ready enough to buttress a "tyrannical régime" which "supplied Nazi Germany with enormous quantities of chrome"; but "they will not hear of helping war-torn countries like Albania or Yugoslavia" (cf. *Bashkimi*, 26 March). Not a word, of course, is said about UNRRA, which the simple people of Albania have at different times been taught to believe was either a benevolent organisation of Soviet origin or a poisonous instrument for the promotion of "fascist reaction." The emphasis the whole time is on the unfair discrimination of the Western Powers, as contrasted with the sympathy and support of the Slav bloc. (See also under "United Nations.")

Bulgaria

The Bulgarian press naturally gave prominence to the arrival of the main party of the U.N. Investigation Commission at Sofia last week. The most restrained comment on the Government side was, as usual, published in the Zveno paper *Izgrevo*. This welcomed the Commissioners, said it felt sure they must realise already that no genuine grounds existed for accusing Bulgaria of helping to create mischief near her southern frontier, and added: "We take this opportunity of saying that the

Greek people are entirely unjustified when they blame their neighbours for every disturbance occurring in their country." The distinctively Communist papers were a good deal more unbalanced. It may here be remarked that some of the crudest and most irresponsible newspaper articles which have been appearing on the subject have been written by a prominent left-wing journalist called Vladimir Topencharov who has all the time been acting as a member of the Bulgarian liaison group officially attached to the Commission.

The United States delegate drew attention at a public session of the Commission on the 27th March to the Bulgarian Government's recent instructions that the population of Bulgarian ("Pirin") Macedonia were to be registered for the future not as Bulgars but as Macedonians. The Bulgarian liaison representative at once objected that the Macedonian question lay outside the Commission's competence; it was only being touched on, he felt sure, as "an attempt to divert investigation from the Greek internal situation."

Sofia Radio announced on the 26th March that a bill providing for a capital levy had received Cabinet approval and would shortly be submitted to the National Assembly by the Minister of Finance. Bulgarian citizens and companies would be liable to duty on all property, whether at home or abroad. Among organizations to be exempted were State and national institutions and enterprises, Fatherland Front Committees, and all party, trade union, educational, cultural and charitable bodies, including the Church. Farmers with less than three hectares of land would also be exempt. Foreign residents would have to pay on property in Bulgaria. The decree of the 7th March (see *Summary* No. 384) now falls into its place, and it becomes somewhat easier to see how the ambitious two-year plan will be paid for. (It has been announced that 26,000 million leva—no more—will be provided towards it in this year's budget, although the cost of the plan for 1947 alone is estimated at 55,000 million. The whole budget amounts to precisely this sum—55,000 million leva.)

A Czech Government loan to Bulgaria of 200 million krone at 3 per cent. is announced. Over 800 Bulgarian workers left for Czechoslovakia two months ago.

Turkey

The sudden return to the capital of the Prime Minister and several of his Cabinet