

# THE EUROPEAN CRISIS AND HUNGARY\*

by

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Psychologically the life of Europe has entered a blind alley. All peoples alike realise that there is trouble and that there is a hitch somewhere. Every man in the street knows well enough what ought to be done; yet the leading politicians are unable to mend matters, being instead engaged in gnashing their teeth impotently and throwing the blame on one another, so that they continue to act foolishly and heap up more and more obstacles to obstruct the way out of the blind alley of their own making. There is not a nation not desirous of peace; Germany and France are not in opposition and have no demands to make from one another!! And yet we find the bitterest conflicts continually distributing and disquieting the public opinion of these two countries, spreading unrest and mistrust; indeed, those conflicts are just now actually causing a danger of war menacing the whole of Europe. What is the cause underlying this absurd state of things? It is impossible not to realise the truth. What we have here is the conflict between two systems — between two different methods being applied for the organisation of Europe. Between Germany and France there is no conflict of "real" interests; what is going on is merely a continuation of the still undecided struggle which broke out between Clemenceau and Wilson in 1918.

What Wilson wanted was that there should not be any victors or conquered. He desired a sincere reconciliation to be followed by honest cooperation. Clemenceau on the other hand wanted to subject his defeated victims to a yoke of slavery and to shackle the conquered peoples now reduced to servitude with fetters ensuring the permanency and unassailability of his one-sided superiority. To bleed the conquered peoples economically by the imposition of unpayable reparations, to weaken them and reduce them to a state of coma by disarmament and in addition to keep them in constant terror by forming a mighty coalition against them; that is still the ideal of most French politicians. President Wilson entered the lists on behalf of the right of self-determination of

the peoples; what he wanted was a voluntary agreement between free peoples. What Clemenceau wanted was to force his former enemies surrender unconditionally and to make them incapable of action. Unfortunately for the world the iron will of Clemenceau won the day; and the hand of steel first used by him is still throttling the Europe of today. The mutilated body of Hungary is still in the grip of the Little Entente, which has already grown into a political alliance. And Germany is being subjected more ruthlessly than ever to a policy of blockade posing as a means of collective security. Clemenceau's spiritual successor, Barthou, set the avalanche of the Russian Soviet in motion down the precipitous slopes of Europe; and that avalanche is still sweeping on its way, dumfounding all good Europeans. Even the radical statesman Lloyd George admits that if the Soviet leaders should succeed in overcoming Germany, the ruins would fall into the hands of communism. And what would the Russian danger mean to Hungary with her 9 million inhabitants, which would be used as an assembly field for the Russian forces in the event of the Franco-Russian alliance being put into practice? This latter alliance is an attempt on Europe as a whole; for the advance of pan-Slav influence in the lowlying district between the Danube and the Tisza would upset the political balance of Europe, while the spread of communism would sweep away Christian civilisation and our moral order. Never was the conflict between the two great deceased — Wilson and Clemenceau — so great as it is today; and the decision cannot be postponed for very long.

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I cannot believe that Clemenceau's political inheritance has proved a blessing even to France herself. I see on the contrary that the events injurious to the interests of France have all originated from this mistaken mentality based upon a mistaken preoccupation. The expulsion of the various German dynasties did not kill militarism in the German Empire; it has on the contrary prepared the way for centralism and for the exceptionally rapid development of a German unity capable of very effectual efforts. The foolish dismemberment of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy has atomised the Danube Valley and thrown open

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the gateway of the Danube for the passage of pangermanism. The insensate mutilation of Hungary shattered the tock which had for centuries defied annihilation to obstruct the expansion of the German power. The throttling grip of the system followed by the Little Entente — the political, economic and military blockade weighing heavily on Austria as well as on Hungary for over fifteen years — has made the idea of Anschluss with Germany sympathetic in the eyes of the Austrian people, after having been thrust out of its natural sphere on the Danube Valley is unable to find elsewhere any possibility of permanent welfare.

Although the Russo-French and Czecho-Russian alliances may perhaps for the moment allay France's fears, those alliances cannot but detrimentally affect France's position in Europe. There is only one way in which the activity of France can possibly be of advantage to Europe, — if she acts in co-operation with the two neighbouring Western Powers in the spirit of Stresa. The alliance with Russia, apart from its disquieting Poland, makes Great Britain still more reserved in her attitude and gives Germany moral ground enough for endeavouring to establish a system of counter-alliance of her own. These alliances also undermine Austria's position; for in the event of an aggravation of the situation Austria will naturally be impelled when the German and the Russian forces meet in conflict to join her racial brethren in Germany. More than that; these alliances — or rather the Czecho-Russian alliance — destroy the only possible political basis of a reasonable adjustment of the common life of the Danubian Succession States. The only solution open to the small peoples living in the Danube Valley is to stress the idea of an independent Danube Valley liberating them alike from German influence and from that of the Russian forces and to establish an autonomous Danube Valley system which, being built up on fair and equitable compromises, would eventually lead to the reconciliation and co-operation of the Danube Valley peoples and to their healthy re-organisation. This solution is precluded by the Czecho-Russian treaty, which has tied one of the indispensable factors of co-operation in the Danube Valley to Russia and thereby forces Austria and Hungary — countries whose very existence is threatened by that treaty — to look for support against the Russian menace where such support is to be found.

The Russian alliance was the last trump of French policy; it constrained the Germans to take a step which can never be retraced. Europe is dumfounded at the sight of this dangerous game; while France is veritably in a state of eruption, — and that not on account of the breach of treaty committed by the Germans, but because she is terrified to see the system upon which her post-War life has rested tottering to its fall. As Lloyd George said in a recent article, "the French have no objection to a one-sided infraction of a treaty so long as the infraction is committed by France, and only become hysterical when Germany wishes to follow their lead and to make the infraction of

the Treaty of Versailles bilateral". We might add that the same is true of breaches of the Treaty of Trianon and indeed of the minority treaties too; for in August, 1934, the writer of the present article himself witnessed in Geneva the energy shown by France in rejecting even the most modest hint on the part of Hungary of the need of observing the provisions of the minority treaties which had been duly signed. "British common sense is unable to understand why the fact that Cologne, the world-famed ancient German city, has been occupied by two companies of German soldiers, should be spoken of as *savage aggression*." And we might supplement Lloyd George's words with the observation that every agreement by treaty from the Covering Letter of M. Millerand downwards — where such agreement was calculated to relieve the miserable lot of Hungarians — has been torn to shreds without the French uttering even the mildest form of disapproval. So, a truce to all mock modesty! let us say openly that what has infuriated France is not the breach of treaty on the part of Germany, but the sight of Germany at last throwing off her fetters and living and acting independently and thus destroying the system built up by Clemenceau. France is now faced with a new situation!!

What is likely to be the solution? Is there any solution at all? The British Foreign Secretary would appear to pin his faith on the League of Nations. I am sorry to say I cannot share this confidence. The League of Nations is bound hand and foot by its own rules of procedure — to such an extent that it is already incapable of any effectual action in important matters. The development of the League's policy serves simply to confirm that opinion. The League of Nations was the outcome of the principles enunciated by President Wilson; it has drafted many schemes in keeping with its origin and its established aims and has had magnificent dreams: them it began to harangue and has allowed time to lapse and has become out of date. And France has gone her own to the sound of Wilsonian orations and has acted in the spirit of Clemenceau. Many theories have been propounded in Geneva; but very few have ever blossomed out into reality. While the League of Nations solemnly enunciated the ideal principles to be followed, the development of events and facts has moved rapidly in the opposite direction. I have read somewhere that the leading personalities of the League of Nations have acted "not like persons called to the stage of the world by the inspired spirit of the Creator, but like persons distilled in Bernard Shaw's retort in suspicious sociological and literary gases".

To cajole and hush to silence, to patch and mend and deprive all movements alike, whether useful or noxious, of their *nerve* — that is what the League of Nations is fitted for; but courageously and honestly to create a new and upright order in the world — that we must never expect it to be able to do! But there is another forum still left to appeal to, — the eminent and authoritative International Tribunal in The Hague, which

is really fitted to effect the proper adjustment of concrete legal disputes. This juridical forum cannot however be employed to eliminate the deep-seated political evils which are alimented by the constitutional defects of the life of Europe and are therefore constantly breaking out afresh. There is no physician today in a position to undertake to cure the maladies of Europe; only one thing is certain — viz. that the world will not be able very long to continue in the old groove. Yet there is a demand already possessing the soul of every nation — the demand that this state of war must be brought to an end at last. It is this demand which — in addition to the demand for the overthrow of Clemenceau's system — is gathering force every day, — the whole world insisting that the furies of war shall be buried and a return made to the Wilsonian principles constituting the foundations upon which the peace treaties were codified; and if these principles were really put

into effect, the world would be reassured at once. A new peace conference is already a vital necessity for Europe, — the new peace conference proposed by Hitler which would be welcomed by Great Britain and for which all peoples — the peace-loving French people too — are longing sincerely in their heart of hearts. This new peace conference is perhaps the last ray of hope both for our Continent as a whole and for the Hungarian nation in particular; and those who attend that conference must leave behind them all alliances and binding obligations. It must be the work of the conference to prepare the way for an agreement between free peoples based upon equality and to heal the beeding wounds of the two principal arteries of Europe — the Rhine and the Danube. Hungary anxiously awaits this conference — the Hungary of Trianon, the most ruthlessly and unjustly mutilated of Clemenceau's victims.

## DISARMAMENT, REVISION, MINORITY QUESTION

by

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**T**he importance of equality in respect of armaments, of the question of revision and of the minority question has ceased to be confined to certain countries or certain races; the proper solution of these questions is a *sine qua non* of the peaceful co-operation and of the progress of mankind at large. The necessity for such a proper solution was probably never more pressing or the demand for that solution more opportune than at the present moment, when the consequences of the war between Italy and Abyssinia and of the violent quarrel between Germany and France have at last opened the eyes even of those who have so far either pretended to be blind or have really been blind and made every one realise that the Paris Peace Edicts are in sore need of a revision, seeing that instead of inducing tranquillity they have saturated the political atmosphere with an ever-present tension, besides plunging Europe into economic distress and sowing the poisonous seeds of incalculable catastrophes. It is becoming more and more evident that the walls of the so-called edifice of peace built upon the quicksands of lies and misrepresentation and ignorance are falling to pieces and the cracks in them can no longer be plastered over with the transparent mortar of duplicity.

The question of disarmament itself is no longer merely in a state of dilapidation; it is already in a state of ruin. All the fuss made about this question will remain for all time a classical example of hypocrisy. The victors forced the defeated countries to disarm; but it has never occurred to them to comply with the obligation to

do so undertaken by them. And that is because there are certain States which are fully aware that their power is based upon injustice and on the abuse made of a manetary ascendancy. So they would fain perpetuate the reign of force and the disparity of armaments and security as between the various countries in order to be able to keep their war plunder or perhaps even to add to their spoils. That is why the discussions of the Disarmament Conference — which talked big but were entirely devoid of sincerity — had to end in a fiasco and to endorse the view expressed by M. Motta, President of the Swiss Republic when at the opening session of the Disarmament Conference he prophesied the fiasco, "because there can be no disarmament without a fulfilment of all legitimate demands leading to general reassurance". And indeed no one talks any more of disarmament. On the contrary: everywhere people emphasise the necessity of armaments. Though the plea used is certainly strange in the mouths of those States which are already armed to the teeth. The powers that are not concerned with the security of the countries which, being completely disarmed, are at the mercy of their neighbours; indeed, probably the defencelessness of those countries is just what they would rely on. Are they blind to the disquieting consequences of this unequal treatment and to the arrogance and provoking attitude of the fully armed countries conscious of their superior odds? or to the continuous unrest and embitterment in evidence among the defeated? And we might also ask whether the nations generally accept as impartial judge and as