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# DANUBIAN REVIEW

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**A REVIEW DEVOTED TO RESEARCH INTO PROBLEMS OF THE  
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# A STRONG INDEPENDENT HUNGARY A PLEDGE OF PEACE

BY

Dr. ELEMÉR SZUDY

Europe is still restless and nervous. In Munich learned professors met to find means to rid mankind of a noxious, fever-pregnant abscess. And all four professors alike were inspired with the goodwill to create something permanent and beneficial; but they did not dare — or rather, they were unable — to undertake the drastic action needed to ensure Europe a complete cure and to induce the atmosphere of re-assuring conciliation required to palliate the sufferings and fulfil the expectations of the peoples concerned.

The distortions of a ruthless propaganda carried on unceasingly for more than thirty years still acted as an obstacle to historical objectivity and rendered impossible the realisation of a policy which would in reality have served to relieve the tension and remove from the world the explosive material accumulated in the souls of the peoples by the furies of hatred, war and post-war agitation and by the lust of power.

At Versailles and Trianon the treaty-makers dethroned a sublime conception — the right of self-determination of the peoples; and the professors who met in Munich had not the courage to rehabilitate that conception. What was effected in Munich was only a half-solution leading to a reaction which has thrown the whole world into a state of fever and uncertainty. Yet what the peoples of Europe desire is peace; though the peace they desire cannot be definitively and finally brought into being until the professors have penetrated to the roots of the evils and all the questions requiring settle-

ment have been solved simultaneously in accordance with the postulates of justice.

The great awakening has already led to a spirit of pacification; the truth is dawning in the West too: for otherwise what happened at Munich would have been impossible.

Both in Great Britain and in France powerful movements have been started to enforce a reparation of the fatal mistakes due to infatuation; and these movements have gripped hold of Chamberlain and Daladier too: though what has happened so far is only a modest beginning, and if there is no further development, the results hitherto obtained are liable to be jeopardised too. The whole world had expected Munich to bring about a comprehensive, universal and synthetic solution, the enforcement of the unrestricted right of self-determination of the peoples; and what resulted instead was after all merely a half-solution, — despite its having been inspired by cordial goodwill!! And the consequence? A brief, transitional relief of the tension followed by a return of the restlessness which had been there before; the European atmosphere once more charged with high frequency tension!!

As concerns Hungary in particular, it is indubitable that Hungarian public opinion noted with satisfaction that to a certain extent the country's historical claims against Czecho-Slovakia had been enforced. The fact must however be established that the award of the Vienna Court of Arbitration caused disappointment, not only because it failed to realise to the full the so-called ethnic principle, but more especially because the conception of self-determination was relegated entirely to the background. This result must be attributed ultimately to the reaction of Versailles and Trianon and only indirectly to the Munich award; for the friendly Powers which had been asked to undertake the task of arbitration found themselves faced with certain limitations. Naturally this does not mean that Hungary is likely to renounce the enforcement of the principle of the right of self-determination of the peoples or to cease — provisionally — to demand that that principle should be carried into effect. For Hungary it is a matter of vital impor-



tance that this principle should be enforced freely and in an unrestricted form in the Danubian system, — not only in the North, in the case of the Slovaks and the Ruthenians, but in all other regions in which Hungary has suffered dismemberment.

It would be a great mistake to believe that there is any contradiction between the enforcement of the ethnic principle and that of the principle of self-determination, or that the realisation of either is calculated to preclude the practical application of the other. On the contrary! It is doubtful whether history can show any methods more suitable than these for the adjustment of the symbiosis of peoples and for the creation of a political situation inwardly too displaying perfect harmony. This fact is illustrated in a striking and eloquent manner by the Hungarian Kingdom of St. Stephen, which owed its structure to the symbiosis of peoples of various races and nevertheless remained united and strong through the storms of the centuries, until inner propaganda directed from without and the force of war brought it to a fall. But even in its ruins and its records it remains a wonderful sight and a magnificent example of the manner in which, by the exercise of honest goodwill, peoples of manifold tongues and races may work together for the attainment of common welfare and a common prosperity.

The right of self-determination is not a Hungarian speciality; for it was first voiced by Wilson and his collaborators with great eloquence as a paramount political principle. That what was realised in practice, however, was just the opposite, is another matter. That is how peoples were transferred without their wishes being consulted — and against their will — to the rule of foreign nations; and that is how the treaties of peace severed from the body of Hungary three and a half million Magyars, of which number two and a half millions are still suffering the bonds and shackles of foreign oppression. When Hungary demanded the enforcement of the right of self-determination of the peoples, she was thinking, not only of the Magyars living in foreign countries, but also of those peoples which had been welded into one nation by ten centuries of symbiosis and by the memories of common sufferings and common struggles, — which were also

entitled to exercise the right of deciding their destiny themselves, freely and independently. That to be effected naturally not as in 1918, but under correct conditions calculated to reassure all parties alike.

The principle of the right of self-determination has been accepted without reserve by the leaders of the axis-Powers — Signor Benito Mussolini and Herr Adolphus Hitler — too. In his great speech delivered at Triest on September 18th Signor Benito Mussolini made the following declaration: — "When the questions broached become complicated and intricate, the only simple, rational and radical solution is that which we Fascists term a "totalitarian" solution. In the question now causing unrest in Europe the only possible solution is — plebiscites. A plebiscite for each of the nationalities which have been forced to live in that State which should have been "Greater Czecho-Slovakia" and which has now shown that it is suffering from an organic defect."

Just as clearly and unmistakably did Herr Adolphus Hitler take his stand on the principle of self-determination proclaimed by President Wilson, both in the speech delivered at Nuremberg on September 12th., 1938, and in the speech of historical import delivered by him in the Sportpalast in Berlin on September 26th. What he said in his Nuremberg speech in connection with the right of self-determination of the Germans was as follows: — "What the Germans want is the right of self-determination, not platitudes." And in his speech in the Berlin Sportpalast on September 26th. Herr Hitler referred to what he had demanded at Nuremberg and in this connection made the following declaration: "That is the genesis of the demand voiced by me at Nuremberg. This demand was absolutely unequivocal. It was then that for the first time I stressed that now that almost twenty years had elapsed since President Wilson had made his declaration, it was time to put in practice for the benefit of these three and a half million people the principle of self-determination." And later on in his speech he said: "I am ready — as I have been in the past — to hold a plebiscite, if necessary in the whole area of Czecho-Slovakia." The words used by Herr Hitler are unequivocal; consequently, not only London and

Paris, but Berlin and Rome too have committed themselves to support the right of self-determination.

The pillars upon which an independent and free Hungarian State can be built up are the ethnic principle and the right of self-determination. Now, a strong and independent Hungary is in the interest, not only of the axis-Powers, but of Europe as a whole. I do not mean Central Europe strictly so called — i. e. the Danube Basin — only, but the more distant parts of Europe too, which cannot any more isolate themselves from the events occurring in the Danubian area. For twenty years we have been proclaiming this truth; unfortunately, however, we are today living in a world in which even absolute truths need to be continually re-affirmed. That is why Hungarian public opinion unanimously rejoiced and felt full satisfaction when Count Stephen Csáky, Hungarian Foreign Minister, declared that "the Hungarian nation, with its traditions ten centuries old, would be unworthy of its name if it were for a single moment to lose its unswerving confidence in its independence."

This is the true Hungarian political creed; we shall never deny it or renounce one jot of its essence.

The Hungarian Foreign Minister said also that the establishment of a strong Hungary was in the interest, not only of our friends, but also of those who today are far removed from us. And that is undoubtedly true: for the idea of a strong and independent Hungarian State is one that is already backed by international prestige and international public opinion, — as proved by well-known facts of international import. In the British Parliament, for instance, years ago there was formed a parliamentary group of Members friendly disposed towards Hungary which has been joined by over 200 British legislators and has at all times carefully watched the frontier re-adjustment endeavours of Hungary and unceasingly striven to awaken the conscience of the world to a realisation of the injustices inflicted upon that country. There is a group in the French Chamber too which, though small in number, possesses great authority. Members of the French Chamber too have repeatedly pointed to the folly of the dismemberment of the



Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and defended the Hungarian minorities in the Succession States against brutal oppression.

The great Western nations — or at any rate the chosen and competent representatives of those nations — realise clearly and fully that, though the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, which in the Europe of pre-War times always acted as a factor of conciliation and adjustment, cannot any more be raised from its ashes, an effort should be made at least to replace it by some other factor capable of playing the same role as arbitrator in the clash of forces in the Danube basin which is often so chaotic and so uncontrolled. It is quite evident that the only country which both its historical traditions and its central geographical position qualify for this task is Hungary — and it must be a strong and independent Hungary.

This is Hungary's historical mission in the Danube Valley.

But, to enable Hungary to fulfil this mission, which is indubitably a great one and must be fulfilled with absolute unselfishness, more is needed than the unrestricted enforcement in all fields alike of the principle of self-determination; the right of self-determination of the peoples living in the Danube Basin must also be put into effect in practice. That is the best guarantee of peace and tranquillity in Europe.