

## PEACE BY REVISION

BY

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**R**evision! — a peace-idea under all circumstances, both retrospectively and prospectively.

Just think for a moment how different might have been — and most certainly would have been — the development of post-War Europe, had the considerations and arguments, the irrefutable historical, political, economic and geographical truths present in a condensed form in the Hungarian idea of revision, — moments explained exhaustively in 1920 by the Hungarian Delegates to the Peace Conference without any one being able to refute them —, had been enforced already during the peace negotiations! It was the enforcement of the ruthless and rigid principle of "vae victis" put forward by the victors that was ultimately responsible for sowing the seeds of distemper which — particularly in Central Europe — began to ferment and replaced peace with uncertainty, and reciprocal mistrust, stimulating the growth of new passions of hatred and hostility and leading to an enhancement of armaments on an unprecedented scale, to the formation of new, antagonistic blocs, to a division of Europe against herself, to a conflict in the conscience of the world, and to the growth of prepossessions and prejudices in respect of the outlook on life.

Times without number, even among wellmeaning and honest foreigners, we Hungarians are actually suspected of being responsible — as a result of our claims for a revision — for the obstacles impeding reconciliation in the Danube Valley and in Central Europe generally. Not only is this charge groundless and unfounded: just the reverse is true; and the only real basis of peace in Central Europe is revision. For the peace of Central Europe cannot be brought about

except by united action on the part of the nations of Central Europe, while the peace of the Danube sector cannot be secured except by reciprocal goodwill on the part of the peoples and countries of that sector. The real role of the Great Powers in this Central European question is simply to promote the natural adjustment of forces in the territory in question in order to enable the Danube Valley to stand on its own feet and to ensure it against being compelled to enter the service of either group of Powers and thereby to stimulate a further aggravation of existing antagonisms and prepare the way for a fresh conflict leading to a renewed triumph of the barren and destructive principle of "vae victis".

The German revision has been accomplished; the Hungarian revision only very slightly; and the Bulgarian revision not at all. There have been diplomatic situations and moments when everything seemed to point to the Axis-Powers and the Western Powers being anxious to bring about an adjustment of forces in Central Europe — and in particular in the Danube sector — far more in keeping with the postulates of justice than that prevailing at present. Only recently leading British statesmen declared that British policy does not aim at rigidly interpreting and defending the status-quo, but that — while in the meantime defending the independence of the smaller nations — it desired to leave the way open also for a peaceful re-adjustment. These were certainly magnificent words: but we have every reason to fear that the division of Europe into hostile camps and the possible adhesion of countries outside Europe to either of these camps will once more weaken the spirit of abstract justice and the desire to find and realise that absolute justice which was already on the verge of being put into practice. When hostile camps and fronts are formed in international politics and preparations are being made for a clash of forces, the clatter of arms not only silences the Muses, but also neutralises the spirit of absolute justice — in particular of the justice of the smaller peoples, which is replaced by the accident of adhesion to one or other of the two camps. The decisive moment in such circumstances is not justice or the balance of forces or the idea of organic order, but simply the question as to which of the two Parties wins the day: and the victorious Party

will force even his utterly illegitimate claims on the conquered the result being that the horrible process of decomposition responsible for plunging Europe into the present crisis will begin again.

In my opinion British policy — which is desirous of finding natural, peaceful solutions not inspired by prejudice — is most likely to realise before it is too late that no good may be expected in the future either to result from any Central European order based, not upon the natural balance of forces, but upon the victory of either of the two camps. For every solution of the latter kind — as shown by the consequences of the illstarred Paris peace treaties — must inevitably prepare the way for further fermentation and the reduction of the smaller States to the position of vassals of one or other of the groups of Great Powers. After all, the Great Powers too must realise that within the territory stretching from the Baltic and the northern frontiers of Poland to the southernmost point of the Balkan Peninsula (if we include also the territory of Asiatic Turkey) there are living today more than 120 million souls, — really valuable peoples capable of development living within the ring enclosed by the Russian, German and Italian empires which will never under any circumstances acknowledge, if only because altogether they number 120 million souls, that they are predestined one by one to the condition of slaves, to unceasing trimming and to dependence upon others. But, if this enormous mass of human beings would even superficially join forces and make the defence of its own independent existence the pivot of its endeavours, the several peoples constituting that mass of human beings must with reciprocal goodwill remove and bridge over the differences at present impeding their unity. The only means of a peaceful elimination of these differences and antagonisms is — revision. To prevent the realisation of this peaceful revision by arbitrary force — the splitting up of this territory into sections belonging to various blocs — is to bring about an artificial diffusion that runs counter to the interests of the peoples concerned.

For the real way to peace, understanding and co-operation in the vast territory lying between Russia, Germany and

Italy lies through the absolute independence of these peoples.

Not many of these peoples can boast of historical traditions and independent historical achievements. It is indisputable that the chief places among these peoples are due to the Poles and the Hungarians, the Southern Slavs having far less claim in these respects, while the Rumanians and the other Balkan peoples have very little to show. As a consequence it is the Poles and the Hungarians that are predestined to jointly establish the independent power basis of the new adjustment of Central Europe.

The other peoples living in the territory enclosed by Russia, Germany and Italy were — until quite recently — for ten centuries at all times in the service of foreign Powers, that service being indeed the basis of their subsistence. The Poles and the Hungarians, on the other hand, have always regarded as the decisive moment their special mission in Europe, having at all times lived and acted accordingly. And it would be extremely dangerous and injurious in its effects for British policy to attach either to the grit and perseverance of Poland as a Great Power bent on defending her independence against the superior power of Soviet Russia even in the event of a European conflict or to the grit and perseverance which have always characterised the Hungarians, less value than to the attitude of those peoples which find less difficulty in bearing the yoke of unconditional submission.

The eyes and the conscience of Europe are still unable quite clearly to grasp the sublime and indispensable character of the St. Stephen State-idea. Yet the germ of the crisis from which Europe has been suffering ever since 1914 — i. e. for a quarter of a century — is the circumstance that certain Danubian and Balkan peoples were excessively ready to accept a given patronage as being the easier, cheaper and less risky solution. Whereas it should have been (and should be today) the business of the European Great Powers to espouse the cause of those smaller peoples of Central Europe and of the Danube sector which — like the Hungarians — have the courage to represent themselves, shrink from every form of humiliation and show no sign of the inferiority complex of inferior

nations. For a thousand years and more we Hungarians were accustomed, not only to provide for ourselves, but to look after the interests also of other brother nations of the Danube sector which shared our destiny. That is why we Hungarians will never accept as decisive the ethnographical principle, and why we shall never abandon the historical principle. The historical principle cannot exist or develop except in an atmosphere of independence and self-reliance; nor is it under any circumstances capable of tolerating the idea of, and the humiliating situation resulting from, any given protectorate. It would be merely the beginning of a fresh European catastrophe if the Great Powers were to assemble gatherings of auxiliary peoples in Central Europe, justice to be meted out according to the measure of humility of those auxiliary peoples. We Hungarians have never been an auxiliary people and have never served as such to any other nation: for we still cling to the ancestral tradition that we are Attila's heirs here in the Danube Valley. The Treaty of Trianon distributed justice in keeping with the measure of humility of the auxiliary peoples. It would be a bitter day for Europe if the new order of that Continent were once more to be decided by — the measure of subservience of auxiliary peoples...!

We Hungarians cling unswervingly to our ancient mission, fulfilled during centuries of history, and desire to remain lords and masters of the central section of the Danube Valley and of the Basin of the Carpathians; and we are not prepared to allow the inheritance bequeathed by St. Stephen to be frittered away. The banner of Danubian independence has been in our hands for over a thousand years; and even the Treaty of Trianon failed to definitively wrest it from our grasp.

But what we desire to realise in the Danube Valley is not a one-sided Hungarian domination; we desire only a just division of territory and property in a manner conforming to the distribution of the ethnical forces.

The British Empire was built up, not on the number of Britishers or on the basis of their numerical superiority, but on the foundations of British qualities and of the political and empire-building capacity of the British people. The

people of Great Britain must realise that the Hungarian Kingdom with its ten centuries of existence also owes its origin, not to mere chance, but to the exceptional abilities of the Hungarians. It is therefore not just that the measure applied to auxiliary peoples of diminutive size should be applied also to us, who a few centuries ago possessed dominions rivalling even the power of England . . .

Our desire for and our claim to revision is not merely a postulate of justice, but is justified also by the sublimity of the State-building idea which is our inheritance and by the possession of greater inner forces. We wonder whether our British friends — whose nation and Empire have for centuries been held in the highest esteem by Hungarians everywhere — will realise that fact before it is too late?

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