

RUMANIA AND EUROPEAN PEACE

BY

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The whole world trembles at the very thought of war, and thinks with a happy feeling of relief of the various crises in the near past that did not lead to war. Rumania alone of all the States is doing nothing to improve relations with her neighbours and so to help to lessen the tension; on the contrary, she is doing her level best to embroil the Great Powers interested in her future in a new world war. Amongst others, Professor *Jorga*, ex-Premier and King *Carol's* trusted adviser, whose downfall in the Senate took place on 13th June, speaking at the first meeting of the Senate after the elections, said something that aroused a storm of indignation among all lovers of peace. According to the authorised shorthand notes taken by the Parliamentary stenographers he said: "The policy inaugurated by the King has been absolutely triumphant. That the people are of the same mind as the King was proved last March when they flocked to the barracks. When they were sent home again, all they regretted was that they had not had a chance to fight against those who had insulted Rumania and questioned her rights." Ever since Europe has been dancing on the narrow ledge between peace and war, no such openly war-mongering statement has been heard in authoritative places. While the whole world is desperately endeavouring to save peace, which is hanging by a hair, and statesmen never cease stressing their desire for peace, Professor *Jorga* from his presidential seat in the highest Rumanian legislative body unreservedly declares that the Rumanian people regret that war did not break out during the past few months.

It is only since Great Britain and France guaranteed the armed defence of Rumania's frontiers in the event of

aggression that Professor *Jorga* and the rest of the Rumanian statesmen have grown so belligerent. They are rattling, not their own swords, but those of Great Britain and France. Rumania was in a far less warlike modd last March when she mobilized against Hungary. That mobilization — according to a mass of reliable data — was practically an utter failure. Everybody knows that the Rumanian soldiers who were called up had to sleep on hard pavements for lack of proper accomodation, and that when the supply of food from home gave out most of them simply returned home.

Professor *Jorga's* aggressive statement was directed against Hungary. Did not the universal international unrest and the spectre of another world war keep the nations in fear and trembling, Professor *Jorga's* sable-rattling would merely provoke a smile, especially in Hungary. We have not forgotten how, when in 1916 Rumanian forces 500.000 strong invaded defenceless Transylvania, 20.000 Hungarian territorials recruited in haste checked the advance of this mighty Rumanian army armed to the teeth and turned the Rumanian attack into a fiasco. This is a historical fact well known to Rumanian statesmen.

It is not to her own army Rumania trusts but to British and French bayonets when she issues these threats and sets about creating permanent unrest in Central Europe and the Balkans. The result of the promise of military assistance given to Rumania by Britain and France is that now Rumania rigidly refuses to come to terms with Hungary and Bulgaria concerning the protection of the Hungarian and Bulgarian minorities. We cannot imagine that this attitude is approved of by Great Britain and France. This is all the less probable in view of the fact that on 2nd May the Hungarian Foreign Minister announced in a speech which created a widespread sensation throughout Europe that Hungary wished to respect Rumania's frontiers and her rights. *Count Csáky* addressed himself to Rumania in a serious, courteous tone and all he asked was that the rights of the Hungarian minority should be protected and a minority agreement concluded within the

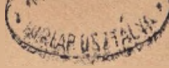
practical limits of international law. This request was more than justified, since in 1919 Rumania concluded a treaty for the protection of minorities with the Allied and Associated Powers and her undertaking to fulfil the obligations laid down in that treaty was the condition upon which she received the territories to which she laid claim. Rumania therefore agreed to all the terms of the minority treaty. She then received the coveted areas under the Treaty of Trianon. But Rumania has never made any attempt to fulfil the conditions of the minority treaty: for twenty years she has tortured and oppressed the Hungarian-speaking citizens under her rule. She could do so with impunity, for neither the League of Nations, which was entrusted with the task of seeing that the minority treaty be enforced, nor the Great Powers guaranteeing that treaty took the slightest notice of the manner in which the rights of the minorities were being trampled underfoot and of the sufferings, tears, destitution, homelessness, and misery caused thereby. In the case of Czecho-Slovakia the persecution of the minorities bore its own inevitable fruit. The Republic could not escape retribution for the oppression and persecution of the non-Czech peoples placed under its rule. But Rumania seems determined to continue this irrational system of oppression. Undoubtedly it cannot be to Europe's interest that such a state of affairs should go on. *Count Csáky* wished to ameliorate these conditions when he addressed himself to Rumania. For a long time no answer was vouchsafed. Then at the beginning of June *M. Gafencu*, Rumanian Foreign Minister, made some statements that allow of the conclusion that the Hungarian proposals have been totally rejected. These preliminaries fully justify the strong and determined tone of *Count Csáky's* speech of 12th June. At a meeting of the Government Party held on that date, the Hungarian Foreign Minister, speaking of Rumania's repudiatory attitude said: "My second statement is more or less an answer to the question addressed to me by various people as to what I think of the recent speeches of certain Rumanian statesmen on the subject of the offer

made by the Hungarian Government regarding the drafting, elaborating and concluding of a minority agreement. If my information gathered from the Press is correct, that offer has been flatly refused. Frankly speaking, in the present circumstances I do not understand this refusal, and deeply regret it. Should it prove impossible to help the Hungarian minority in this way, we are determined not to yield but to try other lines of approach in order to obtain for the sorely tried Hungarian minority the rights necessary to their continued existence, rights for which the Hungarian nation made such great sacrifices of territory in the Treaty of Trianon and which were promised in that Treaty in exchange for those sacrifices.

"I say that the attitude of the Rumanian Government is neither legal, nor fair, nor rational. It is not legal because an agreement concerning the protection of the minorities guaranteed by treaty has been in existence for many years between the Hungarians and the Rumanian nation. This treaty we have times without number endeavoured to induce the international tribunals to enforce, and failure to do so was in no small measure the reason why we abandoned the League of Nations when we saw that it was impossible to obtain the enforcement of those obvious and manifest rights through the instrumentality of that organization.

"It is not fair because the Magyar minority in Rumania, some two million souls, has given manifest evidence of loyalty to the Rumanian State; the Magyars joined the one existing Rumanian Parliamentary Party and received promises in exchange, but those promises have not been kept.

"And it is not rational because in the present extraordinarily difficult circumstances every nation should make a microscopic search, especially where their neighbours are concerned, for every minute possibility of co-operating in the maintenance of European peace and civilization and of finding means of ensuring that the patrimony of each nation shall be respected without resorting to conflict. Now I assert that the greatest and most precious patrimony of the Hun-



garian nation is the Patrimonium Hungariae, that is to say, the Hungarian minorities in other lands."

Count Csáky's speech on the question of the Hungarian minority in Rumania drastically proves the tragic fact that all the sacrifices made in good faith by the Hungarian nation for peace are not able to obviate the danger of unexpected steps on the part of Rumania.

Professor Jorga's attack and the statement made by M. Gafencu, Foreign Minister, came as a surprise to Hungary after Count Csáky's offer of friendship. But this is not all: day after day the Rumanian Government and Press see to it that there should be no abatement of this war psychosis and that peace should not be established. This irrational attitude, however, can continue only until British and French public opinion awakes to the fact that Britain and France are in danger of being dragged into war by Rumania's unjustifiable behaviour.

It is typical of Professor Jorga's war mania that he conceived the idea of putting the members of the Senate into uniform. This proved his downfall. At a meeting of the new Senate on 13th June, Professor Jorga, as President, led the debate on the new standing orders, one of which was that in future Senators would be obliged to wear a uniform. He attempted to get the Senate to pass a resolution that any Senator who refused to take an oath of loyalty to the new Constitution or who refused to bind himself to wear the prescribed uniform should lose his seat. He was outvoted by a large majority, who opposed his new standing orders, and, taking the consequences, he resigned.

Perhaps the attitude displayed by the Senate will be a warning to Professor Jorga and his belligerent compatriots. It may make them realise that by seeking conflict instead of peace with their neighbours they are doing no good service either to Rumania or to Europe.