

WHAT NICHOLAS HORTHY AND THE SZEGED COUNTER-REVOLUTION ACHIEVED TWENTY YEARS AGO

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No doubt foreign public opinion for a very long time — indeed, we might say, for twenty years — failed to realise why the Hungarian nation chose as its leader and Regent — as the Head of the Hungarian State — a born soldier, not a professional politician or a gifted propagandist, as did other peoples in the Danubian Basin. Today, in the critical period through which we are passing, we Hungarians feel that foreign countries are beginning more and more to appreciate the choice of the Hungarian people, and are gradually realising that that choice displayed the peculiar, unerring political instincts of our race and our nation and bore witness to that nation's political genius . . .

It was not only by blood and iron, but far more by military, political and *diplomatic ability that we Hungarians succeeded in creating a country and a State of our own in that region of Danubian chaos where neither the Romans nor the multifarious Germanic and Slav peoples which during their migrations lived and swarmed here proved able to establish order or an organised State life.* That spirit of propagandism which at the cost of a minimum sacrifice of blood prepared the way for and brought into being Czecho-Slovakia, has always been foreign to the Hungarian mind. Our nation — from times immemorial a nation of warriors — followed its instinct when without vacillation or misgivings it chose, not only as the symbol of its past and of its individuality, but as its leader in the gravest catastrophe

recorded in the thousand years of its history, Admiral Nicholas Horthy, the most eminent Hungarian hero and soldier of the Great War.

Twenty years ago there was formed the Szeged counter-revolutionary Government, which elected Nicholas Horthy Commander-in-chief; and this election was partly a protest against the monstrous outrage which Hungary's neighbours and the Great Powers were proposing to commit against Hungary by the dismemberment of that country, but partly also the first step in the struggle begun then to secure justice for Hungary and to ensure her resurrection. *For the Hungarian people fought with glorious valour throughout the Great War and at the end of that War the Hungarian troops were everywhere on enemy soil.* And when the fronts broke to pieces, the Hungarian armies marched back intact to Hungary. These armies would have been able to defend their thousand-year-old country and its frontiers against any attack; yet the Hungarian armies nevertheless laid down their arms because in his familiar Fourteen Points President Wilson had proclaimed that the peace negotiations would be carried on upon the basis of the right of self-determination and of the nationality principle. Wilson's principles were accepted by the Great Powers too; and that is why the Hungarian people was fully entitled to believe that the horrible world-war would be followed by a righteous peace. That people had all the more reason for believing that, seeing that Hungary had not been responsible for the terrible world conflagration. *What happened was however that Hungary was fallen upon by her neighbours — the Czechs, the Rumanians and the Serbians; and it was this hostile attack that enabled Béla Kun and his Red horde to establish a bolshevik régime in Hungary.* But the vitality of the Magyars and their virility brought into being the Szeged counter-revolutionary Government, which found a leader to whose

banner the whole Hungarian nation rallied — a leader under whose guidance that nation began its fight, not only against the Red spectre of Bolshevism, but also against the injustices of the Peace Edict of Trianon.

Not long ago a well-known French diplomat said that during twenty years the Hungarian Regent had not changed, but had remained what he was and what he will be — Nicholas Horthy. The sublime spirit of the simple commander of the "Novara", cultured but unswerving in his manly determination, the thousand-year-old spirit of the Hungarian military genius and the natural sureness and uncompromising resolution of the Hungarian people's political instinct, — that is what is found today in the holder of the highest Hungarian dignity, the Head of the Hungarian State, — not the mere shrewdness of a fashionable but passing propagandism. On August 6th. last the Hungarian people commemorated the issue of that memorable Army Order of such decisive importance for the future of Hungary in which, at Szeged, where he was restrained by the not altogether friendly restrictions incidental to the French occupation, Nicholas Horthy unfurled the banner of a national and historical Hungary and announced that he was recruiting the new National Army. We who were present at the Szeged celebrations were profoundly touched and deeply moved when we recalled the great day twenty years before on which the great Hungarian naval hero of the Great War appeared among us by invitation of the Hungarian counter-revolutionaries and proclaimed to the world at large that he would take up again the fallen thread of the military glory which had been Hungary's boast for ten centuries, and would organise the new National Army.

Our Rumanian neighbours — those illoyal neighbours who always would fain live parasitically on the strength of others — *endeavoured by every means in their power to*

make the world believe that it was their attack on the Red régime established in Hungary by Béla Kun that had been responsible for the liquidation of the bolshevik adventure. This is a grave mistake and a wicked misrepresentation of the facts. Rumania's entry into Budapest was won at the cost of cheap military successes; but it was not that country's interest, nor had she the power, to destroy the spirit of Bolshevism in Hungary. *The first step in the real liquidation of bolshevik rule was taken when Nicholas Horthy started from Szeged at the head of his National Army.* And there can be no doubt that the most natural and most effectual form of liquidating Bolshevism in Hungary — and at the same time the most favourable form for the future both of Hungary in particular and of Central Europe in general, — would have been a joining of forces between the Hungarian National troops assembled at Szeged and those elements which, though serving for the moment in the Red Army and therefore unable to follow their inclinations, were in secret behind the national movement, that being done in anticipation of the Rumanian invasion and occupation. This Rumanian occupation would never have ensued, had the Red Army of Hungary not in the very last moment prevented the assertion of the national spirit and the hoisting of the national colours and not stood in the way of collaboration with the Szeged counter-revolutionaries. *The inner decay of the Hungarian Red Army on the one hand and the unfortunate policy pursued by the Entente in not allowing the national and military counter-revolution led by Niocholas Horthy free play at Szeged,* — these moments ultimately merely served to postpone the real liquidation of the Red rule and at the same time paved the way for the pillaging of Hungary on an incredible scale by other foreign usurpers, leaving Horthy's Government and his Army the heritage of the awful hopelessness of a country stripped and robbed . . .

Terrible is the responsibility devolving upon the political leaders of the victorious *Great Powers* for not *having backed Nicholas Horthy* and for having tolerated Rumania's campaign of robbery against a Hungary devastated previously by the Bolsheviki, as well as for having failed to raise a voice in protest against this fresh campaign of despoilment carried on by Rumania against a country that had then already been actually dismembered . . .

In speaking of these things we are conjuring wraiths of the past. But we Hungarians believe in frank and manly outspokenness and in facing facts. Why should we attempt to disguise the fact that our hearts are full of unmeasured bitterness on account of the undeserved and unmeaning humiliations to which we have been subjected — the utterly unmeaning character of which has only in recent years been fully revealed.

But, despite all humiliation, we are Hungarians and shall never for a moment forget the principal hero of a Transylvanian drama written in pre-War times by Victor Rákossy, the Rev. Dr. Simándy, a Reformed minister, who throws in the teeth of the Rumanian priest whose influence and power in the village is constantly on the increase the following proud words: — "Fifteen hundred years ago we were already world-conquerors, and you are still only goat-herds". And, though perhaps we may not dream of the almost unlimited power of an Attila or a St. Stephen and of their uncompromising rule in the Danube Valley, we cannot either abandon the hope that our Hungarian forces will also be taken into account and our historical achievements properly appreciated in Europe, and that *the abilities developed in us by a thousand years of State building work* will be utilised in the work of sincerely and honestly readjusting on an organic and lasting basis the system of the Valley of the Danube.