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# DANUBIAN REVIEW

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M. Ladislas de Bárdossy's Exposé on Foreign Affairs

The Political, Cultural and Economic Situation of the  
Magyars in Yugoslavia

By Dr. ANDREW FALL

Curriculum of Secondary and Technical Schools in Restored  
Southern Hungary

By IMRE PROKOPY

Repatriation of Szeklers of Bukovina

By JOHN KASSAI

Constructive Work in Transylvania

By LADISLAS SZENCZEI

Hungary and Slovakia

By LEWIS KARPÁTI

Successful Work in Upper Hungary

By BARBARA JENDRASSIK

Political Mosaic

Political Economy

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## M. LADISLAS DE BÁRDOSSY'S EXPOSÉ ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

In his speech on 21st November, during the debate on the Budget in the Hungarian Parliament, M. Ladislas de Bárdossy, Premier and Minister of Foreign Affairs, amongst other things said:

"The debate on the Budget for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is taking place this year at a very significant time. It was a year yesterday that Hungary, forestalling every other country, joined the Three Power Pact in accordance with the decision taken by the Government on 28th September. The significance of the anniversary does not arise from any radical change in Hungary's traditional policy caused by her joining the Pact. *An intimate friendship and close ties have linked us with Germany and Italy for centuries. By joining the Three Power Pact, we merely gave expression to and laid emphasis on what, because of the geographical, economic, cultural and historical factors, knits us to the German Reich and the Italian Empire and through them to their great ally in the Far East.* Events of this nature are of real value — and this is what lends significance to yesterday's anniversary — if a living political reality takes form in them, and not if a form is created to which contents must be added later.

Three days ago the Kingdom of Italy also celebrated an anniversary, the sixth of the day when the League of Nations ordered economic sanctions to be applied to that country. In our hearts we also remembered that day. We had every right to do so, for *six years ago we were on the side of Italy*, and Hungary was one of the very few — we were only three in all — who, defying the resolution of the League of Nations, refused to apply economic sanctions to a friendly country.

The close and intimate friendship and comradeship-in-arms which find expression in deeds not words and whose genuine harmony is not disturbed, cannot be disturbed, by

anything are being sealed afresh with the blood of the Hungarian and Italian soldiers who are fighting for Europe's interests on the Eastern front. Our position in international politics is undoubtedly decisively affected by the struggle in which, on Germany's side, together with Italy and other European nations, we are fighting against the Soviet...

Never before did the political and military power directed by Moscow, a power which — we must make no mistake about it — is just as much Bolshevik as Panslav, stand on our thousand-year-old northern frontiers. This imperialism, which now in the spirit of Bolshevism and under Bolshevik leadership wanted to realize the aims that those obsessed with the Panslav dream so frequently attempted to attain, had never before succeeded in establishing itself in such an advanced position in Europe. Those who are acquainted with the facts of history know how often that imperialism, putting a rope round the necks of the Russian people, drove them to be butchered, and with what stubborn perseverance it attempted again and again to gain its ends...

After Panslavism's trial of strength in the first world war and the collapse of the Russia of the Czars, the vassals in Budapest of the new masters of Moscow gave us almost a fivemonths' taste of the horrors of Bolshevik anarchy. We could not fail to know what having the Soviet prowling around our borders meant. We did know it. When we had purged the red poison out of the nation's system, this country was the first in Europe to suppress the Communist Party. For a long time we had no dealings, not even diplomatic ones, with the Soviet, whose favours we never sought. And we were the first to join the Anti-Comintern Pact at a time when other countries that have since learned to think differently were staunch members of the political group in which the Soviet played an important role and which was formed in order to counteract and keep in check the awakening forces of the German Reich.

It did not escape our notice how Panslav Bolshevik imperialism was gradually, cautiously and perseveringly establishing military positions in preparation for a fresh attack on Europe. Soviet diplomacy began to be active for the first time in 1933 with the London Agreements. It was clear

that the Soviet's treaty of mutual assistance with Czechoslovakia in 1935, which made the hearts of so many Czechs and Slovaks beat faster, was concluded in order that the Bohemian Basin might be used when the time came as a bridgehead for Soviet Russia, or shall we say, a springboard for the far-reaching military plans of the Soviet.

Another thing we followed with close attention was the zeal with which Titulescu, supported by many of his fellow-countrymen, strove to ensure that for certain counter-services Rumania should allow her territory to be used by the military forces as a corridor towards the West between Russia and Czechoslovakia. All these treaties and plans of treaties which were born in that period of pactomania dissolved into nothing like the snows of yesterday when the German Reich attained the fullness of her strength. But the intentions and aims remained. They were merely adapted to changed circumstances, as we see in many places in Europe today. The events of 1940 and the way the Soviet gradually encroached, or tried to encroach, on her neighbours that year, disclosed Moscow's schemes, and also revealed that the men responsible for Russia's policy considered the time had come to act."

#### *The Soviet's Aims and Hungary.*

"It cannot be questioned that when the Soviet made her appearance and took up a position on the northern line of the Carpathians, she did so with the same intention that inspired the Russo-Czecho-Slovak Pacts of 1935 of preparing the way in the same direction though with different methods. In his speech on the Budget the Minister of National Defence told you what a powerfully equipped army the Soviet possessed for the realization of her aims.

*"The whole world owes a permanent debt of gratitude to the Führer of the German Reich for his decision to forestall Russia.* What the consequences for Hungary would have been had he not done so is perhaps unnecessary to state, for we have not forgotten the disastrous battle at Mohi of which this year was the 700th anniversary.

"The fact that the scattered remnants of the Russian armies are seeking safety in flight 1500 kilometres away



from the Carpathians and that danger no longer threatens us from the north signify a radical and lasting change of the position of our country which has been augmented with the addition of the restored areas and relies on a strong, well-disciplined and tried army...

"The danger which we took up arms to avert undoubtedly menaced the whole of Europe. It would be difficult to measure the extent of the danger to each country separately, to say which was more, which less, immediately threatened. But it cannot be questioned that not only were the non-Slav countries of South-Eastern Europe in danger, but that also — in the event of Moscow's plans succeeding — the Slavs within the circle of the Carpathians, who are enjoying the first years of their political independence, would be wiped off the map of Europe, as the Baltic States were wiped off in 1940 by the Soviet.

"The natural thing would be that the countries fighting together against Bolshevism should, in other respects too, draw the obvious conclusions from this co-operation. Unfortunately it would seem that some of them, although in their own interests they were able to revise their political views, are incapable of abandoning their old political methods. The strength, hatred and blindness of the old system still exist. Certain factors loudly proclaim that they wish to take part in the work of constructing a new order in Europe, but the moment there is any question of their having to adapt themselves to the new conditions established by reciprocal agreement, their zeal and good intentions flag. Yet self-seeking and passion may not be allowed to play a role in New Europe. And whichever country gives rein to them automatically excludes itself from the community of European nations and wantonly draws dangers upon itself. To the old system of political friendship belonged — though even at that time it was a disgrace to Europe — the way in which countries aggrandized by the Peace Dictates of Paris treated their Magyar minorities, who had lived in those areas for a thousand years. The ideas and methods of the old system continue to be enforced, and we are compelled to witness how the lot of our Magyar kindred across the frontier grows steadily worse. All our sympathy,

our hearts go out to the Magyars whose bitter trials only the greatest self-control and self-imposed patience enable us to watch without taking action. *Things cannot go on like this.*"

*Redress of Wrongs.*

"In the common interests of us all they cannot go on like this; *for there is a common interest, a European common interest to which we never cease to draw people's attention from this place.*

"Another fact that must be established is that those who for twenty years refused to allow the slightest enforcement of minority rights now, in order to make trouble and foster strife, invoke minority rights, usually as a bald pretext, where there can be no question of them. Advantages that never had any legal basis, that despite right and justice were enjoyed by certain people who obtained them either by violence or by compulsory methods or by ignoring and violating the laws of their own country, cannot be regarded as something to be protected by minority laws. For if they could so be regarded, then the ruthless deprivation of the civil rights of the Magyars, the violence and injustice of the past twenty years would be legalized and perpetuated. The fundamental principle of the new European order is redress of the wrongs suffered, and whoever opposes this wants to hinder the establishment of that order even if he does so to his own loss.

"I have deliberately decided not to say any more here about this question and the States concerned. But I should like to express the hope that independent Croatia, which with the warmest feelings of friendship we were the first to recognize and to whose people we were linked by 800 years of a common history and constitutional ties, will, when she has solved her internal problems of political construction, find ways and means of establishing relations with us that will serve the natural interests of the Hungarian and Croat nations. A description of our foreign political situation would be incomplete without mention of Bulgaria, to which country we are linked by ties of blood, of cordial friendship and of the memory of our common struggle in the first world war . . .

"Two years ago it was with sincere admiration that we watched the life and death struggle of our northern kindred, the Finns, against the Soviet giant. How sad we were when in 1940 Finland was mutilated, and *how sincerely we now rejoice over the liberation of ancient Finnish territories and the reinforcement of Finland's security.* They in the north and our sons in the south are fighting for the same ideals and against a danger that threatened both kindred peoples alike . . .

"Then I should like to say something to our kindred in overseas countries, especially in the large number of Magyars in the two Americas.

"Hence, from the Hungarian House of Parliament, I send this message to the Magyars living across the ocean: The policy of the Hungarian Government sanctioned by public opinion always keeps the interests of the country in view. The Hungarian Government, as the interpreter and executor of the nation's will, draws its strength from the nation's trust in it, and that trust would immediately cease were the Government to do anything against the nation's interests or neglect through carelessness or thoughtlessness to take advantage of any possibilities presenting themselves of serving those interests . . .

*"We not only believe, we know that New Europe will emerge triumphant from the present gigantic struggle. And in that New Europe great tasks await the Hungarian nation. For a thousand years, here in the Danube Valley, we have lived not only racial life but also an organized political life. We accepted its glory and also its burdens. Here we stood defending Europe, maintaining equilibrium among the peoples of the Carpathian Basin. We were intermediaries between the West and the East and vice versa, never regarding our own interests alone, but always serving higher European aims. Our tasks were determined by Divine Providence when we were led to this land, by a Divine Providence which preserved us, strengthened us and blessed us.*

"The tasks awaiting us in the future will be performed well or less well according to whether we shall have to overcome obstacles or whether fate will make them easy to



acomplish. But however that may be *our tasks cannot be performed by anyone else. They are ours alone, and every attempt to take them away from us has hitherto failed hopelessly.* Any arrangement of the Danube Valley that refused to the Magyars the consideration their strength and position demanded was doomed to fail. This was the fate of the clumsy experiments made by Austrian absolutism and this it was that made the system pieced together by the Paris Peace Treaties unstable, so unstable that it soon collapsed. The time for such bungling is now over for ever. *Today Hungary is again an unshakably firm and strong factor of European order and co-operation that stands prepared to make its moral and economic strength radiate far across the frontiers of Hungary."*

OSZK

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