

# MY CAMPAIGN FOR HUNGARY

BY

VISCOUNT ROTHERMERE  
(Author of "Warnings and Predictions")

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DEDICATED

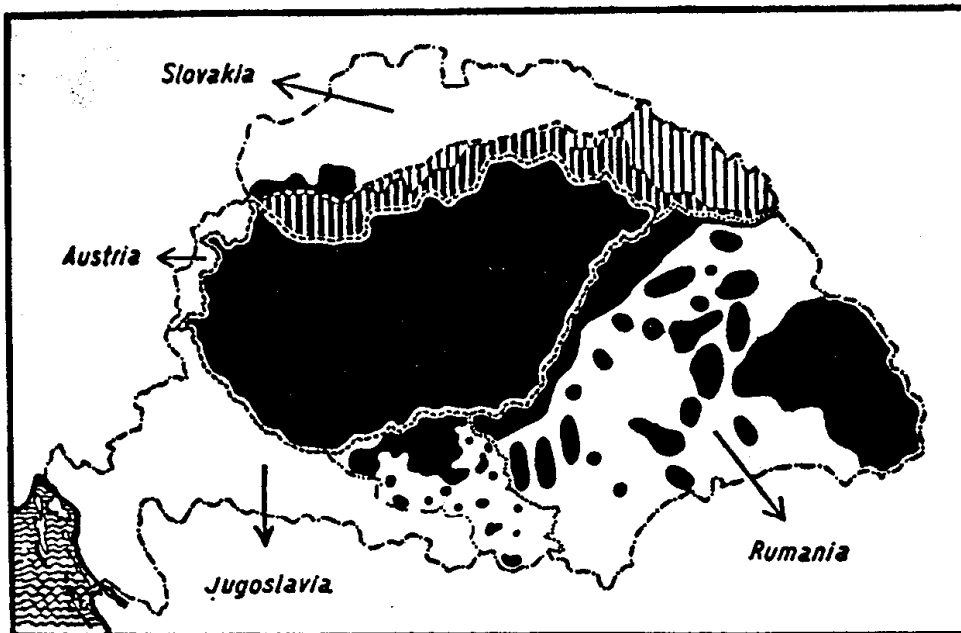
WITH DEVOTION AND GRATITUDE






TO

HIS SERENE HIGHNESS  
THE REGENT OF HUNGARY  
ADMIRAL HORTHY

AND HIS PATIENT AND COURAGEOUS  
PEOPLE

*mere*



-  AREAS OF HUNGARIAN POPULATION
-  FRONTIERS OF PRE-WAR HUNGARY
-  FRONTIERS AFTER THE WAR
-  FRONTIERS BETWEEN SUCCESSION STATES
-  RUTHENIA AND AREAS REGAINED IN 1939

**FOREWORD**  
**by**  
**FERENC HERCZEG**

THAT Lord Rothermere enjoys immense popularity in Hungary is so well known as to be almost proverbial. It is not with the higher social circles of the country alone that he is connected by this tie of sentiment. It unites him just as strongly with the hearts of the masses. Millions who have never set eyes on him,—who perhaps cannot even pronounce his name aright,—nevertheless revere and love him. In the whole history of Hungary there has never been a similar bond between the nation as a whole and any individual foreigner. The only parallel for Lord Rothermere's popularity was that accorded to the heroes of the Hungarian War of Independence.

He is known throughout the country as "The Little Father of Hungary ". This title has a deep psychological significance. It was forged spontaneously in the soul of the people. It is a unique expression of the passionate warmth of Hungarian national feeling.

There is no surer foundation for human friendship than generous sympathy displayed in times of suffering and misery. Amid all the struggles of her troublous past, Hungary never knew such wretchedness as in the years that followed the Peace Treaty of Trianon.

Her people were conscious that they had done their duty on the battlefield, and that they had behaved magnanimously towards those of their adversaries who fell into their hands. When the terms of the Treaty of Trianon were published, in all their unbearable injustice, it seemed at first that they must be a cruel hoax. It was incredible that civilised states should subject a Christian people to such a fate as the authors of the Trianon Treaty prepared for Hungary.

For centuries after the foundation of their country, Hungarians proved their solidarity with Western Europe by the sacrifice of their blood. The Treaty of Trianon, however, seemed to every Hungarian a sentence of banishment from the community of cultured nations. Against this condemnation all the courage and devotion with which Hungary, in her glorious past, had so often defended Christendom against the onslaught of the Turk appeared of no avail.

Above all, it came as a staggering blow that this should have happened with the acquiescence of Great Britain. The people of Hungary, whose Constitution is the most ancient in any Continental country, have always felt a profound sympathy and special affinity with the British nation. Trianon brought to them the bitter realisation that such feelings had existed on their side alone.

It was in the very depth of this time of despair, in 1927, that Lord Rothermere published an article in *The Daily Mail* demanding "Justice for Hungary ". Since Gutenberg invented printing, no letter-press has ever produced such an effect on human hearts as did this article in *The Daily Mail* on those of the Hungarian people.

Lord Rothermere's words *Justice for Hungary*, repeated a thousand thousand times have become the anthem, the symbol, the programme and the aim of all Hungarians.

The effect that they produced may be measured by the fact that directly the preparation of an address of gratitude to Lord Rothermere was announced, great crowds stormed the building where this document was exposed for signature, and within a very few days 1,200,000 names had been appended to it. The sheets containing them were bound in twenty-six huge volumes, and when the Hungarian delegation came to London to present the thanks of the whole nation to Lord Rothermere, the Address had to be conveyed by a special motor-lorry. Had it been possible to prolong the time for receiving the signatures, it is certain that every single Hungarian capable of writing his name would have insisted upon adding it to this tribute of the nation's gratitude.

By temperament, the people of Hungary are more disposed to optimism than pessimism. Historical knowledge is widespread among them, and popular sentiment is consequently a very important factor in the public life of the country. Lord Rothermere's intervention came at one of the most critical moments of our national existence, He restored to Hungary her faith in earthly justice. By so doing he

rescued the Hungarian nation from a mood of despair unnatural to it; he roused again the intrinsic courage of the people; he rekindled their happiness; he revived their faith in the future. Such were the mighty consequences of the pronouncement, at an appropriate moment, of that single word *Justice!*

It is fitting here to recall the manifold signs of that respect and sympathy in which Lord Rothermere is held by my fellow-countrymen.

They have multiplied so abundantly during the passage of years that foreign visitors, making even the briefest stay in the country, see on every side the proofs of the adoration which surrounds his name. Not only are there in Budapest a "Rothermere Street", and a Rothermere Memorial in marble and bronze, but nearly every town in the land has an avenue, a square, or a park called after him. In the countryside his name has even been given to venerable trees or mighty rocks.

Alike in the palaces of the aristocrats and the cottages of humble peasants, photographs, busts, or bas-reliefs of Lord Rothermere are found. It is consequently only natural that when first his son, Mr. Esmond Harmsworth, and then Lord Rothermere himself, came to Hungary, countless thousands should have thrown over their daily work in order to look with their own eyes upon them as the personification of that legendary name.

I fear that all this adulation has occasionally been a burden to Lord Rothermere, entailing heavy calls upon his valuable time; but a man who counts his friends by millions requires special qualities of endurance. I have heard that he has been beset by many fantastic projects and proposals emanating from Hungarians of varying degrees of talent. Painters and sculptors have clamoured to depict him; composers dedicate their music to him; inventors want to submit their contrivances; eccentric politicians and economists try to interest him in their projects for saving Europe.

Meanwhile a constant stream of presents flow from Hungary to London,—for Hungarians love to give presents, especially the poorest among them, and their judgement as to the suitability of a present is often a very subjective one. His Lordship must, indeed, by now be in a position to fill an entire museum, whose exhibits would range from the perpetual-motion device of the village blacksmith to the handsome embroidery worked by peasant-girls, and the quaint carvings of the shepherds of the Puszta. I can only regret that it is humanly impossible to protect Lord Rothermere from the naïve and sometimes unconventional attentions of these loving hearts.

The first result of Lord Rothermere's action was the foundation of the Hungarian Revision League. This body, which shortly after its creation counted two million members, was formed in order to give practical support to the principle *Justice for Hungary!*

From the first it was the purpose of the Revision League to adapt itself to the directives laid down by his Lordship. Lord Rothermere had set before us the aim of procuring the revision of the Peace Treaty of Trianon by the assertion of our just rights and solely by peaceful means. The League accordingly took up the task of organising Hungarian public opinion, which in this respect was already united. It further set itself to arouse the interest of friends abroad, and to influence popular feeling in the victorious countries in favour of a peaceful revision of the Treaty.

The unanimity of the Hungarian resolve to employ only pacific means for the redress of its grievances must surely be considered highly creditable in a nation which takes such pride in the heroic quality of its ancestors, and is furthermore conscious of having been the victim of tank injustice. The most powerful influence in establishing this national discipline must be ascribed to Lord Rothermere, who on this point was adamant. He inspired complete faith in the people of Hungary, for they see in him the embodiment of British justice.

It is not for me to say whether or not it is of any value to Britain that a small nation in the valley of the Danube should regard it as the foundation of England's world-power that she is animated by a superior sense of justice. Should this be the case, then Lord Rothermere has indeed done great service to his own country also, for he has raised Britain to an unrivalled position in Hungarian esteem, where no aspersion or calumny can reach her.

It will give me great happiness if this book succeeds in conveying to the public opinion a fuller knowledge of the struggle waged by Lord Rothermere and his Hungarian followers to secure, by moral and intellectual means alone, that great achievement—*Justice for Hungary!*

## THE STORY OF THE BOOK

This is the account of a unique interlude in the history of present-day European politics. The confused and eventful character of our times has brought about many strange developments but few have been more unexpected than the events that have linked me so closely for the past dozen years to a country with which I originally had no connection of any kind.

At a time of life when most men are beginning to limit their interests to personal affairs I found myself, as the result of a single newspaper article, becoming actively engaged, although from a distance, in the campaign by which the people of Hungary were seeking redress of the grossly unjust treatment inflicted upon them by the Peace Treaty of Trianon.

This participation in the national effort of that country brought me into constantly closer touch with its inhabitants of every degree. The leaders of Hungarian public life visited me in London or met me on the Continent. With the mass of the people I became engaged in a correspondence that at first was of overwhelming proportions and continues to the present time.

Thanks to the generosity with which the Hungarians respond to any gestures of friendliness towards them, my name, unknown to ninety-nine per cent. of the nation until my article appeared, became with remarkable rapidity a household word among them. It was given to streets and squares in Budapest and many other towns. It was carved upon the slopes of mountains. My portrait was hung in the public buildings of the capital. Visitors returning from that country informed me that my bust or picture was to be found in every Hungarian home, and that the peasants always referred to me by a phrase meaning "The Little Father of Hungary".

From the United States, from South America and the British Dominions, Hungarian communities scattered throughout the world sent me expressions of their gratitude. I received ample confirmation of the assurance given me by many leaders of the public life of Hungary that since the days of Louis Kossuth, the Hungarian patriot-leader of the Revolution of 1848, no other figure had achieved such a place in the imagination of the Magyar race.

Once, to my consternation, twenty high officers of the Hungarian army, active and retired, signed and sent to me a "round robin" inviting me to come over and assume the government of their country!

These surprising developments were not of my own seeking. Prominence and popularity in Hungary were thrust upon me. A great force of national emotion had for seven years been accumulating under constantly increasing pressure. My article operated like the oil prospector's drill which strikes a "gusher", and I was carried irresistibly along by the flood of pent-up patriotic feeling that found through me an outlet from the dangerous condition of repression in which it had hitherto remained.

To my surprise and even embarrassment, a constant succession of leading Hungarians came to London to discuss their country's affairs with me; public bodies of all kinds sent delegations; Hungarian Universities conferred degrees upon me; municipalities elected me to honorary citizenship, and the flood of private letters augmented daily.

I received continual invitations to visit Hungary, where I was told I should be given a national welcome. But though I could not, even if I had so desired, restrain the spontaneous outpouring of Hungarian enthusiasm of which I was the object, I declined to appear as a public figure in that country. Nothing is more uncongenial to my temperament than to be the object of ceremonious attentions. Moreover, strong though my sympathy was for the grievances of the Hungarian people, I felt that it would not be fitting for me to accept expressions of their thanks in person until the campaign for the restoration of the unjustly confiscated territories, to which I had given my support, had met with at least partial success.

When that had at last been accomplished, in the autumn of 1938, I finally fell in with the proposal of the Hungarian Government that as the Guest of the Nation I should visit Budapest and the territory

recovered from Czecho-Slovakia. On that occasion I furthermore departed from a life-long rule by accepting from the hands of the distinguished and gallant Regent of Hungary, His Serene Highness Admiral Horthy, the honour of the highest class of the principal Hungarian decoration, the Order of Merit.

These and other developments which will be related in this book were so remote from my own volition that they seemed almost to be the workings of Fate. At times they took a strange and romantic turn. There was a period in which I even had to discourage attempts to put me forward as a candidate for the Hungarian Crown. The chief significance, however, of the whole story is that it provides a measure of the fervour with which the Hungarian people pressed for the revision of the Peace Treaty.

It was entirely of my own initiative that I came forward as an independent advocate of justice for Hungary. My intervention had not been instigated or solicited in any way by the Hungarian Government or by anyone acting on its behalf.

It was not so much in the interests of Hungary as in those of Europe as a whole, including my own country, that I favoured a policy of reasonable and pacific treaty revision. But the astonishing manifestations of patriotic feeling which my action aroused in Hungary, and the exceptional opportunities that came my way to see deeply and clearly into the heart of that courageous and ill-used people, soon filled me with genuine enthusiasm for what I recognised to be in itself a righteous cause.

During the twelve years that have passed since I first gave my support to the Hungarian plea for fair treatment, the ties uniting me with that country have grown constantly closer and more intimate. The origins and character of this association have been, like most things in political life, the subject of conjecture and misrepresentation. The true facts are known to few, and I relate them now, not in order to stress my personal connection with the events that I describe, but because the story throws an unusual light upon recent history in Central Europe.

It furthermore provides an opportunity to recall the courage and constancy displayed by the people of Hungary under suffering and oppression greater than any other country in Europe has had to endure, and to pay a well-deserved tribute to the high qualities of a nation which I have learned so sincerely to admire.

## CHAPTER ONE

### A DANGEROUSLY UNJUST TREATY

WHEN, in the summer of 1927, I began to give active attention to Hungary's claims for revision of the Peace Treaty imposed upon her after the war, my interest in that country seemed to those about me to be as curious and exotic as if it had been devoted to the affairs of Persia or Ecuador.

Since then international politics have become almost the principal topic of discussion in Great Britain. A succession of foreign crises has made the facts of the European situation familiar to all of us.

Twelve years ago the position was very different. Continental boundaries and relationships were then regarded as having been permanently settled by the Peace Treaties of eight years earlier. There was no force in sight capable of upsetting the arrangements thus created. Germany seemed hopelessly divided; Austria was ruined; Hungary crippled. Turkey, indeed, thanks to her successful Nationalist revival under Mustapha Kemal in 1922 and 1923, had rejected the terms imposed upon her by the Peace Treaty of Sèvres and, after a long and critical conference at Lausanne, had obliged her former conquerors to agree to a very favourable modification of them.

But Turkey lay on the farthest edge of Europe, outside the area of the main interests of the Great Powers, and her reaction against the Peace Treaty was not regarded as creating a precedent. In the heart of the Continent the situation was very different. There the French army stood as the custodian of the existing state of things—unchallengeably supreme in numbers, equipment and military spirit.

And allied with France was a powerful trio of the smaller Central European States—Czecho-Slovakia, Rumania, Yugo-Slavia—forming a group whose national forces had alike benefited from French training and been developed with the aid of French subsidies. France looked upon these countries as military outposts of her own in the centre of the Continent. They themselves regarded it as the main purpose of their association to hold down Hungary. Each of them had helped herself to Hungarian territory at the time of the Peace Settlement; each had, on strategic or other pretexts, annexed solid bodies of purely Magyar population, belonging to that strain which, by blood and language, has no kinship in Europe unless it be with the Finns of the far North.

Thanks to this protection, the form which the Peace Treaties had given to Europe seemed in the summer of 1927 to be permanent. The new boundaries appeared to have been deeply etched with the acid of irresistible force.

Moreover, outside the countries that had suffered defeat in the war, hardly anyone gave a thought to the subject of treaty revision. In 1927 international politics were regarded as a matter concerning only experts. It was rare at the time even for the House of Commons to show any interest in foreign affairs. Such debates as took place on the Government's foreign policy were generally limited to our relations with Soviet Russia.

More congenial and profitable were the interests which occupied the minds of the general public in that summer of twelve years ago. The greatest boom in the world's financial history was under weigh. Unemployment was falling; prices and wages were rising; stock-exchange quotations all over the world were soaring to undreamt-of altitudes. It was a time of easy money and complete confidence. In foreign as in domestic affairs during this period—which we now know was but the calm before the storm—the prevailing maxim was "Leave well alone".

By taking up the cause of Hungary in *The Daily Mail*, therefore, as its editorial chiefs pointed out, I ran the risk of wearying its readers, who might be tempted to transfer to some other newspaper which was careful to keep its columns closed to such tedious topics as treaty revision.

These representations did not turn me from my purpose. I saw in 1927 what has since become obvious to the whole world, that the Peace Treaties, as then existing, were intolerable for the nations upon which they had been imposed. I realised that if the Governments of the former Allied Powers continued to



sit obstinately upon the safety-valve of revision, Europe would before long be in danger of another outbreak of war.

To the vast majority of the people of this country this view would have seemed at that time far fetched and alarmist. They certainly did not want to read about such matters in the Press.

But control of a great newspaper entails other responsibilities than that of building up circulation, and I was so impressed by the dangers for my own country and for Europe as a whole which I could see accumulating ahead, that I insisted on drawing public attention to the injustices of the Treaty of Trianon as being the most ruthless of all the Peace settlements. I felt that if a precedent could be established for treaty revision by consent in the case of Hungary, it would prepare the ground for the far greater and ultimately inevitable task of a reasonable and negotiated amendment of the Treaty of Versailles, which might satisfy, before it became formidable, the powerful nationalist feeling whose steady growth I observed on each of my frequent visits to Germany.

In 1927 Hitler was but one of many nationalist leaders in that country. It was impossible to foretell around which of them the reviving self-confidence of the German people would ultimately crystallise. Seldte, Hugenberg, Mahraun—there seemed twelve years ago to be a large choice of potential Führers for Germany. I had met none of them, and was unable to form any opinion as to their respective merits and chances of success. But that the progressive revival of German national discipline and unity would ultimately have profound effects upon the general situation in Europe I felt absolutely certain.

At one time I believed that this new spirit in Germany might find a rallying-point in the former Imperial family. That was before the world had come to recognise the extraordinary gifts of leadership and power of inspiration possessed by Adolf Hitler.

In my travels about the Continent it was steadily borne in upon me that the pressure of the Peace Treaties, combined with the revival of national energies in the countries upon which they had been imposed, must some day confront the former Allied nations with a choice between concession and war.

I remembered how swiftly Germany, under the leadership of Stein, had recovered from her defeat by Napoleon and turned the tables on her conqueror. I recalled the intensely vital spirit which had enabled Hungary to survive her utter devastation by the Mongols in the thirteenth century, her conquest by the Turks in the sixteenth century, the ruthless suppression by Austrians and Russians of her nationalist revolution under Kossuth in the nineteenth, and yet in the twentieth century still had enough national energy left to raise vigorous protests against the crushing penalties imposed upon her for an enforced participation in the Great War.

Countries of such strong character can be kept in a state of subjection and inferiority only by force. I knew it to be the hope and belief of the mass of my fellow-countrymen that the reign of force in international affairs was over, but I saw with my own eyes that the resentments accumulating in Central Europe made another trial of strength inevitable unless a means of allaying them could be found.

Common-sense concessions in the way of treaty revision by Britain and France would have obviated all the crushing expenditure and anxiety entailed by the present race of armaments. Such concessions have, indeed, been made, but not voluntarily; they have been extorted by the unilateral action of Germany.

To avert our entry into the Valley of the Shadow of War through which we are now passing, it was my aim to create a precedent for treaty revision in a part of Europe where it would cause the least disturbance to international relations. If the theory of the super-sanctity of Peace Treaties could be set aside with good results in the case of the comparatively insignificant Treaty of Trianon, world opinion would be better prepared for those reasonable readjustments of the Treaty of Versailles which were necessary to save Europe from another war-crisis, if not from another war.

There could be no nation more suitable to be the beneficiary of such concessions than the people of Hungary. Even during the war there had never been any feeling of hostility between that country and our own.

It was with the greatest reluctance that the Hungarians had taken part in the war at all. At a joint Cabinet of the Austro-Hungarian Government on July 7th, the Hungarian Premier, Count Tisza, resisted

the Austrian Foreign Minister's proposal to attack Serbia as a reprisal for the murder of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand. Two days later a Hungarian Cabinet Council in Budapest approved Count Tisza's attitude of opposition to a European war.

Forced to take part in the hostilities by their more powerful associates, Austria and Germany, the Hungarians fought gallantly, but without either feeling or inspiring the hatred that was engendered between the other nations involved in the conflict.

Hungary, indeed, was the only country where the chivalrous standards once associated with war still lingered. The Hungarian Government did not intern the British subjects living on its territory. Throughout the campaign they were allowed full personal liberty, subject only to nominal police supervision. They were treated, indeed, almost as honoured guests, being even permitted to express their national feelings by holding festival gatherings to celebrate Allied successes.

The portrait of King Edward VII, father of the British Sovereign of whom Hungary found herself an antagonist, continued throughout the war to occupy the position of honour in the National Club of Budapest, the meeting-place of the political and social leaders of the country, which in the mid-nineteenth century, when he was Prince of Wales, and had many close friends among the Hungarian aristocracy, he visited almost every year.

These and many other instances of Hungarian generosity and good feeling might well have constituted a claim upon British gratitude.

Even apart from that, the instincts of fair play and common-sense would doubtless have aroused opposition to the unparalleled penalties of defeat inflicted upon Hungary by the "peace-makers" in Paris, had they become more widely known in Britain at the time. But never was an international document of the first importance concocted in a more hole-and-corner manner than the Treaty of Trianon. It was the product of intrigue and propaganda, supported by forged maps and faked statistics. The thousand-year-old unity of Hungary was carved up at obscure colloquies between minor members of the various peace delegations.

After the conclusion of the peace with Germany in 1919, the Heads of the Allied Governments regarded the drafting of the Treaty with Hungary as a matter of purely secondary importance which could be left to their underlings.

Its compilation was mainly the work of the "experts" employed by States that flanked her territory on three sides—Jugo-Slavia, Rumania and Czecho-Slovakia—of which the first two had been allies of the victorious Powers, and the third, thanks to Czech desertions from the Austro-Hungarian Army, and to the propaganda carried on in Britain and the United States by Dr. Benes and Professor Mazaryk, was able to appear at the Peace Conference on the same footing.

It was the sole purpose of these States to divide as much as possible of the plunder of Hungary between them. They put forward their maximum claims, and were astonished when the "second strings" of the Peace Conference left in charge of the drafting of the minor treaties, conceded their demands almost without demur. These allied delegates knew nothing of the country they were thus dividing up. They had to be shown the position of its chief towns on the map.

The wire-pullers representing the Governments of Czecho-Slovakia, Rumania and Jugo-Slavia had an easy game to play. By the summer of 1920 the subordinate Peace Delegates who had been left in Paris to do the concluding odd jobs of the Peace Settlement were sick and tired of the continuous conferences in which they had been engaged for eighteen months, and were anxious to get home. A small set of self-seeking or time-serving "experts" bombarded them with one-sided memoranda, minutes, digests, drafts, summaries and maps in favour of the partition of Hungary. And that country was allowed no opportunity of refuting the arguments advanced in favour of its dismemberment.

"The agreements and bargains were made behind closed doors," said one of the American delegates, Mr. Robert Lansing, in his history of the Peace Conference. The spirit which animated those who planned the plunder of Hungary was naïvely revealed by one of the principal agitators in support of Czecho-Slovakia's claims, who, in a speech on the Peace Conference made to an American audience four years later in 1924, boasted that "A few experts, knowing their own minds, and concentrating all their

efforts on the attainment of a given end, can sometimes achieve ends unattainable by the leaders of uninformed opinion and uninformed statesmanship.”

Three-fifths of her population and two-thirds of her territory were allotted to the greedy Governments which conspired Hungary’s partition. On only one occasion was a member of the Hungarian delegation allowed to address the Peace Conference, and to protest against the injustice and unwisdom of the terms that were being prepared for imposition upon his country.

Half-way down the column in one of its less important pages, *The Times* of June 5th, 1920, recorded the final act of Hungary’s condemnation to ruin and mutilation in half-a-dozen inches of small type: -

(From Our Own Correspondent, Paris, June 4.)

“In somewhat gloomy weather the Hungarian Peace Treaty was signed at the Grand Trianon, Versailles, this afternoon. It will be known in history as the *Traité du Grand Trianon*.

“To-day’s ceremony was a miniature replica of that which took place last summer in the Palace of the *Roi Soleil*. The *Galerie du Grand Trianon* in which the delegates met much resembled the Hall of Mirrors. Its windows, all facing the same way, look upon the beautiful gardens of the Chateau. Opposite them the walls are decorated with beautiful views by Coypel of the park as it used to be. In the centre of this room, was the traditional horseshoe table within the points of which stood a fine *Louis-Quinze* bureau on which the Treaty was signed. The most distinguished unofficial witness was King Alexander of Greece.

“At 4 o’clock the Allied representatives took their places. M. Millerand, who presided over the ceremony, had on his right hand Mr. Hugh Wallace, United States Ambassador at Paris, the American Government having decided that its representative should put his signature to the Treaty.

“On M. Millerand’s left were Lord Derby, for Great Britain, the representatives of the Dominions, Mr. George Halsey Perley, Mr. Andrew Fisher and Mr. Reginald Blankenberg, and Sir Thomas Mackenzie, New Zealand. Immediately next to them were M. Matsui, Japan; M. Athos Romanos, Greece; and Prince Sapieha, Poland. Mr. Wallace’s neighbours were the other French delegates, MM. Francois Marsal, Isaac, Jules Cambon and Paléologue. Plenipotentiaries were also present for Rumania, Jugo-Slavia, China, Portugal, Cuba, Nicaragua, Panama and Siam. Belgium was represented by M. van der Heuvel and M. Rolin-Jacquemyns. Italy was represented by Signor Boni-Langare.

“M. August Denard, Minister of Labour, and M. Alfred Drasche-Lazar, the Hungarian plenipotentiaries, were introduced a quarter of an hour later by Colonel Henry, Head of the French Military Mission. They were immediately led to seats provided for them on M. Millerand’s extreme left.

“The President of the Assembly thereupon rose and in a few words requested the Hungarian representatives to place their signatures on the peace document beside their seals, reminding them of the solemnity of their action. This done, M. Millerand advanced to the document, which lay on the central table, and signed his own name. He was followed by the representatives of the United States, Great Britain and the British Empire, his French colleagues, the representatives of Italy, Japan and Belgium, those of the other Allied Powers in the alphabetical order of their countries, and lastly, by the Hungarian plenipotentiaries.”

It was in this way, with the participation of a collection mainly of political nonentities representing countries most of which had no contact of any kind with Hungary during the war, that an historic State was dismembered, and its people doomed to many years of misery.

It is small wonder that “Trianon” has ever since that day been to Hungarian ears the most hateful word in any language.

## CHAPTER TWO

### WHAT TRIANON DID TO HUNGARY

BY the arbitrary provisions of the Treaty of Trianon, a national area which had remained intact for a thousand years was divided up to suit the cupidity of Czechoslovakia, Rumania and Jugo-Slavia.

Of these, the first annexed 3,500,000 Hungarian subjects, including more than 1,000,000 of Magyar race, and incorporated 24,326 square miles of Hungarian territory, amounting to more than one-fifth of its pre-war area.

Rumania took 5,250,000 of the population of Hungary into her new boundaries, including over 1,500,000 Magyars. The area of 39,452 square miles which she annexed constituted 36 per cent. of pre-war Hungarian territory.

Jugo-Slavia was more modest in her pretensions, taking only 8,120 square miles from Hungary, or 7 1/2 per cent, of the whole, which contained 1,500,000 inhabitants, of whom nearly 500,000 were Magyars.

To Austria also, Hungary's former associate under the Dual Monarchy, the Treaty of Trianon ceded 1,554 square miles of Hungarian territory with 300,000 inhabitants, including 30,000 Magyars.

In all, the Treaty of Trianon placed under foreign rule 3,000,000 Magyars, of whom 1,880,000 formed part of the compact central mass of the nation.

By these measures Hungary was reduced from a flourishing State, with a population of 20,000,000 and an area of 125,000 square miles, to a population of 8,000,000 and an area of 36,000 square miles.

A naturally united economic region, consisting of a fertile plain surrounded by mountains, watered by great rivers, and predominantly inhabited by a race which is one of the purest in Europe, was split up into arbitrary fragments.

The apathy of the leaders of British public opinion with regard to the manifest injustice and unwisdom of this dictated settlement would have been reprehensible enough if it had been due to ignorance. It is an interesting fact, however, that directly the revision of one of Hungary's most urgent grievances took place,—not as a result of remorse on the part of the makers of the Peace Treaty, but as a consequence of forceful action by Germany,—organs of British policy which had been silent on the subject for eighteen years hastened to explain the natural and justifiable character of such a development.

Thus *The Times*, on October 26th, 1938,—a month after the Munich Pact had opened the way for Hungary to recover territory from the Czechs,—published a long article on the defects of the Treaty of Trianon, headed "An Opportunity for Just Revision", which echoed the arguments advanced by myself eleven years earlier.

"The total losses, to Hungary were considerable," said *The Times*, discussing the confiscation of Hungarian territory by Czecho-Slovakia under the Treaty of Trianon, "accounting as they did to about one-fifth of the total area of pre-war Hungary, with a population of 3,500,000, over 1,000,000 of whom, according to the 1910 census, were Magyar-speaking. Of these the great majority inhabited the strip contiguous to the frontier. The extensive disregard of ethnographic conditions shown in relation to the last-named territory has provided the main target for Hungary's shafts. Even foreign opinion has questioned the necessity of assigning to Czecho-Slovakia the Csallóköz, or Great Schütt Island, formed by the two branches of the Danube below Bratislava, in order to assure her footing on the Danube, when she had already obtained the port and city of Bratislava itself.

"But Hungary resented more than the loss of these Magyars. What is now Slovakia had always formed a quite integral part of Hungary. The historical continuity of its connection with

the Hungarian crown had been practically unbroken since Árpád's horsemen overthrew the sons of that somewhat nebulous tenth-century figure, Sviatopluk, ruler of Great Moravia, and usurped their dominion. It has never passed under Turkish rule. Bratislava, now capital of Slovakia, was, under its more familiar name of Pozsony, cherished by Magyars as the city where they swore to give their life and blood to their 'King', Maria Theresa.

"While admitting the non-Magyar character of the mountain population, Hungary strongly denied that either Slovaks or Ruthenes, as a whole, desired separation from her. . . . The Czechs soon discovered that Hungary's description of the real feelings among the Slovaks and Ruthenes had not been wholly unfounded."

The moral adduced by the article was that:

"This is one of the rare occasions on which it may prove possible to get a settlement founded on acknowledged principles or justice; to prove that revision need not necessarily strike a blow at peace but may lay the foundations for a more enduring order."

A case could be made out on ethnological grounds for the transfer of a large proportion of the 8,000,000 inhabitants of the original Hungary belonging to other races—Rumanians, Ruthenians, Serbs, Croats and Germans—to their kindred nationalities. But the Treaty of Trianon went far beyond the redistribution of these populations of other stocks, most of whom had lived under Hungarian rule for many centuries. For strategic or political reasons it detached solid populations of purely Magyar blood from the pollarded stump of that nation and placed them under foreign rule.

Thus the million Hungarians ceded to Czecho-Slovakia formed 90 per cent. of the population of the long belt of territory, 30 to 40 miles in width, which was taken away from Hungary upon her northern frontier.

Inevitable as it might be that any more or less isolated community of Magyars should be cut off from Hungary by the Peace Settlement, it was flagrantly unjust to detach also the 600,000 who were condemned to live just outside, the new border between Hungary and Rumania—a district which, for a better description, I have named "Hungary's Sudetenland"—and a similar wrong was inflicted upon the 400,000 Magyars in the provinces of the Banat, Baranya and Baksa, who were taken over by Jugo-Slavs.

The Jugo-Slavs were the least exacting of the three nations that profited by Hungary's dismemberment. In a memorandum which they submitted to the Peace Conference at an early stage, they proposed that she should be reduced in area from 125,000 to 50,000 square miles. Thanks to the greed of their two associates, Czecho-Slovakia and Rumania, however, the size of post-war Hungary was ultimately reduced to 36,000 square miles.

The best way for British readers to visualise the treatment inflicted upon Hungary is for them to imagine that the result of the Great War had been the opposite of what it was, and that Germany, in order to reward Russia for partial desertion of the cause of the Allies, had allotted to that country a great tract of British territory, inhabited entirely by Englishmen and Englishwomen. It might further be supposed that the victorious Germans had granted to their minor allies, the Bulgarians and Turks, two other large sections of British soil and population.

One can better understand the feelings of the Hungarian people if one tries to picture what those of Britons would be if Northumberland, Durham and Yorkshire were thus occupied and ruled by Russians; Bristol, Plymouth and the West Country by Bulgarians; and Kent and Sussex by Turks, with the local populations handed over in each case to a regime of terrorism and humiliation

Had that been the issue of the Great War, we should have seen at the Crystal Palace, and in other open spaces around London, multitudes of hopeless, half-starved refugees like those which swarmed into Budapest. As there, long rows of squalid sheds would have sprung up, overcrowded with families expelled, at an hour's notice and without the slightest compensation, from their homes in the British territories occupied by the enemy. Semi-starvation, tuberculosis and pneumonia, the diseases of poverty

and despair, might have taken as grim a toll of some of the best parts of our British population as Hungary had to pay to a Peace Treaty which was hurried through without due consideration, and was based upon false information supplied by the very parties who were to benefit from the injustices they brought about.

The situation of dismembered Hungary was well described by her most brilliant journalist, the veteran Eugene Rákosi. He said:

“It is a country without strategic frontiers, with its rivers cut in half, rivers which all rise in the territory of pre-war Hungary, and join the Danube in Hungarian territory. The Treaty of Trianon has given all our mountainous regions, our forest lands, ores, minerals and salt-mines to our neighbours, who are armed to the teeth, and ready to defend the spoil allotted them, while we have been deprived of all arms and military equipment.

“We are surrounded by enemies guarding their spoil. We are shut off on all sides from contact from the outer world, which derives its information concerning our affairs solely from our foes, and knows hardly anything of our good points, and more than enough of our faults.”

‘The British Prime Minister, Mr. Lloyd George, did, indeed, have sufficient intuition to realise the danger of giving full satisfaction to the pretensions of Hungary’s greedy neighbours.

“There will never be peace in South-Eastern Europe,” he wrote, “if every little State now coming into being is to have a large Magyar *irredenta* within its borders.”

Years afterwards, Mr. Lloyd George again publicly stated that he had relied upon the expectation that the conditions imposed on Hungary by the Treaty of Trianon would be modified later on.

“We all distinctly contemplated,” he said, “the possibility of certain clauses and provisions of the treaties themselves being made a subject of discussion, adjudication and possible revision by the great tribunal set up in the first clause of these treaties—the League of Nations.”

This expectation was confirmed to the Hungarians :themselves at the time of the presentation of the peace terms, on May 6th, 1920, by M. Millerand, the President of the French Republic.

The Treaty, as drafted, was accompanied by a document which became known as the “Millerand Letter “. It dealt with the possibility that “an enquiry on the spot may perhaps reveal the necessity of altering certain parts of the frontier-line provided for in the Treaty. Should the Boundary Commissions consider that the provisions of the Treaty involve an injustice at any point which it would be to the general interest to remove, they may submit a report on this matter to the Council of the League of Nations “.

The “Millerand Letter” prescribed the course of action to be followed under such conditions by the League Council in order “to obtain by a friendly settlement the rectification of the frontier as originally laid down.” On the same day as this document was handed to the Hungarian Delegation, the semi-official Paris newspaper *Le Temps* emphasised its significance in the words, ‘M. Millerand, in his covering letter, opens the door of hope “.

Yet, despite the constant protests of the Hungarian populations cut off from their native land by the new boundaries, no remedial action was undertaken by the Boundary Commissions, except in the solitary case of two villages annexed by Czecho-Slovakia.

During all this time, the heads of the principal allied Governments gave no attention to what they mistakenly deemed a minor matter. Grave and urgent issues at home were clamouring for their attention. In all the allied countries the complicated process of transforming the national life from a basis of war to one of peace was constantly causing friction. In Russia, Afghanistan and other remote places the embers of the war still smouldered fiercely.

It was perhaps impossible for the chief statesmen of Europe to deal directly with the details of the allocation of a few thousand square miles of territory, which were the subject of confusing and conflicting claims on ethnological, linguistic, racial, economic and strategic grounds, by a whole group of minor States. They must, however, bear the responsibility of having failed to remember that such territorial rivalries had, in the past, been a prolific cause of war. They should at least have taken pains to ensure that the subordinates to whom they delegated their authority would see to it that justice was done, instead of listening only to the arguments of the “experts” put forward to urge the claims of the States that aimed at dividing up the major part of Hungary between themselves. By so doing they allowed the plaintiffs to be judges in their own cause, and created a scandalous muddle in Central Europe, which has remained, up to the present day, a potential cause of international conflict.

Economic conditions were left entirely out of account in the general pillage of Hungarian resources. Before the war, Hungary had enjoyed a well-balanced internal economy. Though predominantly agricultural, she also possessed growing industries whose raw materials were largely found within her own borders. The export of her agricultural surplus enabled her to purchase abroad the goods which she did not herself produce.

The Treaty of Trianon completely wrecked this harmonious national system. Of the 139 towns, large and small, in pre-war Hungary, ninety-four were transferred to foreign rule. The Hungarian farmer thus lost his local market, while the industries existing in the towns that remained to Hungary were cut off from their former supplies of raw materials.

The country’s network of communications was disrupted by the large cessions of territory imposed. The system of credit and commercial relations on which the national life depended was paralysed.

Ignorant alike of Hungarian economics and geography, the drafters of the Treaty of Trianon deprived that country of all its resources in minerals, timber and salt. The settlement dictated by them reduced what had been an almost self-supporting national unit to a mutilated economic monstrosity.

Characteristic of this was the detachment of the mountain-area of Ruthenia from the Hungarian plain, of which it was the natural complement, and to which it had for generations sold the timber, salt and seasonal labour that—except for the largest stags in Europe—were its only native products.

This province was incorporated by the Peace Treaty in the artificially formed composite state of CzechoSlovakia, with which it had no connection historically or even physically, since all the valleys of its territory descended into the Hungarian plain and the communications naturally follow this direction. As a result of its arbitrary amputation from Hungary, Ruthenia, during the two decades that she remained part of CzechoSlovakia, was the most depressed and poverty-stricken area in Central Europe.

The automatic result for Hungary of the crippling conditions imposed upon her was an adverse trade balance and a ruinously unfavourable rate of foreign exchange. The effects of the reckless carving-up of Hungarian territory for the benefit of her covetous neighbours were felt, moreover, far outside the economic sphere.

Upon the mutilated and impoverished fragment of Hungary which still remained, there began at once to descend a mass-influx of refugees from the lost territories. To escape from the persecution of their new Czech or Rumanian masters, the Magyar peasants and townspeople from those areas poured into the capital with no other possessions than the clothes on their backs. The Hungarian Government could do little to relieve their distress, its resources had been ruthlessly reduced by the same measures that occasioned this additional strain upon them.

Thousands of the fugitives died of sheer starvation. Seven years after the signature of the Treaty of Trianon, when I first began to take an interest in the affairs of Hungary, the number of suicides in Budapest by drowning in the Danube still sometimes reached—so it was reported—the figure of fifty in a single week. The police had to station special motor-boats at the bridges over the river, to pick up the people who were continually jumping from them. The hospitals established clinics for the psychical

treatment of persons making unsuccessful attempts at suicide, in the hope of arresting the contagion of despair that was spreading through the nation.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **MY FIRST EFFORT IN THE MAGYAR CAUSE**

IN my travels I was constantly meeting Hungarians, many of whom had been driven into exile by the loss of all their property under the confiscations imposed by the Peace Treaty, and were seeking to earn their living abroad. My talks with these exiles left me with a strong impression of the reasonable and conclusive case which they made out for the thorough revision of the Treaty of Trianon that had done such grievous harm to their country and its people.

They had not lost their sense of realities. They recognised that the restoration of pre-war Hungary, whose 20,000,000 inhabitants had included 8,000,000 who were of other races, was practically impossible. They argued, however, that the Treaty of Trianon had flagrantly violated the very principle of national self-determination in whose name it had been drawn up. It had cut off from their native land at least 2,000,000 Magyars lying immediately outside the new frontiers of Hungary, and separated from the rest of their former fellow-countrymen only by an arbitrarily drawn boundary-line. They revealed to me a condition of gross injustice and barefaced expropriation existing in Central Europe of which the great majority of the British people was entirely ignorant. They convinced me that the repair of these abuses was essential to the preservation of peace in Central Europe.

Having thus become familiar by hearsay with Hungary's grievances under the Treaty of Trianon, which had condemned that country to the greatest loss of territory, population and resources suffered by any nation defeated in the war, I determined to verify these reports and investigate conditions on the spot.

During the warm Whitsuntide of 1927 I happened to be in Vienna, and took the opportunity of paying my first visit to Hungary; Without any previous announcement of my arrival or its purpose, I set out with the small party of friends who were accompanying me, and motored the hundred and sixty miles from Vienna to Budapest, following the line of the Danube.

The history of the Magyars—the Hungarians—had always had a fascination for me, as for anyone with any imagination who studies the history of Europe.

Nearly two hundred years before William the Conqueror invaded Britain, a race of herdsmen and fishermen were driven from their home to the East of the Ural Mountains and came eventually to the great plain of Central Europe.

Mounted on shaggy ponies, they seemed to the people through whose lands they passed, and whose lands they took, to be another band of those Huns who had earlier brought sword and fire in theft train. They were thus, quite fallaciously, called Hungarians.

Once settled in the Danubian plain, it was the fate of this race to become the bastion of Christendom against a series of marauders, thus developing through the centuries those qualities of resource, courage and tenacity that made them into one of the most formidable fighting races in Europe.

During their first century or so in Central Europe they displayed their warlike qualities to the full. They scoured Southern Germany, crossed the Rhine, and plundered Burgundy to the West. To the South they invaded Italy, and even tried to capture Venice by swimming their horses across the canals. They were bought off under the very walls of Constantinople.



So fierce were they that their country was declared to be “the enemy of God and humanity”—but with the advent of King Stephen I a change swept over them. In the year 1001 he was given a royal crown by Pope Sylvester II, and the title of “Apostolic King.”

It is one of the most remarkable and romantic things in life that even to-day *the Holy Crown of St. Stephen* is the venerated symbol of Hungary. I shall have much to say of it in trying to tell the story of Hungary’s struggle for justice, and for the unity of her people under that Holy Crown, nearly 1000 years later.

When the last King of Hungary, the Emperor Karl, abdicated the throne at the end of the Great War of 1914—18, the Holy Crown of St. Stephen remained as the symbol of the Monarchy. To-day the Regent, Admiral Horthy, rules in the name of a non-existent King, for, as the veteran Hungarian statesman Count Albert Apponyi defined it :—

“The Crown is not only the symbol of Royalty, but also of the Hungarian State, of the whole Hungarian nation, of her constitution and of her territory. It is more than a symbol—it is the seat of sovereignty.”

To the fidelity of that Crown, and to the providential fact that this hardy people had theft kingdom on the direct road of a Turkish advance into Western Europe, Christendom and the Christian faith owe their survival.

When the Turks under Sultan Suleiman flooded into Europe the nobility of Hungary 25,000 strong set themselves to stem the Ottoman tide. At the famous battle of Mohács, fought on August 29th, 1526, in a two hours’ conflict they were absolutely annihilated. The King, two Archbishops, four Bishops and the 25,000 noblemen died on that bloody field.

They had not triumphed, but they *had* exhausted the “drive” of the Turks. Hungary was looted, 125,000 of the people were carried off into slavery, the country was divided and was occupied and oppressed by the invader for nearly a hundred years—but the conquest of Europe by the Moslems had been averted.

But for the gallantry and sacrifice of the Hungarians, Suleiman might have carried the choice between the Koran and the creed of Christ to the very shores of the Straits of Dover.

From the expulsion of the Turk—not finally driven out until as recently as 1716—until to-day, the Hungarians have continued to suffer attack, invasion and revolution. Theirs has been no placid or unheroic history.

It was, naturally, with much thought and talk about the Hungarian role in Europe’s story that I, with my friends, approached the ancient capital that for so many long and arduous years had actually housed a Turkish pasha.

Until a little more than a hundred years ago the Hungarian capital consisted only of the city of Buda. It stands on the steep heights that look eastward across the Danube, here flowing from north to south. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Pest, which is the modern part of the city, was still a largely undeveloped site, where stood the brick-kilns and furnaces from which its name is derived. Its original development was due to that great Hungarian Anglophile, Count Stephen Széchenyi, who, a hundred years ago, took the lead in promoting the enterprise of building the first bridge across the Danube, designed by an Englishman, Adam Clarke.

Buda is now the official and aristocratic quarter of this joint city, whose modern life is concentrated on the Pest side of the river, along which runs that favourite promenade of the people of Budapest, the Danube Corso, shaded by acacia trees, and lined with the terraces of cafés, from which the view is one of the finest in Europe.

It looks, indeed, more like the backcloth of a scene in grand opera than the impressive combination of natural and architectural splendours that it is.

In the foreground stretches the wide surface of the Danube, busy with the steamers and barge-traffic that it carries half-way across Europe. Beyond it, dominating Budapest from the top of a precipitous rock 500

feet high, stands the far-spreading Royal Palace of 860 rooms, built under the Empress Maria Theresa, and enlarged by Francis Joseph I—the most impressive and imposing building of its kind in Europe.

This great baroque palace, where the state and forms of Royalty have been for twenty years jealously preserved without a king, represents the latest phase of a national history which is without a rival for romance.

It was in this city, so interesting in every way, that I took up my quarters, and set myself to ascertain the facts about Hungary's claims for the restitution of her lost territories and the extent to which they could be justified and realised. Among the sources from which my information came was the Regent of Hungary, that wise and courageous sailor who has brought his country safely through so many critical dangers; Count Bethlen, who for ten years was Prime Minister of Hungary, and several other leading figures in Hungarian public life. They furnished me with ample evidence of the grave injustice done to Hungary, and convinced me that the peace of Central Europe would never be established on a permanent foundation until at least the most outstanding of her wrongs have been rectified.

To the enduring character of Hungarian sentiment about the lost territories convincing evidence abounded. In the Liberty Square a flag, guarded by young Hungarians, flew always at half-mast in their memory. Every taxi-cab carried a plaque inscribed with the words "I believe in the resurrection of Hungary." On the doors of private houses were metal plates bearing a map of the dismembered country encircled by a crown of thorns.

In my walks through the streets of Budapest I could see for myself conclusive evidence of the abject poverty which the crushing and irrational conditions of the so called peace settlement had entailed upon a once prosperous country.

The Hungarian capital had all the setting of a rich and stately city. At a casual glance it might have seemed that life went on there much the same as in other great European centres. One needed to look behind this façade to discover the truth about the dire poverty that existed beneath the attractive surface. The Magyars are a proud race whose independent spirit impels them to keep up appearances to the very last. Life in the streets, boulevards and cafés preserved an aspect of normality, but behind the neatly curtained windows of countless private houses and apartments there prevailed nothing but privation and despair.

There is a State Opera House, but it was long since it had been able to stage a performance. There were good restaurants, bright cafés and gay cabarets, but they were filled almost entirely with strangers whose foreign currency enabled them to command the best that Hungary could produce at a minimum of cost.

In the principal shopping street, the Váci Utca, the windows carrying "To Let" notices were as numerous as those displaying stock. Young girls of the best Hungarian families competed eagerly for employment in such stores as remained open. A request to the hotel for a guide brought an embarrassing choice of men and women of the highest social standing and linguistic accomplishments, many of whom had held important posts in the service of their country. Beggars lined the pavements, and on the outskirts of the city wretched encampments built of packing-cases or sheets of corrugated iron sheltered, under conditions of primitive misery, those unfortunate refugees who had been expelled from the territories annexed by Hungary's neighbours.

I was appalled to find, here in the very heart of Europe, a nation of splendid history and of high culture which was being bled to death by the operation of a Peace Treaty of whose terms the mass of the British nation had remained entirely ignorant, although morally they had their share of responsibility for them.

I decided, therefore, to publish in The Daily Mail an article putting the case for revision of the Treaty of Trianon fairly and objectively before the British public. It was evident to me that the existing situation in Hungary could not continue indefinitely. So much suffering, so much despair, so deep and rankling a sense of oppression constituted a mass of bitterness in the centre of Europe which, if allowed to continue, would inevitably find its ultimate expression in violent action.

It would not have been surprising if the hopeless misery of so large a proportion of the Hungarian population had led to another outbreak of Bolshevism in the country, leading to the possible infection of the surrounding states. Indignation at the ill-treatment of *J their*' kinsmen living under foreign rule just beyond their new and contracted borders might some day arouse the Hungarians to desperate intervention on their behalf. There was furthermore an influential party in Hungary which believed the only hope of improving the national conditions to lie in a restoration of the Monarchy, whose Crown remained, as it were, in commission under the Regency.

Any one of these developments would have led to conflict. Earlier attempts to regain the throne of Hungary by the ex-Emperor Charles had at once brought about the mobilisation of two of the three armies of the Little Entente, with a threat to invade the country if he were allowed to remain within its precincts. The Little Entente, indeed, regarded Hungary in the light of a captive nation upon whom they could at any time impose their will.

What had the Hungarians done to incur these misfortunes? Their responsibility for the war was less than that of any nation taking part in it on the side of the Central Empires. They had fought loyally and well. After their defeat and the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire of which they formed part they had been subjected by Béla Kuhn to three months of a bloodthirsty and cruel Bolshevist regime.

Had it not been for the courageous reaction of the Hungarian people under their great leader, Admiral Horthy—defeated, disorganised and starving though they were—against the tyranny which the agents of Russia had imposed upon them, this first incursion of Bolshevism into Central Europe might have spread through all the surrounding countries.

Just as the Hungarians in the Middle Ages had, by the sacrifice of themselves, saved Western Europe from the onslaughts of the Mongols and the Turks, so in **1919** did they check the advance of the new peril from the East.

Though their own country went through the full horrors of 'Red violence, with the corpses of murdered peasants hanging from the trees in the main streets of the villages, with mothers forced to look on at the massacre of their sons, and with many of the leading figures of the country subjected to brutal torture in the cellars of the Parliament building, the people of Hungary nevertheless rallied under the courageous and patriotic leadership of their present Regent, and evicted the gang of criminals that had seized power in Budapest.

By its patience, self-restraint and heroism, Hungary had deserved a better fate than the oppression and abject poverty under which, in 1927, it had already suffered for seven years. What commended this nation especially to the sympathies of an Englishman, however, was the fact the Hungarians are by natural instinct so pro-English in their ways.

Were it not for the extremely complicated character of their language, which few Britons have succeeded in learning, there is no country on the Continent where the British traveller would feel more at home than he does in Hungary. This obstacle to intercourse is largely overcome by the wide extent to which Hungarians speak English. That language takes first place among the foreign tongues taught in Hungarian schools. The people of the better-educated classes almost invariably speak it with such fluency that one entirely forgets in talking to them that one is conversing with a foreigner.

The habits and tastes of the whole nation correspond closely to those of the British people. The Hungarians are passionately fond of sport. The shooting in Hungary is some of the best in Europe. All those sports connected with the horse which figure so largely in English country life are practised with equal zeal by Hungarians.

Although the wealth of the Hungarian magnates has largely disappeared, the Hungarian cavalry regiments still keep up their hard-riding traditions by maintaining packs of drag-hounds.

Horse-racing is very popular, and on the broad plains, covered with rich, bone-forming grass, bloodstock of the first class is bred.

Among the mass of the population football is played with the same zest and skill as in Great Britain. Cup Final teams have often gone out from England on a visit to Hungary and been soundly beaten by Hungarian football-elevens.

In water-polo and other games Hungary has frequently been world champion. At the last Olympic Games she was sixth among all nations.

This love of sport for sport's sake is shared with Britain by comparatively few foreign nations, and by none more completely than the Hungarians.

Politically, the kinship of Hungary for , Britain is close. A matter of months only separated the Charter of their liberties from our own Magna Carta. They remain the nearest approximation to Britain in the form which their Parliament takes. They have two-chamber government. Their Lower House is virtually the same in its methods as our own House of Commons. It is supervised by an elected Speaker; it conducts its affairs by the party system.

Britain's lively concern for the preservation of Parliamentary democracy should surely have caused her to fly early to the succour and support of this sister Parliamentary democracy.

When in the middle years of last century the smaller countries of Europe in a wave of revolt against tyranny rose against foreign dominance, the great Hungarian patriot Louis Kossuth shared with Garibaldi the adulation of all British lovers of freedom and liberty. It was ironic that the national ideals which had been applauded in Kossuth in the 1840's should be ignored and unheeded in Great Britain less than a hundred years after.

Hungary's admiration for British institutions had certainly never wavered.

It was not, however, the fact that Hungary is so Anglophile which decided me to put her case before the world. The denial of justice to that nation was unmistakable, apart altogether from the prejudice in its favour.

I decided to call my article "Hungary's Place in the Sun ". I aimed at planting, in the hearts of those who had it in their power to influence international politics, the seed of misgiving as to the wisdom of prolonging a state of affairs which made the development of a stable situation in Central Europe impossible.

I knew too much to expect that immediate or visible results would ensue from my presentation of the Hungarian case. I was satisfied to start the ball rolling, in the hope that the impulse which I had given to the Hungarian cause might, later on, and at some favourable moment, help to push it into the forefront of practical world politics.

# HUNGARY'S PLACE IN THE SUN. SAFETY FOR CENTRAL EUROPE.

By VISCOUNT ROTHERMERE.

BUDAPEST, June 11.  
Europe is strewn with Alsace-Lorraine. By severing from France the provinces of that name the Peace Treaty of 1871 made European war inevitable. The Peace Treaty which has been committed on a paper in the Peace Treaties which they have created dissatisfied countries in half a dozen parts of Europe.

of the frontier, would, moreover, be a step towards a Customs Union under which both countries would greatly benefit. Hungary's third neighbour, Jugo-Slavia, on the south, took over as a result of the Peace Treaty 400,000 Hungarians, most of whom live in a corner of the former province of Croatia, formed by the angle of the Rivers Drave and Danube. Mixed up with them are about 300,000 Germans who would certainly prefer to be returned to Hungarian rule. To Jugo-Slavia, whose situation, both internal and external, is at the present time more critical than that of any European country, it would be an asset.

Allied Peace Delegation, that Balkan peril has been extended to a wider area. It is ought to root out the grass and dead timber of the Peace Treaty of 1919 before some chance spark be too late. The parochial prejudices of the Allies must not stand in the way of European unity. One of the aims of the Peace Treaty was to prevent a monarchical rule in Hungary. Why should not the Allies have a king, if such is their wish, they conduct their affairs in a more proper manner? Rumania



The dark line represents Hungary's present frontiers as established by the Treaty of Trianon in 1920. The dotted lines indicate approximately the alterations required to restore to the country the 2,000,000 Hungarians referred to in Lord Rothermere's article.

My article appeared in *The Daily Mail* on June 21st, 1927. On another page I reproduce the heading of this article and the map which accompanied it.

So widespread and enduring have been the results of this article; so profound were its affects upon Hungarian national opinion, and so unexpected yet extensive and continuous have been its consequences for myself, that I here reprint the article in full:

## HUNGARY'S PLACE IN THE SUN.

### SAFETY FOR CENTRAL EUROPE

*Budapest, June 11.*

“Eastern Europe is strewn with Alsace-Lorraines. By severing from France the twin provinces of that name, the Treaty of Frankfort in 1871 made another European war inevitable. The same blunder has been committed on a larger scale in the Peace Treaties which divided up the old Austro-Hungarian Empire. They have created dissatisfied racial minorities in half a dozen parts of Central Europe, any one of which may be the starting-point of another conflagration.

“Of the three treaties which rearranged the map of Central Europe, the last and most ill-advised was that of Trianon, which Hungary was called upon to sign on June 4th, 1920. Instead of simplifying the network of nationalities existing there it entangled them still further. So deep is the discontent it has created that every impartial traveller in that part of the Continent sees plainly the need for repairing the mistakes committed.

“As they now run, the frontiers of the new Central European States are arbitrary and uneconomic. But they have a more serious aspect still. *Their injustice is a standing danger to the peace of Europe.*

“When we remember the circumstances under which was imposed upon a handful of Allied statesmen the task of remodelling the map of the world, it is not surprising that minor parts of their gigantic work should have been hurried. The division of the territories of the Austro-Hungarian Empire naturally appeared to some of them a less critical matter than the settlement with Germany. The principal delegates were content to rely for advice and counsel on the representatives of the smaller Allied nations bordering on Austria-Hungary and on the subject nationalities of the Hapsburg Monarchy which during the war had come over to our side.

#### *An Out-of-date Pact.*

“But the Allied Premiers failed to make allowance for the fierce jealousies and greeds which prevail among the medley of races left in Central Europe by historical tides of conquest and migration. There can be no doubt that, in the various treaties thus drafted, justice was sometimes sacrificed to rapacity, with the result that much of Central Europe is now in a thoroughly Balkanised condition of unstable equilibrium.

“We in England have so many grave problems of our own to face that we are inclined to dismiss these half-forgotten Peace Treaties as things settled once for all. But no one acquainted with the affairs of Central and Eastern Europe can take that placid view. The hands that imposed the political conditions now existing there sowed the seeds of future war.

“The instability of the peace settlement was shown by the fact that the three Central and Eastern European States, Czecho-Slovakia, Jugo-Slavia, and Roumania, felt themselves obliged to form immediately a military affiance backed by France, for the maintenance of the Treaties, especially the Treaty of Trianon with Hungary, which contained obvious defects and injustices.

“That alliance, known as the Little Entente, still exists, though at its annual conference last month the attitude of the three States towards Hungary was noticeably less aggressive than in

past years. This development is doubtless due to the fidelity with which Hungary, though always protesting against the unfairness of her Peace Treaty, has continued to carry out its terms.

“The Little Entente, indeed, is fast losing its international value. Alliances of such a kind, if they are prolonged after the need for them has disappeared, may themselves become perils to international peace. It is seven years this month since the Treaty of Trianon was signed, and those who know Central Europe best are beginning to ask whether it would not be wise to adjust some of the obvious shortcomings of that particular Treaty in the calmer spirit which prevails to-day.

#### *Benefits all Round.*

“The first benefits of such a step would be reaped by the nations of the Little Entente themselves. Roumania, for example, has inherited a deadly feud with Russia in annexing Bessarabia. Whether Russia remains Bolshevik or not, Rumania must always reckon with the possibility of having to defend her newly won rich frontier-province by force of arms. In such a campaign she could have no hope of success unless her neighbour to the west were an entirely friendly State. This can never be the case under existing conditions. For the transfer of Transylvania from Hungary to Rumania involved the handing over to Rumanian rule of one-and-three-quarter million Hungarians. The majority of these are so intermingled with a predominantly Rumanian and German population that Hungary has reconciled herself to their loss. But lying immediately outside her existing frontier are two compact blocks of Hungarians, numbering about 600,000 people. Considerations of a strategic railway were mainly instrumental in securing the transfer of this population to Rumania. Matters of such insignificance must not be allowed to keep the war-spirit alive in Central Europe.

“Similarly, should Czecho-Slovakia, to whom the Peace Treaty annexed more than a million Hungarians, become involved some day in a dispute with Germany over the 3,000,000 Austro-Germans who were brought within her northern frontier, it would be to her advantage to have got rid of all preoccupations on her southern boundary. Friendship with Hungary, based on a reasonable readjustment of the frontier, would, moreover, be a step towards a Customs Union under which both countries would greatly benefit.

“Hungary’s third neighbour, Jugo-Slavia, on the south took over as a result of the Peace Treaty 400,000 Hungarians, most of whom live in a corner of the former province of Croatia, formed by the angle of the Rivers Drava and Danube. Mixed up with them are about 300,000 Germans who would certainly prefer to be returned to Hungarian rule. To Jugo-Slavia, whose situation, both internal and external, is at the present time more critical than that of any European country except Russia, it would be an access of strength to get rid of this dissatisfied racial minority on her northern border. The new frontier, varying but little from the present one, could be drawn without interfering with the Croat section of the old Austro-Hungarian province which was joined up with Serbia to make the kingdom of Jugo-Slavia.

“By such comparatively simple changes, two million of the 3,300,000 Hungarians whom the Treaty of Trianon placed under foreign domination could be reunited with their own race. Ease would thus replace friction with no alteration of the main lines of the peace settlement and without appreciable change to the balance of power in Central Europe.

#### *The Banker’s Power for Peace.*

“I suggest that the time has come for the Allied Powers who signed that arbitrarily drafted instrument the Treaty of Trianon to reconsider the frontiers it laid down, in the light of the experience of the past seven years. When an arrangement does not work well after a trial of seven years, there is a strong probability that it is inherently unsound.

“In modifying the terms of peace imposed on Hungary, the intricately mixed populations of the territories concerned should be consulted. They have had time to make up their minds to which nationality their instincts and interests unite them. The plebiscites to be taken in each area

would need to be under the control of the Government of the United States or some other disinterested nation, for in certain of the ceded territories there is abundant evidence that the Hungarian inhabitants do not enjoy the liberty of speech and opinion which the Treaty of Trianon intended to secure to them.

“I urge this revision of the Central European situation as much on the ground of expediency as of justice. Rumania, Czecho-Slovakia, and Jugo-Slavia are very largely dependent upon foreign credit for any national progress they may hope to make. This means that they are doomed to stagnation, and perhaps to decay and disintegration, unless they can convince the financial houses of London and New York that no acute frontier questions are outstanding to imperil the security of loans made to them.

“If the difficulty of obtaining foreign credits is not already felt by these small and precariously situated Allied States of Central Europe, it is only because they have hitherto been able to take advantage of the naïve optimism of investors, mainly on the other side of the Atlantic. I notice that New York financial houses have lately been floating loans for the city of Belgrade. As things now stand in Jugo-Slavia, I cannot imagine any less attractive investment. At the present moment the Jugo-Slav Government is putting forward aggressive claims to interference in the affairs of the small Albanian Republic, her neighbour on the shore of the Adriatic. This policy has its rise in the fear that Croatia may secede from Jugo-Slavia and thus deprive the Jugo-Slav kingdom of nearly all its Adriatic coast-line. The Jugo-Slav Government hopes for compensation in a subordinate or a subjugated Albania.

“The result of this forward policy has been to bring Jugo-Slavia into a position of growing hostility, if not of collision with Italy. The question of who controls Albania—as a glance at the map will show—is quite as important to Italy as is to England the question of which Power holds Calais and Boulogne.

“It is with equal difficulty that I can imagine any responsible financial house undertaking to urge upon its customers a loan for the Rumanian Government. Rumania lives in well-founded fear of Russia, but a policy of jealousy and acquisitiveness prevents her from protecting her flank by a fair deal with Hungary.

#### *Clear the Ground in Time.*

“The peace of Central Europe is of direct importance to Great Britain. We cannot afford to leave it at the mercy of small and relatively unimportant nations which owe their expansion, and in some cases their existence, to the sacrifices of the Allies in the war. For generations past the Balkans were regarded as the focus of the danger of international conflict. It was there that the Great War actually broke out. And now, as a result of the insufficient knowledge and hurried decisions of the Allied Peace Delegates, that long-standing Balkan peril has been extended over a much wider area. *We ought to root up all the dry grass and dead timber of the Treaty of Trianon before some chance spark sets fire to it. Once the conflagration has started it will be too late.*

“The parochial prejudices of small States must not stand in the way of European security. One of the aims of the Little Entente was to prevent a monarchical restoration in Hungary. Why should not the Hungarians have a king, if such is their wish, so long as they conduct their affairs in a peaceful and proper manner? Rumania and Jugo-Slavia, which threaten to invade Hungary if she calls back her royal house, are both monarchies themselves.

“We can safely show confidence in Hungary. She had only a minor part in provoking the Great War. And while Hungarians fought courageously for the cause with which they were associated, they treated British residents in their country with indulgence throughout the war, allowing them to lead their ordinary lives without internment.

“Within a few months of the armistice, defeated and broken as they were, the Hungarians had enough energy and national spirit left to overthrow the Bolshevist tyranny which fastened itself upon their country under the infamous Béla Kuhn. By so doing they saved Europe from



having in its midst a plague-spot from which a campaign of corruption would have steadily been carried on.

“Next followed the dismemberment of Hungary by a treaty the severity of which was deplored by many Allied statesmen at the time. It reduced her population from nearly 21,000,000 to 8,000,000, and her territory from 125,000 square miles to 36,000 square miles.

#### *Our Natural Ally.*

“Hungary was glad enough to lose some of the peoples, like the Czechs, Croats, and Rumanians, which had been incorporated with her under the Dual Monarchy. But along with them were ceded nearly 3,500,000 Hungarians by race and language. And the country’s territorial losses involved the sacrifice of her entire supplies of wood salt, and iron, three substances most essential to a population almost entirely agricultural. So ruthless was the Peace Treaty that Hungary even found herself required to deliver a large quantity of construction timber to Austria, despite the fact that she was reduced to importing timber for her own needs.

“In her fulfillment of the Peace Treaty Hungary has given the Allies no trouble. She has balanced her Budget, and to-day her working-class and peasant population is in as prosperous a condition as before the war. Two million acres of ploughland have been purchased by the State from large proprietors and divided among smallholders, with the result that no country in Europe has cheaper and better supplies of freshly grown food.

“I should like to see our Foreign Office follow the lead which Italy has given to the Powers of Western Europe in holding out a helping hand to Hungary. Hungary is the natural ally of Britain and France. She has a right to a place in the sun. The attitude of the Hungarian nation towards Germany to-day is one of distrust and resentment. So long as the memory of the war survives a renewal of her old relations is impossible.

“Likewise the resumption of the old bond with Austria is out of the question. The feeling against Austria is to-day as strong as it was after the defeat of Kossuth’s war of liberation in 1849, when the Hungarian national leader found refuge and sympathy in England. It is to Western Europe that Hungary looks for international friendships, and now is the time to cement them.

“A people like the Hungarians, with a thousand years of national and constitutional tradition behind it; with a medieval record as gallant defenders of Europe against the Turk; with a Magna Carta of its own—the “Golden Bull” of AD 1222, only seven years later in date than our own—is not to be treated like a newly formed Balkan State of upstart institutions and inexperienced politicians.

#### *A Practical Step.*

“I should like to see our Foreign Secretary show his interest in Hungarian affairs by giving personal attention to the attempt by Rumania to burke an appeal to international arbitration—as provided by the Peace Treaty— on the part of a large number of Hungarian farmers in Transylvania who, have been expropriated of their lands by the Rumanian Government without compensation. This matter has been before the League of Nations for some time. Britain, as one of the signatories of the Treaty of Trianon, has a direct responsibility to see that right is done.

“For stabilising and pacific effect, however, no influence is more important in Central Europe than that of the great financial houses of London and New York. They have this matter in their own hands. If they refuse to make money advances to the States which are responsible for maintaining the present precarious situation there, it will not be long before the result of that policy begins to show itself in the adoption of adjustments and understanding which will greatly reduce the potential causes of war.

“Of the alteration of the Peace Treaties by violence or threats there can be no question. Any former Allied or enemy nation which tried to bring about new changes in the map of Europe

by force of arms would be opposed -in the interests of self-preservation—by the joint resources of the Allied Powers. But the exercise of wise financial caution by the banking firms which are invoked to help the newly constituted States of Central Europe would have a beneficent and tranquilising force. Reasonable rectifications of frontier difficulties, carried out advisedly and calmly under this influence, will strengthen rather than endanger the peace of the world.”

## CHAPTER FOUR

### INSTANT AND WIDESPREAD REACTIONS

THE Hungarian Telegraph Agency and correspondents of the Hungarian Press in London had telegraphed the foregoing article in full, and on the following day it was republished as the principal feature in all the newspapers of that country.

The comments with which it was welcomed were eloquent of the deep-seated sense of Hungary’s grievances which, ‘to the amazement and joy of the people of that country, had thus found an echo in a British newspaper.

The *Pester Lloyd* is the Hungarian organ best known abroad, for it is published in German. Its editorial writer said:

“Lord Rothermere went straight to the root of the Central European problem. He has certainly done a great deal for the clarification of the European situation.”

Other opinions were:

*Az Est.*

“Lord Rothermere’s article is a milestone in the history, not only of Hungary, but also of Europe. From now on, the Treaty of Trianon will become the talk of the day.

“The wave of opinion against it is gaining in strength and impetus. Hungarians must wait calmly for the moment when this wave will sweep the whole Treaty away.”

*Új Magyaróság.*

“Lord Rothermere has shouldered the task of tearing to shreds the veil of lies and illusions, and of giving British foreign policy an initiative which sooner or later will have to be followed.”

*Nemzeti Ujság.*

“The civilised world is compelled to pay respectful attention to Lord Rothermere’s words. His voice heralds the triumphant resurrection of the downtrodden and humiliated Hungarian nation.”

*Magyar Hirlap.*

“Even Hungary’s neighbours will be unable to refuse serious consideration to the opinions of such an outstanding authority.”

*Új Nemzedék.*

“The sorely tried and deeply humiliated Hungarian nation hails Lord Rothermere’s article as the dawn of fresh hope. It shows the growing desire for genuine peace, which cannot rest on force or injustice.”

There were dozens more of similar reviews, not limited to Hungary alone. It is characteristic of Hungarians that, in whatever part of the world they may make their home, they maintain a strong sense of their national traditions. In the United States there are many large and influential Hungarian communities. One of their leading newspapers, the *Amerikai Magyar Népszava*, published a commentary on my article by Mr. Alexander Konta, a well-known American-Hungarian banker, who, before the war, had stood in close relations to the Austrian Government.

Mr. Konta Wrote: -

“Lord Rothermere has done something to the honour of British journalism, and has promoted a true understanding between nations by his pronouncement on behalf of Hungary. He has pointed out in trenchant and persuasive terms the precise situation in which Hungary was placed by the ill-considered Treaty of Trianon.

“It is clear to everybody that the dismemberment of Hungary was a crime against nationality.

“It was, and remains, to the credit of the Hungarian people, that the Treaty did not cause reprisals. Happily the people bore their sufferings nobly, knowing that in course of time the truth would dawn upon the world that robbery of territory could not remain hidden.

“Lord Rothermere’s personal inspection of the conditions, his realization of the dangers of the mid-European situation, his sane statements concerning the wrongs of the economic barriers arbitrarily raised under the Treaty and his manifest desire that happiness and prosperity shall reign in Hungary rather than discontent and poverty—all these have improved a situation which was becoming ominous.”

In England, “Hungary’s Place in the Sun” aroused no special interest. Those were days when British public opinion was almost wholly indifferent to European politics.

In the minds of most people at that time the map of the Continent to the east of the Rhine was no more than a dim blur. During my visit to Hungary I had been told that it was not unusual for letters to be received from England bearing some such address as :—

Budapest,  
Rumania,  
Asia Minor.

One result of the publicity which I gave to the Hungarian case was to evoke confirmatory evidence from some of the few people who had inside knowledge of the means by which the Treaty of Trianon had been forced upon the Hungarian people. Characteristic, and of particular importance among these was a letter addressed to *The Daily Mail* by Mr. Alexander Gordon-Ross, the former General Secretary of the, Delimitation Commission of the Czecho-Slovak-Hungarian Frontier.

This gentleman spoke with authority when he declared that the Boundary Commissions deliberately neglected their duty of revising the frontiers on the spot as promised in the Millerand Letter.

On July 12th, 1927, Mr. Alexander Gordon-Ross wrote as follows: -

“Sir,

“People who are acquainted with the actual situation in South-Eastern Europe will agree that Lord Rothermere has done a most useful piece of work in drawing public attention to the latent dangers of the state of affairs created by the Treaty of Trianon. It may be well to remember that the Hungarian Government only accepted the Treaty on the strength of a promise of the subsequent modification of the frontiers laid down, which was contained in the too little known ‘Covering Letter’, signed by M. Millerand, accompanying the Treaty.

“This letter acknowledges that ‘certain islands of Magyar population will pass under the sovereignty of another State’. This is a most misleading term when applied to the greater portion of the Magyar population severed by the new boundaries from the Hungarian nation, as it forms one continuous and undivided whole with the nation itself.

“‘An examination conducted on the ground,’ M. Millerand’s letter goes on to say, ‘may perhaps prove the necessity of an alteration of the boundaries as traced in the Treaty’.

“This Covering Letter is itself a proof that those responsible for the drafting of the Treaty of Trianon were aware that its terms were unjustifiably severe and practically unacceptable. When, however, the commissions got to work it very soon became apparent that they had been established for one purpose only,—to mark out the boundaries as fixed by the treaty, and that there was no intention of revising the original demarcations.

“Forcible inclusion of foreign populations in a State is out-of-date and most disadvantageous to the State perpetrating it. We have witnessed the final liberation of Poland, Finland, Estonia, of Italia Irredenta and of Alsace-Lorraine. Ireland has now acquired her independence after long years of discontent—to the great advantage of Great Britain. Mere acquisition of territory is no gain to any State if it implies the subjection of an alien and dissatisfied population, and the opportunity will sooner or later present itself, for the aggrieved party to break away.

“If those in authority in the Succession States were to have the courage to look facts in the face and endeavour to put an end to the present precarious situation, it would be well for all concerned. The moment is propitious, as the States bordering on Hungary would be dealing with a singularly level-headed, tactful and fair-minded statesman in Count Stephen Bethlen, the present Premier of Hungary.

Yours, etc.,

ALEXANDER GORDON-Ross.”

Although the majority of the British public maintained an attitude of indifference towards the whole question of Hungary’s grievances, they could not fail to be impressed by the extraordinary reaction which the publication of my article produced in Hungary.

To the people of that country this unexpected championship of their cause by an Englishman in control of one of the largest organs of British public opinion was like the sudden sight of a sail to a shipwrecked crew on a raft in mid-ocean. It might lead to no practical results, but it brought to them at least the boon of hope.

For years they had believed that Hungary’s case had been forgotten by the outside world. Their small and impoverished nation had during all that time suffered persecution at the hands of its nearest neighbours, who in turn were supported by powerful allies. Amid the gloom of their isolation and despair it came as a sudden ray of sunshine that an independent and impartial onlooker from abroad should have publicly declared himself convinced of the justice of their claims.

Within forty-eight hours of the appearance of the original article, Count Bethlen, the Hungarian Premier, and Count Albert Apponyi, the veteran statesman who had been the original head of the Hungarian delegation to the Peace Conference, both made references to it in Parliament. Extracts from the article were read to a sitting of the Hungarian Upper House, and on the mention of my name the whole assembly rose to its feet, applauding enthusiastically.

The President of the Hungarian Christian Socialist Party in the Czecho-Slovak Government, Dr. Szüllö, telegraphed to the London Press: -

“In the name of the Hungarian minority attached to Czecho-Slovakia, I have expressed thanks in a speech in the Czecho-Slovak Parliament to Lord Rothermere. We Hungarians respect laws everywhere, but fight with legal expedients for our rights. We offer to Lord Rothermere the thanks of a depressed but nationally conscious people.”

The post brought even more startling proofs of the extent to which my pronouncement in favour of justice for Hungary had stirred the hearts of the people of that country. On the second day after its reproduction in Budapest, a large mail-sack, full of letters, was delivered to me in a London hotel. It had hardly been opened before another postman arrived with a second sackful. My secretary reported that this unexpected avalanche of correspondence consisted entirely of communications in a language unknown to him, but which appeared from the stamps and postmarks which they bore to originate from Hungary.

This was only the beginning. Day after day more and more communications arrived from Hungarian readers of my article. Many of them enclosed pamphlets or maps published by the Hungarian Revision League 'to illustrate the extent of the territory detached from their country. There were thousands of an ingenious series of postcards produced by the Hungarian National Women's Association. These bore a map of pre-war Hungary mounted in such a way that the turning of a little cardboard wheel caused the territories confiscated under the Treaty of Trianon to split off, leaving the truncated fragment of Central Hungary isolated in the middle.

I was obliged to take on at once two young Hungarians living in London to act as my secretaries, for the purpose of translating and acknowledging the continuous flood of letters which had set in. Their engagement was regarded on both sides as only a temporary one, but they remained with me for years, during which time my Hungarian correspondence far exceeded that in my own language. On one of my birthdays I had a careful account kept of the number of communications reaching me from Hungary. The letters, postcards and telegrams amounted to over 200,000.

In the months following upon the appearance of my article, Mr. Ferenc Herczeg, the greatest living Hungarian author and playwright, who is also President of the Revision League, had started a movement to present me with a memorial of thanks from the whole Hungarian nation. Lists for signatures were circulated in every town and village throughout the country, and reports reached London that the entire population of many of the most important places in Hungary, without distinction of age, religion or social position, were flocking to sign.

Before long a million and a quarter signatures had been collected, all written on parchment and made up into twenty-five handsome volumes, each two feet tall and several inches thick, bound in embossed leather.

The first volume contained the names of all the members of both Houses of the Hungarian Parliament, with that of Dr. Tibor Zsitvay, the Speaker of the Lower House, at their head. Other volumes were filled with the signatures of the members of the Law Courts, Academy of Sciences, Literary Societies, and Universities.

This address was brought to London by a special delegation of leading men in Hungarian public life, headed by Mr. Bela de Vermes, Vice-President of the Hungarian Revision League, and Mr. Emil Nagy, former Minister of Justice.

The text of the document to which 1,250,000 Hungarian men and women, out of a total population of 8,000,000, had set their names, was engrossed on vellum in colours and gilt, and read as follows :—

“We, the undersigned men and women of Hungary, Catholic, Protestant and Jewish priests and clergymen, members of both Houses of the Hungarian Parliament, University Professors and Students, Academicians, Judges, Civil Servants, Poets, Artists and Journalists, Generals, Officers, Soldiers and ex-Servicemen, Landowners and Peasants, Manufacturers, Bankers, Merchants and House-owners, Commercial, Postal, Railroad, and Navigation employees, Agricultural labourers, Miners, and all kinds of Industrial workers, Physicians, Pharmacists, Lawyers, Engineers and Teachers, men and women of every profession, class and social position, we unanimously profess that the Treaty of Trianon is a cruel, inhuman and insupportable dictate, unworthy of European civilisation, and we all agree that Viscount Rothermere merits the gratitude and homage of the whole Hungarian nation, because, true to the

glorious traditions of the British race, he has, with noble courage, espoused the cause of those millions of our brethren who have been forced under foreign yoke and deprived of all human rights.”

The date of the gathering at which this presentation took place was November 10th, 1927.

I looked at the men composing the delegation with interest, for it was the first time that I had met any Hungarians in an official capacity. The experience brought home to me how different from the reality is the popular British idea of those peoples with which our own country comes rarely into individual contact.

I knew well from my conversation with English friends and acquaintances what sort of picture the word “Hungarian” brought before their minds. It was one of a somewhat backward peasant, with high cheek-bones and long moustaches, dressed in a flowing embroidered cloak, and leading a semi-primitive life as a cattle-breeder on broad plains upon whose horizon constantly flickered the *fata morgana* of political as well as physical mirages.

How different from such a conception was this characteristic group of Hungarians! Here were seven middle-aged men whose bearing, dress and demeanour differed in no respect from that of British members of the professional or official classes.

Such Hungarians, and the 8,000,000 more whom they represented, are people whose character and (standards of life resemble our own more closely, perhaps, than those of any other European nation. And yet, as a nation, we had allowed them to be made the victims of injustice, suffering and expropriation, without troubling to ascertain even so much as the details of their fate.

The leader of this delegation, in presenting the national address to me, told a story of his personal experiences which was characteristic of those of the Magyar inhabitants of the lost provinces.

“My native town, Szabadka,” he said, “is situated in the northernmost corner of the compact block of Hungarians transferred by the Peace Treaty to Jugo-Slavia. As the ex-deputy of the city I was put on the proscription list a short time after the Serbian invasion.

“Then I was incarcerated and expelled. So I lost, in my old age, my home and a good deal of my fortune. Therefore, the words of your memorable article, which has already taken its place in history, vibrate with increased intensity in my mind. .

“We know perfectly well that we have to surmount enormous difficulties and obstacles before your eloquent appeal to the fair-mindedness and the moral responsibility of the signatories of the Peace Treaty may bring about practical results. But we have unshakable faith in the unfailing triumph of justice and good common-sense.”

By critics supporting the strange view, which regards it as presumption that any ordinary citizen should concern himself with international affairs, I have sometimes been charged with having stirred up and stimulated the Hungarians to protest against a settlement to which they would otherwise gradually have become reconciled. Such people would have learned the futility of this expectation if they could have had before them—as I had daily—a multitude of letters from Hungarians in every part of the country and in every walk of life, whose unanimity of emphasis plainly revealed how widespread and deep-seated was the spirit of despair and resentment which the Treaty of Trianon had created in Hungary.

As time went on I came to realise much more clearly than at my first consideration of the Hungarian question how grave was the danger of trying permanently to repress this seething national indignation.

Though the people of Hungary had been reduced to 8,000,000, a solid body of 8,000,000 men and women at the very heart of Europe, all animated by the same burning sense of injustice, and ready to throw in their lot with any nation that might become strong enough to challenge the provisions of the Peace Treaties, made up a ‘force whose potency could not be overlooked.

Hungary, as I had seen for myself, was a nation living under an obsession. The revision of the Peace Treaty was for them an aim far more urgent and paramount than the recovery of Alsace-Lorraine had ever been for the French after the war in 1871. They held that they had been robbed of what was theirs by historic right, and anyone who had studied that country's history knew the grim tenacity of the Hungarian character in resisting national wrongs.

*Nem, nem, soha!* was the slogan of the whole country. *No, no, never!*— the words were a programme in themselves,—a programme of patriotic effort which, if it were resisted and repressed, might some day bring about another mighty explosion in Central Europe, scattering the sparks of war among countries far removed from the source of the conflagration.

These considerations led me to continue my appeal for the reasonable consideration of Hungary's just claims. I decided to publish a further article in *The Daily Mail* under the title of "Europe's Powder Magazine".

It appeared on August 30th, 1927. This time, however, I was addressing an audience considerably wider than the British public. The stir aroused in Hungary by my first manifesto had attracted world-wide attention. The announcement of the forthcoming publication of "Europe's Powder Magazine" led to requests for advance copies of it from the leading newspapers of France, Germany and Italy, as well, of course, as from the entire Hungarian Press. Even in the United States, at that time far less interested in European affairs than she has since become, my second article was reproduced in more than fifty of the principal newspapers.

Its text was as follows: -

## **EUROPE'S POWDER MAGAZINE**

### **GROSS INJUSTICES MAKING FOR WAR**

"Paramount with the Allies during the Great War was the desire that when peace came it should be permanent. Whatever else victory might bring, the men and women of the Allied nations wanted it to ensure that there should be no more Alsace-Lorraines to keep the ,war-spirit smouldering.

"It was the professed aim of the Peace Conference, when it gathered in Paris in 1919! to rearrange the map of Europe on a basis of self-determination. But as its work went on, this principle faded from sight. The result has been that Central Europe to-day is piled high with the materials of a new conflagration. The primary cause of this is the partitioning of the Hungarian nation, among its neighbours by the Treaty of Trianon, imposed upon Hungary in June 1920, which transferred—in compact masses contiguous with the main body of the Hungarian people—600,000 Hungarians to Rumania (out of a total of 1,750,000, most of whom are intermingled with the Rumanians), 1,750,000 to Czecho-Slovakia, and 400,000 to Jugo-Slavia.

#### *Hole-and-Corner Work..*

"In the Peace Treaty made with Germany the principle of self-determination was so thoroughly applied that a plebiscite was even held in Schleswig to revise the frontier which the Prussians had imposed upon the Danes in 1864. But with the signing of the Treaty of Versailles the principal Allied statesmen relaxed their efforts. The task of settling with their chief enemy had been a prodigious one. Their powers of personal application were exhausted. The affairs of their own countries urgently claimed their attention. The drafting of peace terms with Germany's minor allies seemed to them a secondary matter which they might well leave to the subordinate members of their delegations.

"For similar reasons the world's interest in peacemaking evaporated, and the light of publicity which had been concentrated on the work of the Conference was withdrawn. In reality only half the work of restoring a lasting peace to Europe had been performed. But the importance

of what yet remained to be done was overshadowed by the achievement already accomplished, and the remaining treaties were left, to be drafted behind closed doors and signed amid general indifference many months later in various suburbs of Paris.

“This negligent procedure suited very well the intrigues of various minor nationalities which had come to be associated with the Allied cause, and which stood to profit considerably from the settlements thus obscurely made.

“Representatives of these new-fangled nationalities immediately began to arrive in large numbers in Paris, where, with the aid of certain doctrinaire pamphleteers of Allied nationality, they set themselves to pull every available string to ensure that the particular peace treaty affecting their own small State should be as profitable as possible to their public and private interests. This was how grave abuses, containing the sure seed of future wars, crept into the Central European peace settlement.

#### *Disregarding Principles.*

“These abuses were committed in the name of self-determination. If that principle had been strictly observed all round, there would have been no cause for complaint. But the creation of Czecho-Slovakia was an artificial operation only carried through by outraging the principle of nationality which it was supposed to serve. There never had been a state or nation of Czecho-Slovakia, although in the Middle Ages there had existed a Kingdom of Bohemia whose independence ended in 1620, and whose last Queen was a British Princess, Elizabeth, daughter of James I. The frontiers of this State, however, had no resemblance to the post-war creation of Czecho-Slovakia.

“The union of the Czechs with the Slovaks had been brought about only as the result of a meeting held at Pittsburgh, U.S.A., during the war, at which the Slovaks, ‘upon a pledge of autonomous home-rule for their people in any future Czecho-Slovak State that might be formed, agreed to support the demands of the Czechs when a Peace Conference should assemble. The conditions of this pledge, like those of the subsequent Treaty of Trianon, have not been carried out by the present Czecho-Slovak Government, with the result that bitter recriminations are now being exchanged between the two chief racial sections of the new republic.

“To find territory for this hybrid State, the Peace Delegates at Paris were reduced to expedients in direct conflict with their proclaimed principle of self-determination. Not only were 3,000,000 Austro-Germans incorporated in it, but its borders were extended to the south by the inclusion of a compact mass of 1,000,000 Hungarians of entirely different race and language from the Czechs. These people, and the Hungarian Delegation at the Peace Conference, protested bitterly but unavailingly against their fate. Its injustice was tacitly admitted by the Allies at the time in a covering letter dealing with the Treaty of Trianon written by M. Millerand, the French Premier, which contained a promise that the frontiers laid down should, if necessary, be revised.

#### *Abuse of Good Fortune.*

“No sooner had the Czechs got control of the Hungarian population ceded to them than they began to subject it to oppression by the side of which the Germanisation of Alsace-Lorraine pales into insignificance. The Czecho-Slovak Government adopted towards its Hungarian minority population a deliberate policy of expropriation of property, which has continued unchecked up to the present time. The compensation for the seized property was so insignificant that it was virtually confiscated. No financial accounts of this expropriation have ever been published, nor have repeated appeals to the Czech Government resulted in their production. If only half the stories that are told about these land deals are true, the Czech Government is responsible for tolerating some of the worst frauds that have ever taken place in the public life of Europe.



“No heed was paid to the expostulations of the twelve Members of Protest . whom this Hungarian minority (despite the dragooning of the electorate by the Government) returns to the Czech Parliament, nor did the injustice done attract any attention elsewhere in Europe. It is only now, when the great Allied nations have more leisure from their own problems, that they are beginning to learn how Czecho-Slovakia and Rumania have twisted and distorted the Treaty of Trianon. *By their greed and oppression these two States have created two new Alsace-Lorraines which are nothing less than festering sores in the heart of Europe.*

“Such conduct is specially odious in the case of Czecho-Slovakia, for this State is a spoilt child of fortune. Apart from a handful of Czech ‘legionaries’ who came over to the Allies, the Czechs fought on the side of the Austrians to the last. It was thus a curious freak of fortune which enabled Czecho-Slovakia at the end of the campaign to assume the role of a triumphant conqueror while imposing upon Hungary that of a defenceless victim.

“Czecho-Slovakia owes her independence, in fact, solely to the philanthropy of Great Britain, France, Italy, and the United States, and if she has any perception of her own interests she will take care not to lose the good will of the peoples of these countries.

“The position of this post-war republic is by no means secure. In domestic affairs the mixed elements of which it is compounded—Czechs, Slovaks, Hungarians, Germans, Moravians, Poles, and Ruthenes—are so antagonistic to each other that the disappearance of the State by sudden disintegration from within is always a possibility. In this way she constitutes *the powder magazine of Europe*. From the reports in circulation it looks as if anything may happen in Czecho-Slovakia at any time. An overnight revolution might remove her from the map of Europe as an independent State.

“One thing is certain—Czecho-Slovakia cannot continue her present policy of exploitation of her subject populations, whether they be Hungarian, Austro-German, or one of the other nationalities. By doing so, she will affront the public opinion of the world, and this is a risk no modern state dare incur.

“The Czecho-Slovak Government must soon take a momentous decision. Will it elect to stand upon the evasion and perversion of the Treaty of Trianon, or will it follow counsels of reason and justice by saying to Hungary: ‘We do not wish to retain within our frontiers compact blocks of Hungarian population against their will, and we agree to a revision by plebiscite of our frontiers in this respect’?

‘If such a rectification could be brought about, I should recommend that Hungary should reimburse Czecho-Slovakia for any money spent since the Treaty of Trianon upon the retroceded territory, and for the loss of employment on the part of Czecho-Slovak public functionaries, but there must be a set-off in the shape of adequate compensation to the Hungarian nationals who have been wrongfully dispossessed of their properties.

#### *Risks the Czechs Run.*

“The idea of an independent Czecho-Slovakia first reached the minds of the masses of the Western nations through *The Daily Mail* and its associated newspapers, and I very much doubt whether, except for the publicity thus given, Czecho-Slovakia, as we know it to-day, would have any existence.

“M. Masaryk, the President of Czecho-Slovakia, was during the war a highly esteemed member of the staff of contributors to these papers. I am convinced that President Masaryk himself is not satisfied with the present position in regard to the Hungarian minorities in his country, for it is stated in this month’s *Fortnightly Review* that in a recent treatise entitled *The New Europe* he envisages a revision of the present frontiers of Czecho-Slovakia. I cannot do better than quote his exact words. He wrote:

*“The settlement of ethnographic boundaries after the storm of war will possibly be provisional in some cases. As soon as the nations quieten down and accept the principle of self-determination, a rectification of ethnographic boundaries and minorities will be carried out without excitement and with due consideration of all questions involved.”*

“I was one of those who welcomed the erection of Czecho-Slovakia into an independent State, and I should be sorry to see that country forfeit the confidence which the Allied nations placed in it. I realise, as every thinking man must, the standing danger to European peace of allowing Czecho-Slovakia to remain an exposed political powder-magazine. Two years ago I decided to draw attention to the perils of the present position, but I then determined to wait until the Treaty of Trianon had been in operation seven full years, so that whatever adjustments were essential could take place in the calm atmosphere of mature reflection.

“I have some hope that the Czecho-Slovaks will see how plainly to their own interest is the course that I recommend. In a large measure their development depends upon foreign financial help. Any international banker will tell them how gravely the risks of their present internal and external position compromise their standing in the money markets of the world. As one who claims some knowledge as an investor, I cannot imagine any securities with less attraction for the well-informed investing public to-day than the State Loans of Czecho-Slovakia and Rumania. The position of both those countries is far too hazardous to appeal to any but the speculative investor seeking a much higher rate of interest even than that which they are paying now. Financial houses of London and New York which handle such loans certainly owe it to their clients to warn them of the grave risks associated with investments in countries which have been endeavouring to incorporate powerful national minorities differing in race, language, and often religion. I foresee that in no distant future, if neither of these States takes steps to reduce the grave dangers of trouble both at home and abroad for which their own action is almost entirely responsible, their loans will have no greater value than Russian scrip possesses to-day.

#### *Fair Deal for Hungary*

“What I claim for Hungary is no more than elementary justice. The idea of a return to her pre-war frontiers is out of the question. Hungary must pay the penalty of defeat. But that is no reason for inflicting upon her such wrongs as the war was expressly waged to abolish. She has a perfectly righteous and reasonable claim to recover the territories preponderantly inhabited by Hungarians which, as a result of the Treaty of Trianon, at present lie just across her frontiers, cut off from all intercourse with her by every device that the malevolence of her neighbours can invent.

“This state of things is an outrage to an ancient and splendid people with a history of high endeavour extending over a thousand years. It is fundamentally wrong, and it cannot endure. There is time now to right it peaceably and effectively. If we continue to dose our eyes to the evil it will keep alive the spirit of hatred and hostility in Central Europe, with the inevitable result of a disastrous war.

“Are we so blind as to let the elements of another terrible conflict accumulate unchecked? It is the duty of Britain, France, and Italy, as the members of the League of Nations primarily responsible for the present situation, to take steps to give Hungary the relief to which she is entitled. Their generosity in this matter will not be abused. They will be dealing with a nation which, though small, has a character and traditions second to none. I repeat that Hungary is the natural ally of Britain, France, and Italy in Central Europe. Even during the war she showed her natural good feeling towards Britain and the United States by refusing to intern her British and American residents, who were allowed to continue their usual occupations. She was hardly more than a technical enemy of these two countries and she will make a loyal and reliable friend of whatever nation extends to her a helping hand in her day of emergency and distress.”

## CHAPTER FIVE

### MUSSOLINI COMMENDS MY CAMPAIGN

As one who all his life has controlled newspapers and mixed much in politics, I knew that a great political enterprise like the revision of the Treaty of Trianon could not be carried through by Press articles alone. Tributes to “the force of public opinion” are on every politician’s tongue, but behind most great events in the sphere of world affairs there is some powerful personality who has forced the issue to the front and carried it through by his own resolute impulsion. Propaganda is important for the creation of a favourable atmosphere for such action, but by itself can effect little.

Casting about for influential support in my campaign for Hungary, I determined to consult Signor Mussolini, the Head of the Italian Government, who had then been five and a half years in power. He had already shown his friendly disposition towards that country by being the first of her former enemies to make with her a treaty of” constant peace and perpetual amity “.

At that time the Italian Government was still closely associated with those of France and Britain, and it would obviously be of the greatest value to enlist, in support of Hungary’s plea for revision of the Treaty of Trianon, the influence of the Prime Minister of one of the countries that had imposed it.

Those were the early days of the immense effort of reconstruction and development which the Duce has carried out in Italy. At that time he was still busy reorganising the entire economic system of the country under his newly formed Ministry of Corporations. His energy, will-power, industry, memory and judgement had been successful in reconstructing the national life of Italy in all its political and economic aspects. From that bare work-table of his in the Palazzo Chigi, which was then his headquarters, at the corner of one of the busiest streets of Rome, there radiated throughout the entire country the effects of the inflexible determination, amazing power of organisation, and clear-sighted vision possessed by this great national leader.

It was in March 1928 that I went to see Signor Mussolini for the purpose of discussing with him the practical possibilities of helping Hungary to recover those parts of her lost territories to which she had an incontrovertible claim on every ground, whether political, racial or moral.

I felt that if I could obtain Mussolini’s support for my campaign, I should have a powerful argument with which to silence those short-sighted critics who protested in alarm that any modification of the Peace Treaties would plunge Europe into anarchy. Austria-Hungary had been the traditional antagonist of Italy for generations, and if the head of the Italian Government were prepared to approve a revision of the treaty imposed upon one of the members of the pre-war Dual Monarchy, it would be evidence to the rest of the world that such a reform was thoroughly justified.

This was not the first time that I had visited Signor Mussolini. Almost a year earlier I had had a long talk with him at the Palazzo Viminale, the Ministry of the Interior, where he then used to work in the mornings. The personal impression which I had gathered on that occasion had been one of sincere admiration for the achievements and ideals of this originator of a new political philosophy.

“Italy has often led the world into new eras of human thought and achievement,” I said in an article I published on May 2nd, 1927. “Western Europe derives her code of law and system of administration from the example of ancient Rome. Modern arts and letters owe their existence to the Italian Renaissance. Throughout history it has been the Lath races rather than the Nordic peoples who have initiated, created, and inspired. It is becoming more and more evident that we in our own day are witnesses of yet another revolution in the world’s ideas, brought about by the restless and fertile genius of the Italian people.”

At that time, over twelve years ago, the significance of the national reconstruction carried out by Mussolini in Italy was almost entirely overlooked in this country. When one surveys the European

situation to-day and measures the profound and fundamental effects that have followed upon his conception of the Fascist State and on the subsequent introduction of kindred ideals in Germany, it is possible to gain some idea of the mark which this great man has made on the history of his own times.

As I entered his room at the Palazzo Chigi, a delegation of Fascist officials belonging to the directorates of various Italian provinces was coming out. The alert bearing and intelligent expressions of these men, none older than the early thirties, were indications of the success with which Mussolini, sweeping away bureaucratic obstruction, had mobilised the youth and energy of Italy in the service of the State.

The Duce rose from his oaken work-table in the corner of the large room as I entered. He was wearing riding-breeches and boots, and as if to explain his costume, said, "You know I take horseback exercise in the Villa Borghese Gardens every morning ". His manner as he addressed the official who had shown me in was definitely dictatorial, but his bearing towards myself could not have been pleasanter or more modest. He smiled all the time as we discussed various questions of world politics, before I developed the main purpose of my request to see him. And I was struck by the forthrightness and incisiveness of his replies. Signor Mussolini had no knowledge in advance of the matters which I was going to bring up, yet his rejoinders to my remarks were invariably both instantaneous and trenchant.

As soon as I opened the question of the Treaty of Trianon, I found that I was preaching to the already converted. The Duce told me that he followed closely my campaign for the return to Hungary of some of those compact Hungarian populations which had been artificially detached from the mass of the nation.

"The Hungarians are a chivalrous people," he said. "We Italians respect them. Though we fought against them in the war, we appreciate and admire their good qualities. The relations existing between Italy and Hungary to-day are those of sincere friendship.

"It would not be in the interests of European peace ", the Duce went on, "to leave a nation like Hungary bowed down by the sense of being unjustly oppressed.

"The sanctity of treaties must of course be preserved, but that principle does not prevent the modification of the details of a specific settlement whose terms have been proved by experience and investigation to be unsatisfactory."

The Duce leant back in his high leather chair and gazed reflectively round the vast empty room with its lofty painted roof, and walls lined with carved wooden seats like choir-stalls, which must have come from some cathedral or council-room. His mind was forging one of those terse phrases in which he so often expresses the gist of a complicated problem.

"*A treaty is not a tomb,*" he said emphatically. "In all history there has never been one that was eternal."

The day after this conversation I received an invitation to lunch with the Duce. His day is so rigorously organised for working purposes that he very rarely entertains private guests. This luncheon was held in a private room at the Circolo della Caccia, the principal club of Rome, which has a magnificent set of apartments in the historic Palazzo Borghese.

It was the first time that I had seen the club, and I believe the first time Mussolini had been there also. As Head of the Government he was no doubt an honorary member, and had chosen the place as being conveniently near his office in the Palazzo Chigi for the purpose of an informal luncheon-party at short notice. Count Grandi, then still an Under-Secretary of State and not yet bearing his title, was there. It was my first meeting with him. The rest of the party consisted of Count Capasso-Torre, the head of the Press Bureau; Signor Mameli, who was then Mussolini's *chef de cabinet*; and one of the friends who had come with me to Rome.

I noticed how abstemious Mussolini is. He ate no meat—only a plate of *pasta* and some fruit. He said that he had not tasted alcohol for ten years and does not smoke. He told me that he had found it impossible to do really hard mental work if he took tobacco and alcohol. That was the conclusion to

which I had come by personal experience, with the result that I had long given up the use of both those articles. The Duce added that he slept eight hours a night, and that he has so good a memory that he need never send a second time for a file of documents after he has once studied it.

His conversation, which was in French, avoided political subjects, as if he felt the need of turning his mind to other topics during the short mid-day interlude. He gave me, however, the first news I had heard of the building of the Maginot Line, as Marshal Petain had recently been to see him after making an inspection of the first hundred miles of it to be constructed.

When we came out of the luncheon-room, Prince Colonna, the President of the Circolo della Caccia, and several of the Committee were waiting to show us round the club with its lofty rooms and painted ceilings. It was noticeable how well Mussolini's Roman-Emperor-like head and bearing consorted with this sumptuous setting. The death-mask of Lorenzo the Magnificent, that great Florentine figure of the Renaissance, bears a marked likeness to his own features. Only when one sees a great Italian against a background belonging to the great and glorious days of Italy, does one realise that much in his attitude and behaviour which to Northern eyes appears theatrical is, in fact, a natural expression of racial character.

The account of my interview with Mussolini which I published in *The Daily Mail* on March 28th, 1928, caused a great stir in Europe. The French, Czech and Rumanian newspapers especially criticised and condemned the views that it expressed, accusing Signor Mussolini of unfaithfulness to the treaties which his Government had signed at the Peace Conference of the Allied Powers.

The Hungarian Press was of course delighted by the emphatic declarations which I had obtained from the Head of the Italian Government. The *Pester Lloyd* in a leading article compared my campaign for Hungary with that of Gladstone for Bulgaria. It described Signor Mussolini and myself as "most magnanimous and distinguished friends of Hungary", and continued:

"The eternal gratitude of the Hungarian nation is due to these two great men for bringing the Hungarian problem into the front rank of European political tasks.

"Signor Mussolini's words that it was against European interests to embitter a nation like Hungary by maintaining an open injustice were as clear as crystal".

The *Pesti Napló*, referring to the complete unanimity with which the deputies of every party in the Hungarian parliament had voted the dispatch of a vote of thanks to myself, said:

"The name of Lord Rothermere has acted with magic power in creating conditions of harmony and unanimity in the discontented and quarrelsome public life of Hungary".

Mr. Eugene Rákosi, the leading publicist of Hungary, wrote in the *Pesti Hirlap* that my interview with Signor Mussolini was the greatest event in Hungarian history for a long time, because the Duce had made it clear that the Treaty of Trianon was an absurdity which must be changed. Every Hungarian who had knowledge of foreign affairs, he added, was well aware how careful responsible statesmen were in making such declarations.

"Lord Rothermere's campaign," wrote Mr. Rákosi, "has reached a new stage with this declaration, for Hungary can now count, when the time comes, upon the help of Signor Mussolini and official Italy."

Rákosi had been dead ten years when this forecast was fulfilled, but it is a fact that Mussolini played a very influential part in securing for Hungary an even larger share of her lost province of Ruthenia than Germany originally desired to award to her in the first realignment of the Hungarian frontier which followed upon the Munich Conference in the autumn of 1938.

The Italian Press replied with vigour to the criticisms of the Duce's adhesion to my crusade for the repair of Hungary's wrongs. The semi-official *Giornale d'Italia* declared that Signor Mussolini had given ample proof of his respect for treaties.

“He did not explicitly announce “, went on this newspaper, “that his foreign policy aimed at the revision of the Treaty of Trianon. He merely expressed, with his usual frankness, sympathy for the movement initiated by Lord Rothermere for revision.

“The campaign undertaken by Lord Rothermere in favour of Hungary has assumed such proportions as to become a subject of international debate, whereon every responsible politician can frankly and usefully express an opinion.”

The stone which my article had cast into the pool of international politics continued to make steadily increasing circles of popular feeling. Characteristic was the chief feature of the *Stampa*, of Rome, on May 27th, 1928, headed “A Country to be Restored “, which, at column length, deplored the undeserved fate of “the Hungary of Széchenyi and Kossuth, the fatherland of Hunyadi and Mathias Corvinus, the bulwark against the Turkish invasions which saved Europe from the ignominy of Ottoman subjection “. To-day, as fifty years ago, said the *Stampa*, borrowing the title of my second article, that part of the world is “the powder-magazine of Europe”.

Before the blunders of the British Government thrust this former ally of ours into the arms of the Nazi Government, Signor Mussolini had forged a strong economic link between Austria, Hungary and Italy by the agreement known as the “Rome Protocols “, which pledged the Governments of those countries to consult each other in all matters of fiscal policy.

This wise policy, had it been allowed to mature, might have established the international relations of Europe on firmer ground than that on which they stand to-day. It was the short-sighted obstinacy of certain British Ministers that drove Mussolini into other courses more dangerous for ourselves. One of the first features of the process intended to create in Central Europe a counterpoise to German recovery was the speech made by the Duce to the Italian Senate on June 5th, 1928, six weeks after my talk with him in Rome. He said:

“There exists, wedged in between the States of the Little Entente, a nation whose relations with Italy have recently attained an intense degree of cordiality: I speak of Hungary.

“Hungary, whose Premier, Count Tisza, did not want to take part in the war, has suffered the severest consequences from it.

“Friendly relations between Italy and Hungary have existed in every field from time immemorial. The war interrupted them. But the end of the war brought no termination of Hungary's sacrifices. In 1919 she passed through the terrible in days of Bolshevist dictatorship, and then came the catastrophe of her currency.

“Before once again turning her face towards the outside world, Hungary had to organise her internal recovery in the political and economic fields.

“This done, Hungary tried to escape from her isolation. Italy held out her hand loyally and without ulterior motive. A solemn diplomatic document, signed in Rome last April, sealed the friendship of the two States and the two peoples.

“Hungary can count on the friendship of Italy. It should be recognised that the territorial clauses of the Treaty of Trianon cut too deeply into her living flesh, and it may be added that for a thousand years past Hungary has fulfilled in the Danube valley a vital and historical mission.

“The Hungarian nation, ardently patriotic, self-confident and industrious, deserves a better fate. Not only from the standpoint of universal justice, but also from that of Italian interests, it is desirable that this better fate should be achieved.”

I could now look upon my campaign for Hungary as established upon a firm base of operations. I did not know in what direction it might prove to the best advantage for that oppressed country to develop it. I was determined that the tactics employed should be— unlike much of the political intrigue that goes on in Europe—honourable and above-board. Especially did I resolve that, though the readjustment of national frontiers had in the past so often provided a pretext for war, my own efforts in such a cause should steadfastly aim at a peaceful solution.

Already, in the year 1928, I had no doubt of success. I felt assured of the ultimate fulfillment of a demand for justice backed by the united will of a nation whose unquenchable resolution had been so often manifested in history; approved by the Head of the Italian Government, who was then the most powerful individual statesman in Europe; and admitted by Mr. Lloyd George, a principal negotiator of the 'Peace Settlements, who knew, and confessed, that the Treaty of Trianon had been drafted under misleading influences.

It was then too, early to foresee that ten years later Germany would have made a formidable come-back as a factor in European politics, and that, as an indirect consequence, the year x 938 would witness Hungary's recovery of all the Magyars and most of the territory that she had lost to Czecho-Slovakia.

But if the opportunity for effective assertion of Hungary's justifiable claims still remained to be found, the essential thing in 1928 was to keep Hungarian public opinion from despair by giving it encouragement, and European public opinion from indifference by reminding it of Hungary's wrongs.

Such was the position in the spring of 1928, which was to be a year of unexpected developments in my relations with Hungary.

While I had been in Rome seeing Mussolini, a Hungarian delegation, 500 strong, and containing some of the most distinguished people in the country, was on its way back from New York, where it had been attending the inauguration of a statue on Riverside Drive, overlooking the broad waters of the Hudson, to that gallant and romantic figure of Hungarian patriotism, Louis Kossuth.

Close on a hundred years ago this leader of the Hungarian Revolution against Austria in 1848 had a tremendous vogue of popularity in England. After being driven into exile, he lived here for eight years.

It is curious that the same British nation which gave Louis Kossuth a frantic reception on his landing at Southampton; which heard or read with glowing approval every word of the speech he delivered to an immense crowd in Trafalgar Square; and whose enthusiasm procured for him the welcome of the City of London at the Guildhall, should have displayed such apathy to Hungary's grievances a century later.

In all the efforts during ten years or more that I made to interest British public men in the cause of Hungary I met with failure—plenty of fine sentiments, but nothing more.

On their way back to Hungary sixty of the principal delegates who had attended the ceremonies in memory of Kossuth, made a special journey to London to express to me their gratitude for my interest in their country's cause. They were led by Dr. Eugene Sipöcz, the Lord Mayor of Budapest, and included Members of Parliament, ecclesiastics, industrialists and merchants.

On landing at Southampton, where he was officially welcomed by the Mayor, Dr. Sipöcz said:

“The chief purpose of our visit to Great Britain is to express deep gratitude to Lord Rothermere on behalf of our city and fellow countrymen for the service he has tendered to them in the effort to obtain revision of the Treaty of Trianon. We always appreciated intensely the great work which Lord Rothermere has thus performed, and our eagerness to register our thanks has been accentuated since our tour of the United States.

“It was only then that we learned to the full how widespread and magnificent has been the influence exerted by the appeals by Lord Rothermere in *The Daily Mail* concerning the tragedy of the Treaty. A great man and a great journal have rendered a great service to the cause of justice and peace throughout Central Europe.”

The account of this visit filled a great part in the Hungarian Press. Commenting upon the mutability of international relationships, the Hungarian newspaper *Pesti Napló* said:

“The balance of power in Europe has changed since the war, and England, France and Italy, now the rulers, were inclined to display indifference towards Hungary until the only independent power that remained—the Press—came to the rescue.

“Lord Rothermere’s papers have from day to day pronounced the truth about Hungary, but until recently his personality was to us almost mythical. The Kossuth pilgrims in London could, however, hear living words from his lips..

“He spoke of Kossuth as having made him a friend of Hungary through his writings, and told me how he revered the memory of a great patriot.”

At this time also I received a unanimously voted resolution of thanks from the Hungarian Lower House, which read as follows:

“The Hungarian House of Commons expresses its thanks to Lord Rothermere for the unselfish, noble and enduring labours by which he has directed the attention of the whole world to the injustices inflicted upon the Hungarian nation. Its confidence is unshakable that revision of the Peace Treaty in the interests of Hungary and for the benefit of European peace will follow.”

In moving this resolution Count Sigray, an Independent member, said that the chief credit was due to me for the fact that the Hungarian question had become a European problem.

“Some people think,” went on Count Sigray, “that Lord Rothermere stood by Hungary because, being a good politician and publicist, he believes revision to be inevitable. Others think that he wants to see Hungary enlarged as a bulwark against Bolshevism, but I myself maintain that Lord Rothermere is fighting for justice and European peace.”

At about the same time the forty-six women’s associations of Hungary addressed a manifesto to the women of England which read as follows:

“Englishwomen—You are the daughters of a rich, powerful and great country. Your lucky fate gave you a happy fatherland, where you are able to fulfil the noble dreams that women’s hearts may have.

“But Fate gave us a fatherland where the strongest will and effort are unavailing to alleviate misery and suffering. The greatest sacrifices fail to prevent the increase in children’s mortality, in tuberculosis, in unemployment and crime. Hungarian women are helpless onlookers at the tragic lot of their children.

“In post-war times, when souls were filled with bitterness, hate and selfishness, England was the first place where the noble voice of justice and pity was heard. It was in England that Lord Rothermere first drew public attention to the tragedy of a poor faraway country: to the tragedy of Hungary. Lord Rothermere emphasises continually that help must be given to Hungary. He has often repeated that he will do everything that can be done in a peaceful way to change Hungary’s terrible plight.

“Women of England! Lord Rothermere, when working for Hungary, acts not only out of sympathy, but chiefly from a sense of justice. His motives are absolutely pure and noble; their moral power is immense.

“But he can only succeed with the aid and sympathy of many noble hearts; therefore we ask you, Englishwomen, to sustain and help Lord Rothermere in his work, so that he may attain his aim of awakening the conscience of the world in the Hungarian question.



“If he succeeds, not only will Hungary’s fate be changed, not only will Hungarian children smile again, but all humanity will be enriched by a wonderful moral triumph”.

By this time the pressure on me to visit Hungary had become continuous. The University of Szeged, which had recently absorbed the refugee students and professional faculty of the University of Kolozsvár, in the territory of Transylvania, which Hungary had lost to Rumania, had conferred upon me the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws, and urgently desired me to attend a ceremony of public investiture.

Much as I appreciated this honour, I felt that it would be premature for me to become the centre of public demonstrations before my efforts had achieved any concrete success.

I accordingly announced to the Kossuth pilgrims in London that my son Esmond would go to Hungary to receive this academic distinction on my behalf.

## CHAPTER SIX

### HUNGARY’S RECEPTION OF MY SON

WHEN I asked my son Esmond to go to Szeged University in what has now become eastern Hungary, for the ceremony of the bestowal of my honorary degree, neither he nor I suspected that he would become the centre of a national demonstration which is certainly without parallel in the post-war history of Europe. In fact, if my son had had any idea of the extent to which he was going to be lionised, I feel pretty sure that he would have found some excuse for evading my suggestion, as he is one of the most modest of men, with no love of the limelight.

Like myself, he appreciated deeply the warm and unmistakably sincere affection in which his father had come to be held by the people of Hungary, as a consequence of having come forward in support of that nation’s just demands. Like myself, he realised that this display of national sentiment was rather a tribute to the generosity of the Hungarian temperament than to any practical achievement which my campaign had realised.

I had been assured countless times by Hungarians in many different walks of life that, were I to come to Hungary, I should become the centre of a national demonstration. This I was determined to avoid, for I realised the serious possibilities of international complications which such manifestations might cause with Hungary’s jealous neighbours of the Little Entente. In the case of my son, however, both he and I expected that the ceremonial part of his visit as my representative would be limited to the academic formalities of the bestowal *in absentia* of the degree of Doctor of Laws.

No sooner, however, had the announcement of Esmond Harmsworth’s forthcoming arrival in Hungary been made, than invitations began to pour in, urging that he should also represent me at other places and in connection with other national institutions.

A committee of fifty leading personalities, under the presidency of Mr. Ferenc Herczeg and Baron Sigismund Perenyi, was formed to organise the programme of the visit. It appointed an executive which consisted of Baron Perenyi, who holds high and almost mystic office in Hungary as “Custodian of the Holy Crown of St. Stephen”; Mr. Herczeg, who is Hungary’s greatest author; Dr. Sipöcz, the Lord Mayor of Budapest; Count Paul Teleki, the present Prime Minister, and Mr. Eugene Rákosi, Hungary’s most distinguished journalist.

Local committees were formed, not only in Debrecen, but also in Sopron and Győr, towns through which anyone proceeding from Vienna into Hungary might pass.

Almost to our consternation, my son Esmond and I received, towards the end of April, an elaborate programme, officially drafted for his visit of a week to the country with which I had in the previous twelve months become so swiftly and intimately associated.

A national visit of such scope and importance clearly required more than ordinary preparations on our side.

It was obvious that he would need his own means of transportation in Hungary, and I sent out two open Rolls Royce cars for that purpose.

We also decided that the journey to and from Hungary should be made by air. In those days the passenger-carrying air-services of Europe were not nearly so well-developed as now, and particularly in Hungary, where the building of aeroplanes had been forbidden under the Peace Treaty, the sight of a large machine was still unusual,

I thought that it would be good propaganda for the British aircraft-industry to let Central Europe see a specimen of what was then its acme of production. I accordingly chartered an eighteen-seater Handley-Page machine of the most modern type, and had it rechristened the "City of Budapest". Upon its side were painted the arms of Hungary and the words of the national patriotic slogan "*Éljen Magyarország!*"

They started on Sunday, May 13th, for, though they were not due in Hungary until Wednesday, the flying range of big aeroplanes was then so limited that, on the way from Paris to Vienna, where the cars awaited the party, the machine had to come down for petrol both at Strasburg and Munich while the aeroplane continued to Budapest, my son and his companions covered the last stage of their route, from Vienna into Hungary, by car.

At the Hungarian border, which they reached at 10 a.m., a sudden transformation of their journey began, and for a whole week this party of visiting Englishmen ceased to be private individuals and became the enthusiastically welcomed guests of the whole Hungarian nation.

A triumphal arch had been raised at the frontier, and the Austrian Customs officials looked on with unconcealed astonishment, from their post a hundred yards to the west along the road, at the reception-committee which there awaited what appeared to be a quite unofficial group of British visitors in bowler hats and blue overcoats.

Bouquets were presented by little girls in the dainty white Hungarian national dress, and then the procession moved on to Sopron, the first Hungarian town, standing two miles inside the border. The picturesque streets of this medieval place were thickly lined with people, and the small main square was packed. Children in peasant-dress strewed a carpet of flowers before my son's car as it advanced slowly towards the Town Hall, where the Mayor delivered a speech of welcome and then invited him to drink a glass of wine with the members of the municipality in the Council chamber. The enthusiasm of this reception at Sopron was only the first taste of the almost frantic greeting which was waiting for Esmond Harmsworth all the way to Budapest.

At Győr, which was reached at 12.30, a solid mass of people was packed into the square in front of the Town Hall, where the Mayor and Council were drawn up waiting. As my son got out of his car, a guard of honour of young pages in eighteenth-century Hungarian dress fell in to escort him up the steps of the building.

After lunch the procession continued through Komárom, an ancient and historic Hungarian town, founded by the Romans, which used to stand, like Budapest, astride the Danube. The Treaty of Trianon had actually bisected this city in order to give the Czechs the river as a frontier, with the result that although the railway-station and factories remained Hungarian, the residential part of the town was handed over to the Czechs, who proceeded to reduce it to the status of a village, and deliberately to give it a Czech character by dismissing and deporting Hungarian officials and residents. It was here that my son had personal contact for the first time with a typical Trianon blunder.

Black-bearded Count Maurice Eszterházy, a former Premier of Hungary, was waiting there at the head of the Magyar townspeople, and delivered a speech in English, stressing the justification of Hungarian claims for revision.

From there, during the later afternoon, the visitors continued their way to Budapest. Cut deeply in the turf of the hills beside the road they saw, in letters 20 feet long, the name ROTHERMERE. The inhabitants of every whitewashed village through which they passed had turned out *en masse* to cheer them.

Several miles before the city of Budapest was reached the double row of welcoming onlookers beside the road became continuous. Roofs and windows were crowded; flags were flying everywhere,—the Union Jack and the red, white, and green of Hungary alternating; the rain of flowers was continuous. ‘Outside the large and imposing St. Gellért Hotel were waiting Baron Sigismund Perenyi, Mr. Ferenc Herczeg, and the fifty leading Hungarians who made up the committee of reception. They formed a solid phalanx of gleaming top-hats in the midst of the vast throng of people which surged about them almost uncontrollably, for there were not enough police in Budapest to handle the 100,000 enthusiastic demonstrators who filled the whole breadth of the river-side promenade in front of the hotel. Every point of vantage on the steep hill behind had its throng of onlookers. There was not an empty window, or a roof-parapet unlined, for hundreds of yards from the hotel. Even the great three-foot-wide steel parapets of the suspension bridge, rising steeply into the aft a hundred feet above the river below, were used as grand-stands by the more active of the crowd, of whom scores had there found a precarious perch. As Esmond afterwards told me, he was made to feel like a long-lost son who had suddenly returned to the heart of a huge and affectionate family.

Then came a parade which lasted without interruption for two hours. It consisted of delegations, national societies, and patriotic associations from all over Central Hungary.

One contingent of young men bore black crosses inscribed with the name “Trianon “. These, when they arrived in front of my son, they flung on the ground, and smashed to pieces with symbolic violence.

Esmond Harmsworth and his party that evening attended the dinner at which he was welcomed to Hungary by the Municipality of the City of Budapest, in the presence of two hundred guests.

The next day was one of brilliant sunshine, and at half-past nine my son set out for the Coronation Church to attend a celebration of High Mass.. He is not a Catholic, but the majority of the Hungarian people are, and theft religious and patriotic feelings are closely allied.

There was a large crowd waiting outside the church, and as my son got out of his car at the entrance, the contrast between the brilliant sunshine outside and the darkness of the ancient building within made it for a moment difficult to see the interior. But as he advanced down the short flight of steps leading to the nave, the spectacle that met his eyes was indeed impressive. To the last square inch the body of the church, two hundred feet in length, was filled with people, all standing. Down the broad aisle between them Esmond Harms-worth and a solitary companion advanced to the choir-stalls, where the seat nearest to the altar had been reserved for him.

The great congregation remained standing as he walked down the aisle to leave the church, outside the door of which a group of pretty little Hungarian girls in national dress were waiting to offer him flowers.

The rest of the morning was filled with a round of engagements such as was to be the continuous routine of the whole week. He had luncheon with the Regent, Admiral Horthy, and Madame Horthy at the Royal Palace, which is the finest and most conspicuous building in Budapest.

That afternoon the guest was taken from the race-meeting to the largest of Budapest’s many football-grounds, where Blackburn Rovers, the team that had defeated Huddersfield in the English Cup the previous season, was playing a team representing Hungary. He was ‘immediately recognised by the people nearest to the box, and the cheer that they set up spread swiftly through the crowd of 30,000 onlookers surrounding the pitch. The two teams, until then intent on their game, actually ceased play in their astonishment at the sudden burst of enthusiasm, and then, recognising its cause, ran to line up in front of the box and give three cheers for my son and for myself. The match ended with a Hungarian victory by three goals to two.

Dinner with the Prime Minister, and, the following day, luncheon with the Archduke Joseph, one of the Hapsburg Imperial family, added more official warmth to the welcome.

It would be too much to relate all the hospitality offered to my son when he visited Hungary as my representative.

There were displays by national associations of all kinds, at which young girls, after dancing that curious Hungarian peasant polka, the Csárdás before him, formed themselves up in the shape of the original frontiers of Hungary. Then other girls, dressed in black, and carrying black flags, cut into this human outline of Magyar territory, and marked the post-war frontiers of Hungary, while the girls left outside the line of mourning-banners prostrated themselves on the ground, and a choir sang that vibrant passionate anthem which since the war had become almost the national air of Hungary *Nem! Nem! Soha!*,—declaring that *No! No! Never!* would Hungary agree to the reduced frontiers imposed upon her.

At a ceremonial sitting of the Chamber of Commerce, my son saw his father's name solemnly inscribed in the records of that institution. A reception was held in the Hungarian Parliament, and a dinner was given by the Nemzeti Casino, or National Club, the leading institution of its kind in Hungary, where all the most prominent figures in every walk of Hungarian official life gathered—unofficially—to meet him.

It was on this occasion that one of the most eloquent speeches ever delivered in the English language by a foreigner was made by that splendid old Hungarian statesman, Count Albert Apponyi, then eighty-three years of age, but still in the full strength of his great intellectual achievements.

“You are doubtless struck,” said Count Apponyi to Esmond Harmsworth, speaking in English at the dinner which the National Club offered to him, “by the impulsive and almost explosive character of your welcome. The English are generally shy of showing too much feeling, and as a rule our own masses, the rural ones especially, are not over-demonstrative.

“It requires some deep impulse to make them break through all restraint, as they have done since you arrived among us. We who know this country have witnessed with astonishment a spontaneous uprising of all classes and sections of the nation, which required no stimulus from without. What are you to infer from this extraordinary outbreak of public feeling? What else than the existence of some powerful current, of some tremendous force, possessed of volcanic energy?

“That tremendous force is actually there. It lives in every Hungarian soul, whether it be the soul of a powerful statesman or of a simple day-labourer; whether of a deep thinker or of an innocent child.

“That force is a burning protest against Trianon, and an unflinching resolve not to accept it as a final judgement. Generations may pass; that feeling will be transmitted from each one to the next as a sacred inheritance. Its continuance will be a condition of the blessing which Hungarian fathers on their deathbeds give to their beloved children.

“Now that feeling—which is never absent from our minds; which is part of our prayers, of our daily work, of our recreation; which we eat with our very food; which remains awake while our bodies slumber—that elementary feeling for long found itself opposed by such an array of international forces that there seemed no earthly hope of its achieving fulfillment.

“So it went on smouldering in the darkness—I will not say of despair, for ten eventful centuries of Hungarian history have taught us never to despair—but it had no visible prospects or hopes. We were living in a moral dungeon, asphyxiated by its stuffy atmosphere, isolated from all sympathetic support; nobody seemed to care. Even those who knew and understood shrugged their shoulders, and dismissed the distress of a small nation as an important factor in a general situation which appeared satisfactory.

“But in the midst of this atmosphere of oblivion and cynicism a voice was heard—the voice of a man whose heart is big enough to hate injustice, even if the sufferers by it are not numerous; whose foresight reaches far enough to see the dangers to world-peace attending such

injustice, and who is able to address every day millions of people—a king in the realm of that great power called the Press. That man is Lord Rothermere.

“When his voice was heard by the millions whom it daily reaches, we felt a change in the general atmosphere. A ray fell into the darkness of our dungeon; a breath of fresh air entered its closeness. Hope came into our souls—not the desperate hope which as a last resource counts even upon general catastrophe, but the hope which sees a possibility of liberation in the force of public opinion—a force which is strong enough to compel even unwilling Governments.

“Do you not now see the source of the effervescence which broke through all restraint, when hope—a longmissed guest—appeared once more among us, personified in Lord Rothermere’s own brightest hope, his last surviving son? It was no artificial current of electricity; it was the lightning and thunderbolts of heaven; it was the elementary forces of human nature in a brave race. which exploded when thus brought into contact of the precious blessing of *Hope*.”

Even to read those glowing words, as I read them a few days later, was a stirring experience, and to hear them delivered with the sonorous voice and dignified gesture of that grand old Hungarian nobleman, must have been memorable indeed.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### DEMONSTRATIONS OF NATIONAL SPIRIT

THE reception which Esmond Harmsworth, as my representative, received in Budapest was only a prelude to the main purpose of his visit, which was to accept on behalf of his father the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws, conferred on me by the University of Szeged.

This ancient Hungarian city now stands only five miles inside the frontier as fixed by the Treaty of Trianon, the three historic Hungarian provinces of the Banat, Bacska, and Baranya, which lie just beyond it, having been handed over to the Yugo-Slavs.

Szeged is a hundred miles to the south of Budapest, and my son set out by motor-car from the capital at eight o’clock on the morning of Sunday, May 20th. His drive was a long, triumphal progress. Every village had built an arch of greenery across the road, surmounted by the word “Welcome” in English or Hungarian. Even the smallest places had been to the trouble of procuring Union Jacks to decorate their houses in honour of their English visitor. The whole population along the road and for many miles on either side of it lined the way to see him pass.

The mayor of each of these clean, whitewashed, contented-looking villages halted the procession to deliver a speech of welcome. Then a little girl would step forward with a bouquet, and amid cries of *Éljen Rotbermere! Éljen Harmsworth!* my son would drive on down an avenue of smiling, friendly faces.

On the outskirts of Szeged the Mayor and Councillors were waiting, all in the romantic costume of Hungarian magnates, made of black silk, close-fitting and fur-trimmed, with a tall white aigrette in the head-dress, gold-laced Hessian boots to the knees, and curved scimitars, whose hilts and scabbards were elaborately chased and ornamented. Hundreds of motor-cars belonging to private citizens fell in behind to escort the visitor to the City Hall.

Fifty thousand people were packed tight together under the hot sun in front of this building, with young girls in scarlet and white dresses in the foreground.

Szeged is the second city of Hungary, and the excitement aroused by my son’s arrival there may be measured by the fact that twenty-seven special trains converged upon the town that day, bringing delegations from seventy towns and villages. These varied in size from about 100 people, which was

nearly the entire population of some villages, to 4,000. There were detachments that had come from seventy-five miles away.

The speech of the mayor on this occasion well expressed the feelings of the Hungarian people towards the oppression of the Treaty of Trianon :—

“You see us arrayed in our best attire, and our town gaily decorated. But do not be misled,” he said. “Like a consumptive, whose seemingly healthy colour hides a mortal disease, we are slowly dying, and the cause is the Treaty of Trianon. It is a protracted but sure death. “In this frontier-town 100,000 desperate Hungarians greet you. Their suffering is great. Trade and commerce are at a standstill; our way to the sea is closed; unemployment is increasing; thousands of workmen verge on starvation; and the increase in the number of suicides is so alarming that Parliament will soon have to take up this terrible problem.

“Nearly all the Government employees have been driven from their old homes. Here you are face to face with stark tragedy. There remains only faith—faith in the sense of justice of the English people, faith in your father and yourself. The prayers of the Hungarian people are with you.”

From the Town Hall Esmond Harmsworth and his party walked through streets which had been specially cleared to a square where stood a statue of Kossuth, facing which a velvet-draped pavilion had been built. Taking his stand on this, my son heard first a gypsy orchestra of 150 violins and double-basses play the British National Anthem. Then began a march-past of the peasant delegations and the patriotic associations, which lasted for two hours.

The luncheon given by the City Council which followed began two hours later, and the Bishop of Csanad and Szeged there made a speech which revealed the persecution to which he and other refugees from the former Hungarian Province of Transylvania had been subjected by the Rumanian Government.

“I welcome you, Mr. Harmsworth,” he said, “and salute your father, the valiant champion of justice for Hungary. I am peculiarly entitled to do this, because the thousand-year-old diocese of Csanad is a bleeding witness to the cruel injustice which the Treaty of Trianon has inflicted on the whole of Hungary.

“Although not more than 5,000 of the total population of 75,000 of Temesvar was Rumanian, I was obliged to leave that ancient seat of the Bishops of Csanad and fly to this Hungarian corner of the diocese, because I was not permitted to protest against the Rumanian Government’s infringement of our lawful rights.

“I protested unavailingly against the beating of priests and children, and against the Rumanian order that our mother-tongue should be totally excluded from the Roman Catholic schools of Temesvar.

“I venture to call your attention and that of Lord Rothermere to the dreadful injustice which is forcing many hundreds of thousands of Hungarians of my faith to be subjected against their will to the authority of the Greek Orthodox religion.”

The next feature of the day’s programme was to have been a drive to the Yugo-Slav frontier, a few miles away, but in view of the excitement prevailing in the crowded town, it seemed possible that this excursion might be accompanied by large numbers, particularly of the mounted peasants, and that, in their patriotic ardour, some of the wore rash among the young men might gallop across the border and create an incident. It was wisely decided therefore to omit that item of the programme.

My son accordingly went direct to the ceremony of the University, where, in a solemn conclave, the Pro-Rector handed to him the Diploma of the Degree of Doctor of Laws, which had been bestowed upon myself.

The Pro-Rector, Dr. Menyharth, said, as he presented the parchment-scroll: -

“After the war Hungary was mercilessly dismembered by the very nations that she had defended for centuries against barbarism.

“Hungary was forced by reason of her entanglement in alliances which could not be broken to join in the war. She was sentenced in a court where the plaintiff was the judge, and arguments for the defence were not heard. She became the victim of her own fidelity.

“Please accept this diploma which we have drawn up for your father, and deliver it to him as a testimony that, while we Hungarians possess many faults, no one can impute to us the vice of ingratitude. It is a testimonial to the merits of Lord Rothermere, towards whom we look as a knight without fear or reproach, always fighting for justice and right, and with it we send him our fervent blessing.”

The next day was spent in Budapest, where, at a session of the Hungarian Parliament, the member addressing the House stopped his speech to greet my son as he appeared in the Distinguished Strangers’ gallery, with the words :—

“In Western Europe, which should have felt gratitude for Hungary’s services to civilisation in the past, only one man was found to stand up for her without any self-interested motive. I ask his son to take to Lord Rothermere the message that his name will surely be mentioned in the prayers of our grandchildren.”

That night a gala performance was held at the National Opera in Esmond Harmsworth’s honour.

Twelve hundred people filled the magnificent auditorium, and the Hungarian opera “Carnival Wedding” was sung by a company of seventy.

At midnight my son left by train for Debreczen, which is twenty-five miles inside the new Hungarian frontier with Rumania. This quiet, old-fashioned city of 100,000 inhabitants is the home of Hungarian Calvinism, and sixty-five per cent. of its people are Protestant.

Delegations from the surrounding country had been on their way into the town all night, and when, at nine o’clock, Esmond, accompanied by the Mayor, drove from the station to the principal hotel in an open landau, formerly belonging to the Emperor of Austria, and drawn by five horses—three leaders and two wheelers—with an escort of horsemen in traditional dress, the streets were densely lined. After a reception at the Town Hall he went to attend a special service at the principal Protestant church. The severe simplicity of Calvinist worship was in marked contrast to the impressive ritual of the High Mass which he had attended at the Coronation Church at Budapest.

After the service, there were scenes in the main square of the city as impressive as those at Szeged. 100,000 people had paraded with flags and banners, and the discipline of the crowd was remarkable.

Union Jacks flew everywhere, and there were many banners inscribed with sentiments of friendship towards Britain. When the cheers at last died down, a choir sang “God Save the King” in perfect English. Then came the solemn Hungarian “Credo,” expressing to sombre music the sorrow of the nation, and ending with the crescendo, “I believe in the resurrection of Hungary.”

A storm of welcome greeted my son as he advanced to the edge of the balcony. The crowd were prepared for a speech in English. To their delight he addressed them in Hungarian words, spoken clearly, and plainly audible on the far side of the square. They were: -

*“Magyarország nem volt hanem lesz ! Éljen Magyarország! Éljen Debreczen !“* (Hungary has a past, but she has also a future. Hurrah for Hungary I Hurrah for Debreczen!)

No effort of oratory could have been happier in its effect. The students waved their caps; the horsemen waved their arms; there was a sea of fluttering handkerchiefs, and the bells of the great church rang out in a joyful peal.

In Debreczen there was only one British resident. A place of honour had been reserved for him at all the functions of the day. He was a Canadian who had been on a holiday-tour in Hungary when the Great War began. Though detained, as the subject of an enemy State, he was not even interned, but was allowed full liberty inside the town, and whenever any corporation festivity took place during the campaign he was in-variably invited to it. In consequence of this friendly treatment, Debreczen's sole British civilian "prisoner of war" took such a liking to the place that he has remained there ever since.

One of the most enjoyable events of my son's visits was to follow on this great demonstration in Debreczen. Around that town stretches the mighty prairie of the Hortobágy Puszta, a vast rolling plain, broken only by casual clumps of trees, and fringed at times by strange horizon mirages—the famous "Fata Morgana" of Hungary. Once full of populous villages, it was depopulated by the Turkish invasions.

On this gigantic grazing-ground roam vast herds of broad-horned, white Hungarian cattle, guarded by mounted cowboys, whose dress and mode of life have changed little since the Middle Ages. The Hortobágy swarms with wild-fowl, and at the right season some of the best geese-shooting in the world is to be had there. Esmond Harmsworth was driven out twenty-five miles into this great expanse, and there visited the reed huts where the cowboys and their families live during the summer. He watched them cooking pancakes over their fires, and ate of their food. The horsemen gave him an exhilarating display of their skill, parading 60,000 head of cattle before him, steering herds of unbroken horses at full gallop, cracking their long, curiously decorated whips, and racing over rough ground in girthless saddles with centaur-like security of seat.

After luncheon, in a typical little Hungarian inn, where a hundred-year-old gypsy played the violin, and the young cowboys and their sweethearts danced the *Csikós*, it was again proposed to show Esmond Harmsworth the new and arbitrary Rumanian frontier which had been established near at hand.

Out on the Hortobágy there was not the same danger as at Szeged that such a visit might cause a border incident, and he and his party in three motor-cars drove to within half a mile of the national boundary. They were then asked to leave the cars and proceed on foot in small groups to the top of a rise in the ground, from which territory newly annexed by Rumania could be seen.

The reason for these precautions became apparent as my son and his friends reached the ridge, for there before them, only 400 yards away, on the other side of the frontier, lying down deployed for action, and with their machine-guns mounted, was a battalion of Rumanian riflemen. It was typical of the uneasy conscience of the Rumanian authorities that the news of the entertainment in Debreczen of the son of the man who had come forward as an advocate of the revision of Hungary's frontiers should have led them to take these exaggerated precautions.

Most touching of all the manifold experiences which my son had in Hungary was his visit, on the final day of his tour, to the encampments of wooden huts on the outskirts of Budapest where scores of thousands of impoverished refugees from Hungary's lost territories had found precarious shelter. Half-starving though many of these unfortunate people were, they gave him a welcome whose enthusiasm even surpassed the great receptions he had had elsewhere.

All through this tour, and especially in taking leave of his Hungarian hosts, my son had been careful to emphasise that his visit was an entirely unofficial and personal one, which did not indicate in any way that the cause of Hungarian treaty revision had obtained any new supporters in Britain other than his father.

In addressing members of the Hungarian Press on the day of his departure, he said :—

"It would be a matter of eternal regret to me if the enthusiasm of the Hungarian people, of which I have been the fortunate object, should lead them to overconfident expectations. The legitimate aspirations of Hungary rest upon such sure foundations that it would indeed be unfortunate if your people were to cherish unrealisable expectations. Before I came here I already had a very high opinion of the qualities of the Hungarian nation. Now that I have learned to know that nation for myself, my respect and esteem for it have been increased. Its courage and endurance are virtues which ensure that it will come safely through these difficult times."



There has very seldom been anything like Esmond Harmsworth's tour of Hungary. The demonstrations which accompanied it were a measure not only of the burning desire of the whole Magyar race to be reunited with the brethren it had lost, but also of the generosity of the Hungarian temperament, which thus, at the cost of much personal sacrifice and without any hope of benefit, expressed, by welcoming my son in such a noble way, its appreciation of the efforts of one who had done no more than come forward as a public advocate of its cause.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### MYSELF AND THE KING QUESTION

THE enthusiasm aroused among the people of Hungary by the support that I had given to their just claims for revision might have been expected either to die away entirely, or even to enter upon a phase of anti-climax when my efforts on their behalf produced no visible result. Surprised and touched as I was to find myself held in personal devotion by millions of Hungarians, I never imagined that this sentiment would be of long duration. Yet it showed no signs of diminishing as the months following upon the publication of my articles lengthened into years.

I gradually came to be regarded as an unofficial counsellor and mentor of the Hungarian nation. Appeals constantly arrived from Magyar newspapers or national associations to make pronouncements on the prospects of the European situation as it affected Hungary. Leading Hungarian statesmen passing through London, or arriving in Continental cities which I happened to be visiting, made a point of calling upon me. There was a constant stream of delegations from public bodies of all kinds. The volume of my correspondence from Hungary showed no signs of abating, and, most touching of all, I often received small gifts and souvenirs from individual members of that nation of whom I had never heard.

Without any intrinsic value, these presents were pathetic evidence of the place which I had attained unsought in the imagination of the mass of the people. A whole room in one of my houses is filled with hand-carved walking-sticks, amateur paintings, plaster models, pieces of embroidery, and other specimens of the handiwork of Hungarian peasants and artisans.

At different times Hungarian national societies bestowed on me historic trophies of much interest and significance. Thus I was given a flag that had been carried by Kossuth, the great champion of Hungary against Austrian domination; the sabre of one of Maria Theresa's generals who, two hundred years ago, in the war against Frederick the Great, led a thousand Hungarian hussars on a cavalry-raid which captured and held Berlin for a week; the model of the aeroplane which, christened "Justice for Hungary", and piloted by Captain George Endresz and Lieutenant Alexander Magyar, made a 3,500-mile non-stop flight from Newfoundland to Hungary, thereby gaining a prize of £2,000 offered by myself.

In addition, the Budapest Chamber of Commerce presented me with a magnificent specimen of the Hungarian cabinet-maker's art in the form of a writing-table decorated with the coats of arms of the fifty-eight provinces and towns of Hungary. These and many other mementoes are valued possessions of mine as evidence of the affection which my sympathy for Hungary's afflictions had aroused among her people.

It was not with the Hungarians of Central Europe alone that I had acquired this standing.. Wherever I went in the world, I found myself the object of the most friendly attentions from communities of Hungarian emigrants. Though Hungary has never had overseas territory of her own, her people have always been great colonists, and they make settlers whom any country might consider itself fortunate to acquire.

Winnipeg, in Manitoba, is the centre of a large community of Canadian farmers of Hungarian origin, who maintain their own newspaper in the Magyar tongue. All over the United States the Hungarian element is to be found. I was told by a Hungarian statesman who had been touring America that within two years from the publication of my first article the opinion of that country on the Hungarian question had entirely changed.

I have been fêted by Hungarians in the West Indies, in South America, in South Africa and in the Far East, and so generous has been their welcome everywhere that I doubt whether there is a more effective passport to Hungarian good-feeling throughout the wide world than the name Rothermere.

Sometimes these attentions were embarrassing. I have been waked in the middle of the night by Transatlantic telephone-calls from Hungarians who forgot the five-hour difference in time. It often happened on long train-journeys in the United States that delegations would be waiting at wayside stations in the small hours to present bouquets and addresses. Once, when Prohibition was in full force, I was invited, on a visit to New York, to attend a reception organized in my honour in a hall belonging to a Hungarian church. There were several hundreds of people present, and, rather to my surprise, I observed that Hungarian wines, and other than illegal alcoholic refreshments were being served. As I do not take alcohol myself, this entertainment had no special appeal to me, but I knew the difficulty of accumulating such supplies under the "dry regime" then operating, and I appreciated the efforts which my hosts had evidently made to ensure that nothing should be lacking to the evening's festivity.

This feeling was changed to consternation, however, when I suddenly noticed, entering the hall, a party of city police officers in uniform. It occurred to me that this might be a raid under the liquor regulations, and I anticipated with some alarm the possibility of being involved in a prosecution for an infringement of the Volstead Act.

As discreetly as possible I drew the attention of the priest who was presiding over the party to the presence of the agents of the law. He reassured me at once. These policemen, he said, were American citizens of Hungarian origin, who, hearing that I was in New York, wanted to greet me. It was only the fact that they had been on duty which had caused them to arrive so late at the reception. Nor did these guests display any reluctance, in their unofficial capacity, to partake of the liquid refreshments provided.

These travels in different parts of the world revealed to me the fact that my plea for just treatment of the Hungarian people had aroused far-reaching reactions. No sooner did I set foot upon the soil of a foreign country than a dozen journalists would ask for interviews on the prospects of a revision of the Treaty of Trianon.

In Sweden the *Svenska Dagbladet* published a series of articles on my campaign. The *Impero* of Rome did likewise. The Paris *Temps* discussed at considerable length the effect it was producing. In Istanbul the newspaper *Republique* supported my action. The Press of the Little Entente countries,—Czecho-Slovakia, Rumania and Yugo-Slavia,—kept the issue alive by their constant attacks upon myself and my supposed motives.

In the United Kingdom committees were formed in both Houses of Parliament to investigate the treatment of the Hungarian minorities under the Peace Treaties. From being a matter buried in oblivion, the claims of Hungary became one of the most actively discussed international topics of the day. Herr Hitler, when I visited him years afterwards, in January, 1937, at Berchtesgaden, told me that he had always followed with sympathy my campaign for the restitution of the forfeited Hungarian territories which were predominantly inhabited by Magyars.

In the course of the year after my association with Hungary began, an intimation reached me that an influential body of opinion in that country was canvassing the possibility of my selection by national plebiscite as a successor to the vacant Hungarian throne.

The news seemed so completely improbable, and was conveyed to me in so vague a form, that I paid little attention, dismissing it as merely an exaggerated expression of those sentiments of gratitude which my interest in Hungary's grievances had aroused.

It gradually became clear, however, that the reports which continued to reach me did correspond to a certain movement within the country. I relate the sequel here because it was a romantic and totally unexpected consequence of my campaign for the redress of Hungary's wrongs.

The discovery that, without my knowledge, I had become the choice of a new Hungarian Monarchist Party placed me in a most embarrassing position. My Hungarian friends were obviously doing me the greatest honour in their power in desiring to put my name forward as a candidate for one of the most ancient and historic crowns in Europe, but it was self-evident that, if Hungary was ever again to have a king, her selection should be restricted to members of that nation.

The last Hungarian monarch of Magyar race had been John Szapolya, who had been elected by a part of the Hungarian nation after the Turkish conquest of that country at the Battle of Mohács in 1526. He was followed by the first Hapsburg sovereign, Ferdinand I, and from that time onwards the crown of Hungary had been linked with that of Austria.

The sequence of Hapsburgs had ended with the ex-Emperor Charles, who succeeded Francis Joseph during the war, and abdicated in 1918. Since his death in exile, the Crown of St. Stephen had been no more than an impersonal symbol of the monarchist instincts of the Magyar race, for the Allied Powers had required the Hungarian Parliament to declare the late King's family disqualified for the succession.

Fortunately for Hungary, she had found in her Regent, Admiral Horthy, a man who, though inexperienced in statecraft when he succeeded to his high office, had demonstrated that resourcefulness and adaptability which are so often the qualities of the naval officer, and had conducted the affairs of his country with wisdom, prudence and courage.

But a Regency is, by its very nature, only a temporary expedient. No provision had been made for any successor to the present holder of that dignity. It was natural that many Hungarians should be looking ahead, and asking themselves what form of government their country would ultimately adopt.

There was a powerful Legitimist party, one of the most influential members of which was the veteran Count Albert Apponyi, whose gallant fight for Hungary's rights at the Peace Conference and the League of Nations had given him a unique claim to the respect and gratitude of his fellow-countrymen. It was Count Apponyi's view that the young Archduke Otto, eldest son of the Hapsburg Emperor Charles, who had been also King of Hungary, was the rightful heir. In private conversation he would maintain that the vote of the Hungarian Parliament excluding the Hapsburgs from the throne of Hungary was so much waste paper, since it had been given under duress. The Archduke Otto was, at the time to which I refer, only fifteen years old, and it was obvious that Hungary would need a more mature sovereign. That was why Count Apponyi desired to see the succession question adjourned until some later day, when the people of Hungary could pronounce upon it in the constitutional way, by a Parliamentary vote ratified by the Regent.

Other possible candidates were the Archdukes Joseph and Albrecht. They belonged to different generations, the Archduke Joseph having been born in Hungary in 1872, and the Archduke Albrecht at Brünn, then in Austrian territory, in 1895.

The Archduke Joseph had passed the main part of his life as a soldier, and during the Great War commanded an Austro-Hungarian Army Corps on both the Russian and Italian fronts. He was very popular with his men, being of an unassuming, sympathetic nature, slow of speech and genial of expression. He is a distant cousin of the late ex-Emperor Karl.

When the collapse came in Hungary after the Armistice, the Archduke Joseph, with his son and daughters, were for a time in danger of their lives from the local Bolshevist regime. They were driven from their estates and lived as peasants working in the fields. During the interval between the collapse of the Béla Kuhn Government and the restoration of constitutional authority in Budapest by Admiral Horthy, the Archduke Joseph, with the approval of the Allied Powers, took temporary charge of the affairs of the country in conjunction with the liberal and moderate socialist elements of the nation. This gave rise to contemporary reports that he would be raised to the Hungarian throne. As soon as Admiral Horthy had established order, the Archduke retired, however, into private life, where he has since remained.

He has a son of interesting and distinguished personality, the Archduke Joseph Francis, born in 1903 and married to a daughter of the former King of Saxony. The young Archduke is a man of considerable intellectual attainments. He holds high University degrees and is a skilled musician and painter. He occupies himself principally with the promotion of the international tourist industry in Hungary.

The Archduke Albrecht, born in 1897, belongs to another branch of the Hapsburg family. His career has been complicated bymorganatic marriages. His mother, the late Archduchess Isabella, born a Princess of Croy, had set her heart on securing for her highspirited son the vacant throne of Hungary. To that end she is stated to have spent great sums of money in subsidising the monarchist movement, her husband, the Archduke Frederick, having been the richest man in Hungary.

The maternal ambitions of the Archduchess received a sudden setback in 1934 when the Archduke, then a bachelor of thirty-seven, suddenly announced that he had been secretly married in a registry-office at Brighton to a lady who was the divorced wife of the Hungarian Minister in Brussels. Before taking this step, he had visited the home of the ex-Empress Zita, widow of the former Emperor Karl, in Belgium, and there formally renounced all claim to the Hungarian throne in favour of her son, the Archduke Otto. Three years later he obtained a divorce, and married a Hungarian schoolteacher, upon which the Archduke Otto, who had meanwhile come of age, used his authority as Head of the House of Hapsburg to expel the Archduke Albrecht from that family.

These events lay still in the future when, in 1928, the monarchist movement of which I have spoken began to show signs of activity in Hungary. The suitability for the Hungarian throne of the two Archdukes was, however, diminished by the fact of their being Hapsburgs. It is true that both had spent most of their lives in Hungary, but the prejudice in that country against the Hapsburg connection has never disappeared since the ruthless repression of the Kossuth movement of liberation in 1849.

Moreover, it had been proved at the time of the two unsuccessful attempts by the ex-Emperor Karl to recover his position as King of Hungary that the States of the Little Entente were prepared to invade Hungary in order to prevent a restoration of that dynasty. They professed to believe that such a step might be the prelude to a reconstruction of the old Austro-Hungarian Empire, out of which the heterogeneous country of Czecho-Slovakia had been carved, and from which Rumania and Yugo-Slavia had annexed large territories.

The position in 1928 was that the monarchist party in Hungary had hitherto been divided. The aristocrats, high officers and senior bureaucrats, together with some of the banking and business community, favoured the return of Otto as the ultimate sequel to the Regency. The younger officers, bureaucrats and small landowners preferred the candidature of the Archduke Albrecht. They had the vigorous support of an influential politician in the person of Captain Gömbös, who was later on to become Prime Minister of Hungary.

Neither of these two groups had any prospect of seeing its aspirations fulfilled, owing to the opposition of the Little Entente, against whose armies Hungary was then absolutely defenceless, her own forces having been reduced to 30,000 men. Even Gömbös, when he became Prime Minister, declared a restoration of the Hapsburgs to be undesirable, since it might be followed by similar developments in Austria, with the result that Budapest would again become subordinate to Vienna.

The Hungarian people, strongly monarchist by instinct, thus found themselves without an available successor to the Crown of St. Stephen. I have never discovered exactly how or when the proposal that this high honour should be offered to myself first took shape. It seems to have occurred independently to a number of minds in the autumn of 1927, shortly after the appearance of my first articles on the question of treaty revision. Though neither I nor my son knew it, the movement was spreading fast when he paid his visit to Hungary in the late spring of 1928.

The astounding welcome that greeted him there gave encouragement to those who had conceived this project. I began to receive communications from Hungary intended to sound me on my attitude towards it. I was assured that, in the prevailing enthusiastic mood of the Hungarian people, a plebiscite m

my favour would be practically unanimous "When King Matthias was elected in 1458, the country was not so united," urged these correspondents. I heard from many Hungarians that during the mass demonstrations at Szeged and Debreczen which had accompanied my son's visit, cries of "Let us keep him as our king!" had been heard from the crowds.

To all these communications I made the same reply that, while I strongly sympathised with Hungary's desire to have a king once more, because I believe the institution of monarchy to have a steadying effect upon a country, I could only recommend my Hungarian friends to choose a ruler of their own race.

My reluctance had at first little effect in discouraging the movement which had been so impulsively launched. Its leaders were genuinely convinced that they were supported by a powerful popular aspiration which would in the end overcome my resistance.

Now that the dynastic institutions of Europe have for some time past taken on a more settled appearance it is not so easy to recall the sense of mutability in such matters which the experiences of the years following the war had brought to Central Europe. There, old-established crowns had been swept away, and new men, whose names in 1914 were sometimes unknown even to the majority of their fellow-countrymen, had risen, or were rapidly rising, to the rulership of some of the greatest countries. In Hungary especially, where the entire national frontiers and the whole economic existence of the State had been ruthlessly transformed by the action of her conquerors, such a change as my would-be supporters had in mind did not seem to them so radical as it might appear to people whose countries had been free from such upheavals.

In the summer of 1928 I received from Budapest a "round-robin", signed by twenty highly-placed officers, including three generals, pledging me their support if I would consent to allow my name to be put forward as a candidate for the throne, and assuring me that from their contacts with their men they could vouch for it that the army would give me powerful backing.

A delegation even came to London to approach me in confidence upon the matter. I cannot of course reveal the identity of its members, but it contained a general officer, and a leading figure in the Budapest business world, who spoke perfect English. Their desire was to obtain my consent for the formation of a political committee which would press for a national plebiscite on my candidature.

Two months after my son's return from Hungary there arrived at my house in the far north of Scotland, another earnest and eloquent advocate of this scheme, in the person of that most distinguished of Hungarian publicists, the late Mr. Eugene Rákosi. What made this visit more remarkable was that he was then eighty-six years old, and had not left his country for many years, having in fact vowed never to do so as long as its mutilated frontiers remained unrepaired.

Rákosi was a man of outstanding ability in many fields. He had written thirty plays, and in 1881 had founded the important daily newspaper *Budapesti Hírlap*. He filled in Hungary the same kind of highly individual and influential position as Mr. J. L. Garvin occupies in Britain.

The weight of years had in no way diminished Rákosi's mental vigour, and it was with energy that he urged upon me the desirability of allowing my name to be put forward as a possible successor to the Hungarian throne. I remember walking with him on the links at Dornoch,—for despite his age, Rákosi was still active,—while he used every argument at his disposal to induce me to change my attitude. He quoted precedents, such as the election of Prince Alexander of Battenburg, then an officer of the Russian Imperial Guards, to the throne of Bulgaria in 1879.

He related the romantic history of the Crown of St. Stephen, which in Hungarian eyes is invested with sacred and mystical properties. It is an article of the national faith that when once this Crown has been placed on the brow, it invests the wearer with kingly virtues, and makes him unchangeably for life king by divine right. So great is the significance attached to this emblem that "Guardians of the Holy Crown" are appointed from the Hungarian nobility, whose duty it is to remove it secretly to a place of safety in any time of danger, such as occurred during the Bolshevik Revolution of 1919.

The Crown was originally presented to King Stephen of Hungary in the year 1000 by Pope Sylvester II. It consists of four open arches, richly jewelled and surmounted by a crooked cross. With this has been combined another crown presented to King Géza I by the Emperor of Byzantium in the year 1075. The two crowns were made into one in the 13th century. Such is the symbol of the highest power in Hungary, with which the nation invests its monarch in the rite of coronation.

Eugene Rákosi's argument was that the future existence of Hungary was bound up with the recovery of her lost territories; that nearly ten years had gone by without any prospect of their restoration until, by my advocacy of justice for Hungary, I had made this question a live issue of international politics. No Hapsburg Sovereign, he said, could ever hope to bring about the reunion of the exiled Hungarian populations with their motherland. By electing to the supreme position in their State the man who had done more than any other for the cause of Hungary's rehabilitation, the people of that country would be making a striking demonstration to the world of their fervent determination to obtain the redress of their legitimate grievances.

He urged that my experience of political affairs, and of dealings with the leading personalities in many lands, peculiarly fitted me to take up the task of working for the return of at least a great part of the provinces detached by the Treaty of Trianon. He pointed out that I was a rich man, and could support the expenses of a Court without imposing any additional burden upon a ruined country.

As for the fact that I spoke no word of the Hungarian language, he explained that this would cause no difficulty, as nearly all the Hungarians in Government circles spoke English, and in any case there had been many Hapsburg kings of Hungary who had been equally ignorant of the Magyar tongue. Rákosi finally assured me that the sympathy and resemblance of character existing between Hungarians and Englishmen would soon make me feel at home in the new sphere to which he wished to see me translated.

I listened to the pleading of this white-haired old man, who had seen so much Hungarian history made before his eyes, and had himself played an active part in the public life of his country. It was an experience that does not fall to many people to be offered even the candidature to one of the most dignified and venerable thrones in Europe. I was touched by the ardour which the aged Hungarian publicist displayed, and I knew from the other sources, of which I have mentioned a few, that he was not speaking for himself alone, but had support among influential sections of his fellow countrymen. I told him, however, that his scheme was thoroughly impracticable, and reiterated the reply which I had made to others, that Hungary must find a candidate for her vacant throne among her own people.

Shortly after his visit to me, the veteran but indefatigable Rákosi proceeded to Italy, where he was received by Signor Mussolini, who assured him that there had been no diminution in the sympathy with the Hungarian claim for revision which he had expressed a few weeks earlier, in his speech to the Italian Senate on June 5th, 1928.

Rákosi, as I afterwards learned, then told the Duce that many Hungarians felt that the only hope of improving the condition of their country lay in a speedy return to the traditional institution of monarchy.

To this Signor Mussolini replied that it was evident that the situation of a monarchy without - a monarch could not last indefinitely. The Duce mentioned the three possible candidates most in view, the Archdukes Otto, Joseph and Albrecht.

Rákosi rejoined that the Hapsburgs were detested in Hungary, and asked Mussolini whether he did not think their restoration would be disastrous. The Duce agreed on the grounds that the States of the Little Entente would thereby be incited against the Hungarian people, and that the rest of the world would believe that the return of the Hapsburgs was the first step towards the linking-up of Hungary with Austria and the restoration of the old Austro-Hungarian Empire. Such a development, he said, would put an end to all hopes of the revision of the Treaty of Trianon.

Rákosi then declared that, though he himself held no official position, being no more than an independent journalist, he nevertheless possessed great influence in Hungary, and that he and a number of

others had decided that the best king for their country would be Lord Rothermere, who had held out his hand to the Hungarian people in their distress.

According to the account of this interview which was later given to me, the Duce knitted his brows and reflected deeply, contenting himself with the rejoinder "Have you thought over that project thoroughly?"

He naturally inquired whether Rákosi had consulted me upon the matter, to which the determined old man replied that though for the present I was obdurate, he relied upon the pressure of Hungarian public opinion to force my hand.

Rákosi returned to Budapest, and wrote an account of this interview which was characteristic of the way in which a fixed idea can influence the pen even of so experienced and responsible writer, for, as translated to me, it certainly conveyed the impression that Mussolini had given his approval to the cause which the old man had at heart.

This made it imperative for me to take a clear stand upon a question which had hitherto been discussed only privately and without any reference to it in the public Press. I learned that German and Austrian newspapers such as the *Vossische Zeitung* and the *Neues Wiener Journal* had been led to publish articles which suggested that my candidature for the Hungarian throne was an established fact.

For instance the first named paper published in October 1928 an article in which it said:

"...Now a new candidate for the Throne has appeared: Lord Rothermere, the English newspaper magnate. . . . His advocates are the publicists Eugene Rákosi and Emil Nagy. Last year the eighty-six-year old Rákosi . . . went to Italy to see Mussolini... Since then he has vigorously advocated a 'big, strong, influential king' for Hungary, and he sings the praises of the 'truly kingly personality' and the 'princely nature' of Rothermere."

This sort of thing, published in a newspaper whose reputation in the Germany of 1928 as a sober Liberal organ corresponded to that of the *Manchester Guardian* in England, revealed the imperative necessity of putting an end to such dreams as any monarchists in Hungary might have associated with myself.

I saw—if others, in their generous appreciation of my espousal of Hungary's cause, did not—a strong incongruity between an Englishman of my training and the Holy Crown of St. Stephen; I realised vividly the practical implications of such a suggestion to which, for the moment, their enthusiasm had blinded them.

At the risk therefore of hurting the feelings of my friends in Budapest, who, after all, had paid me such a compliment as comes to few men in their lives, I was bound to tell them that I could no longer allow my name to be associated, even in their imagination, with plans for the restoration of the Hungarian Monarchy.

## CHAPTER NINE

### MAKERS OF MODERN HUNGARY

THE course which the history of Hungary has taken for the last twenty years is largely the result of one predominant influence. The patriotic courage and administrative wisdom of Admiral Nicholas Horthy have brought about the steady recovery of a country that, in 1919, was on the verge of disintegration. Today the nation upon which the heaviest of all war-penalties was imposed stands well-organised and confident, with a balanced Budget and an army of 800,000 of the best soldiers in Central Europe to defend her still-diminished frontiers.

Admiral *vitéz* Nicholas Horthy de Nagybánya, Regent of Hungary, has been Head of the State during two decades of the most trying financial and political conditions that any statesman in Europe has had to face. He came to his high office with no experience of political life, after a brilliant career as an Admiral in the Austro-Hungarian Navy.

His early life was like that of other naval officers of good family. After an experience of long cruises in the Indian Ocean and the South Seas, which involved visits to India and Australia, as well as to many still-unexplored islands of the Pacific, he was appointed in 1909 Naval A.D.C. to the Emperor Francis Joseph, and became such a favourite with his Sovereign that his attachment to the Court was prolonged until within a few months of the outbreak of war.

Posted when war broke out to the command of the new Austrian cruiser *Novara*, he took a prominent part in the operations in the Adriatic, and in December 1915 led a daring attack upon San Giovanni di Medua, an Albanian port then being used as a base by the Serbian Army. In the battle of Otranto he was wounded as he stood on the forebridge of his ship, and, after his recovery, was promoted to the command of a battleship.

The beginning of 1918 saw the outbreak of a revolutionary spirit in the Austro-Hungarian fleet. The Emperor realised that a change in the High Command was necessary, and Captain Horthy was promoted Rear-Admiral, and appointed Commander-in-Chief over the heads of a dozen senior officers. It was in this capacity that he had the bitter experience of handing over his fleet to the Yugo-Slavs on October 31st, 1918. That was the saddest day of his life; but it was no more than the beginning of a period, of humiliation and persecution for all patriotic Hungarians from which Admiral Horthy was at last destined to rescue his fellow-countrymen.

He returned after the War to his country-home at Kenderes, to find a Bolshevik regime establishing itself in Hungary. At the head of it were two of the most loathsome creatures that emerged during the Red Terror then spreading from Russia to many parts of Central Europe. These men, Béla Kuhn and Tibor Szamuely, both agents of the Third International in Moscow, proclaimed openly in their speeches, and demonstrated by their practice, that they regarded fear as the most important instrument of their rule. Rousing the hungry proletariat of the towns to blind excesses against all classes of the people upon whom the fatal name of "bourgeois" could be fastened, they established, in the three months of their regime, a record of sadistic cruelty comparable to the worst brutalities of the Middle Ages.

On his own estate in eastern Hungary, Horthy came at first into little contact with this Bolshevik tyranny. The peasants of the countryside were comparatively unaffected by the Red propaganda which agitators tried to spread among them.

Meanwhile patriotic Hungarian statesmen were trying to organise the restoration of a constitutional regime. Count Stephen Bethlen and Count Károlyi had gathered around them some of the national-minded elements of the country. But it was evident that political action alone could not break the Bolshevik grip on Hungary. They accordingly looked for a leader who could inspire his followers with the readiness to die, if necessary, - for their country, and was trained to the command of men. They found him in Admiral Horthy, who became Minister of War in a National Government formed by Count Károlyi on June and, 1919.

The indifference which the Allied Powers, now masters of Central Europe, had shown towards the fate of Hungary brought it about that foreign invasion was added to the internal anarchy and Bolshevik tyranny from which that country was suffering. Shortly after Admiral Horthy had taken over the organisation of the national army to restore order, the Rumanian troops made the existence of the Béla Kuhn regime a pretext to march in and occupy Budapest.

Horthy had exchanged his position as Minister of War for that of Commander-in-Chief of the new National Army. Defying the veto of the Interallied Military Mission in Budapest, he advanced to within two hours of the capital, which was still under Rumanian occupation.

The Rumanian troops were steadily looting Hungary, already impoverished by five years of war conditions. Meanwhile Admiral Horthy was steadily becoming the rallying-point for the patriotic feelings



of the nation, and continued his steady pressure upon the Allied Military Mission at Budapest to procure the evacuation of Hungary by the Rumanian Army. His persistence at last succeeded, and on November 16th, amid the enthusiasm of the long-persecuted populace, he rode at the head of the National Army into the capital.

On March 1st, 1920, the Admiral was elected Regent of the Kingdom of Hungary by 131 votes out of 141 in the National Assembly. He was allotted the Royal Palace as residence, and granted the title Serene Highness.

During his long term as Head of the Hungarian State, the Regent's prestige has steadily increased. Yet he has had to deal with many crises besides the permanent difficulties of administering a poverty-stricken and mutilated land.

One of the first of these was the sudden and totally unexpected arrival in Budapest, on Easter Sunday, 1921, of the ex-Emperor Karl, who had abdicated the throne of Hungary at the end of the war.

The Regent, to avoid civil war, persuaded the ex-King Karl to leave the country. The exiled monarch returned to Switzerland, but he regarded the failure of his journey as no more than a postponement of his recovery of the Hungarian Crown. All through that summer Admiral Horthy was subjected to intense pressure by the Legitimist Party. To them he declared that he would always remain loyal to his King, but that a restoration under the conditions then existing would be fatal for the country.

In October the ill-advised Karl made another and more desperate attempt. Accompanied by his wife, the ex-Empress Zita, he flew from Switzerland to Hungary, and landed at Sopron, where Legitimist volunteers in arms awaited him.

Fifteen miles from Budapest a skirmish occurred between the Government forces and the Legitimist irregulars. When Karl at last realised that his return to Hungary involved the danger of civil war, he asked for an armistice, and submitted to internment in a monastery, where, after much negotiation, he was once again induced to leave the country.

This time the Allies brought pressure to bear on the Hungarian Government to pass an Act of Dethronement declaring that the sovereign rights of the Hapsburg dynasty were abrogated, and restoring the systems under which the Hungarian nation could elect its monarch by free choice.

Such were two of the most dramatic incidents of the Regency which Admiral Horthy has carried on with a patience and skill that were rewarded when, in November 1938, he welcomed back to their Hungarian motherland at least three-quarters of the Magyar population which had been annexed to Czecho-Slovakia.

He has had many other difficulties to contend with during his term of office. The world crisis of 1930 came as a heavy blow to Hungary just as she was painfully struggling to her feet. The headlong fall in the world-price of wheat was an overwhelming disaster for a country whose only means of paying for the foreign goods she needs is the export of her agricultural products.

At the age of seventy-one, His Serene Highness the Regent of Hungary remains the outstanding personality in the realm of which he is the head.

This brief account of the Regent's career would, however, be incomplete if full prominence were not given to the skilful collaboration and loyal support which he received during the most critical years of his office from Count Stephen Bethlen, undoubtedly one of the shrewdest living statesmen in Europe. From 1921 to 1931 Hungary was fortunate to have continuously as her Premier this able, accomplished, and patriotic Minister.

Count Bethlen descends from a long line of that Transylvanian nobility which has given many distinguished men to the service of the State, and embodies some of the finest traditions of the Magyar race. Born in 1874, he entered politics at the age of twenty-six, and after the war played a most important

part as an organiser of the anti-Bolshevist movement in Hungary which ultimately brought Admiral Horthy to the Royal Palace as Regent.

He was a member of the Peace Delegation summoned to Paris on January 5th, 1920, to receive delivery of the terms of the Treaty of Trianon. Though the war had been over for more than a year, the envoys of the Hungarian Government were treated as an enemy delegation and quartered in the Chateau de Madrid at Neuilly, where they were forbidden to enter the gates of Paris, less than a mile away, without permission.

It was after the ex-King Karl's first attempt to regain his throne that Count Bethlen succeeded the Prime Minister, Count Paul Teleki, who has returned to that office in the present year, 1939. One of his first actions was to organise the plebiscite at Sopron—the only concession granted by the Peace Conference—which resulted in a vote for the retention of that town and the adjoining area by Hungary. When Bethlen took office, Hungary was without a friend in the world, and surrounded by the three States of the Little Entente which had formed an alliance specifically for the purpose of ensuring the continuance of her depressed and impotent condition.

He set himself to cultivate foreign friendships, and it was due to his vision and persistency that, when he retired ten years later, Hungary had been re-established as an international factor in Central Europe, with powerful friends and sympathisers in foreign countries.

Count Bethlen's internal policy was equally well-conceived. He aimed especially at strengthening the position of the middle classes and the peasantry. He devoted close attention to the maintenance of the prices of agricultural produce, which is the main source of livelihood for the Hungarian people.

When I recall the very many distinguished Hungarians with whom I have had the privilege of being associated in my campaign for the redress of Hungary's wrongs, I can only regard it as a compensation designed by Fate that a nation which has lost so much should nevertheless possess so able and devoted a set of public men to support and plead its cause. Those I mention here are but a few of the outstanding figures whom I have learned to respect and admire for their patriotic zeal, breadth of view, and moderation and steadfastness of spirit even under the provocation of glaring injustice, whose effects they have often felt personally as well as nationally.

Conspicuous among the leaders of the Hungarian Revision Movement with whom my advocacy of Hungary's claims brought me into contact is Baron Sigismund Perényi, the head of an ancient family whose forebears fought on the field of Mohács, and who has served his country untriflingly during a life of close on seventy years. He held the post of Minister of the Interior in the Cabinet of Count Stephen Tisza, the Hungarian Prime Minister who was murdered by revolutionary sailors in Budapest at the end of October 1918. He is now Governor of the newly-restored Hungarian province of Russinsko, formerly Ruthenia.

During the Communist regime, Baron Perényi was imprisoned by the Reds, and his family estates were confiscated by the Czechs. With the resolution characteristic of Hungarians, who refuse to despair of any situation, he set himself, at the time of Hungary's greatest depression, to organise her rehabilitation.

Travelling all over the United States and Canada, he roused the Hungarians living in those countries to a sense of their solidarity with the land from which they or their families had come. The foundation of the "World Federation of Hungarians" was his work. As President of the Hungarian Society for Foreign Relations, Baron Perényi has made friends for his country's cause all over Europe, and I shall never forget the simple, sincere and moving terms of his speech at the dinner to which the National Club invited me in November 1938.

One of the most brilliant workers in Hungary's cause is Dr. Tibor Eckhardt, who has long played a prominent part in the political life of his country, being one of the founders of the National Government which restored order after the expulsion of Béla Kuhn. Dr. Eckhardt's outstanding ability has made a lasting impression upon members of the British House of Commons when he was been invited to address

them in a committee-room at Westminster. During the ten years that he has been my friend, I have often had occasion to admire his rare qualities of political farsightedness. Looking much younger than his actual age of fifty-one, and still a keen fencer and polo-player, this ardent and dynamic statesman became the leader of the Small Farmers' Party, and succeeded Count Albert Apponyi as chief delegate of Hungary to the League of Nations in 1934. He is a man whose high intellectual attainments and strength of character would make him a commanding figure in the political life of any country.

The first Hungarian whom I met after the publication of my article "Hungary's Place in the Sun" had produced its instant reaction in that country, was Dr. Emil Nagy, a former Minister of Justice, who happened to be in London at the time. He had come there with the hope of arousing sympathy for Hungary's cause, and called upon me directly my article appeared. It is characteristic of the zeal which Hungarians devote to their patriotic efforts that Dr. Nagy had learned English for the express purpose of his propaganda-tour within the previous eight months, at an age when, as he assured me,—though his jet-black hair and vigorous frame were far from suggesting it,—he was already a grandfather.

Mr. Ferenc Herczeg, who kindly wrote the generously phrased preface to this book, has long placed the powerful pen and personal prestige of a writer of world-wide reputation at the service of his country's cause. Alike as novelist, historian, dramatist, and politician, he has achieved the highest distinction. When still a young man he stepped into the forefront of Hungarian writers with his first novel "Above and Below", which, anonymously entered for a competition, was at once recognised by the judges as the work of a new master of the literary art.

His plays breathe that spirit of passionate patriotism which is characteristic of the man. His historic drama *Ocksay* is a panegyric of Rakóczi, and Hungary's struggle for independence at the outset of the eighteenth century. *The Black Knight* celebrates Kossuth's resistance against the absolutist tendencies of the Hapsburgs. His novels and short stories are full of Herczeg's devotion to his country and its people, their customs and traditions.

His works have been translated into eleven foreign languages, and one of his comedies, *The Blue Fox*, is constantly revived on the stages of the Continent and the United States. Ferenc Herczeg's political activities have been rather as a trusted counsellor of Hungarian statesmen than in a public character, though he was a Member of Parliament up to the Revolution of October 1918. He was the intimate friend of Count Tisza, the Hungarian Premier who was murdered in that Communist uprising.

In June 1927, after the publication of my first article, he founded the Hungarian Revision League, which enrolled most of the prominent personalities in the country. He has ever since remained as President, and at the age of seventy-five, is still a most active worker in the cause of justice for Hungary.

Too much space would be required were I to enumerate all the distinguished Hungarians with whom my campaign for Hungary has procured for me the privilege of association. The present Prime Minister, Count Paul Teleki, who is a former Chief Scout of Hungary, came to London in August 1929, accompanied by his successor in that post, Count Khuen-Hedervary, together with 800 Hungarian Boy Scouts whom I had invited to make a stay in England as my guests. I have since had the pleasure of meeting this great scholar, whose renown as an expert geographer is world-wide, during my visit to Hungary as the guest of the Hungarian Government.

Dr. Béla Imrédy, who was Count Teleki's predecessor in the office of Premier, was another Hungarian statesman whom I met on that occasion. Still in the middle forties, he rose to the head of the Government after a brilliant career in the financial department of State service, having repeatedly attended international conferences after the Peace Treaty in the capacity of Hungarian economic expert, and later becoming Minister of Finance and Governor of the National Bank.

Among the many others whom my work on behalf of Hungary has added to the number of my friends is Major Stephen Bárczy de Bárczaháza, Secretary of State in the Prime Minister's department, who for the

past twenty years has played in every Hungarian Government a similar important role to that which Sir Maurice Hankey fulfilled as Secretary to the British Cabinet.

This accomplished diplomat, who, for all his long experience, retains the outward appearance of a young cavalry officer, is one of those many Hungarians whose cosmopolitan culture and personal charm make them popular and well-known figures in the social life of almost every European country. He is the depository of the tradition of Hungary in all matters of protocol and government procedure, and in private conversation is indefatigable as a raconteur.

Dr. George Lukács, a former Minister of Public Education, is one of the veterans of the Hungarian Revision Movement. At inter-parliamentary conferences and other international gatherings, he has frequently pleaded the reparation of the wrongs inflicted upon Hungary, and his contributions to Hungarian and foreign publications have always been authoritative and reasonable presentations of her case.

The head of the Hungarian War Veterans' Association, Field-Marshal-Lieutenant Count Joseph Takách-Tolvay, has also played a conspicuous part in urging upon similar organizations in other countries the claims of his country for redress. This distinguished officer who, after the war was over gave his services to the Poles in their resistance against the Bolshevist invasion of 1920, has visited me in London and took a prominent part in my reception at Budapest.

Another of the early acquaintances with leading Hungarians acquired through my advocacy of their cause was that of Dr. Francis Ripka, until 1932 Lord Mayor of Budapest, who did much to make his beautiful city known to foreign visitors, and was the founder of the annual St. Stephen's Festival, which, in August, attracts many foreigners to Hungary.

Well known to the artistic circles of every country is the gifted Hungarian sculptor Mr. Sigismund Kisfaludy-Strobl, whose busts of prominent personalities like the Duke of Kent and Mr. Bernard Shaw are examples of his high artistic skill.

Mr. Kisfaludy-Strobl often works in London, and made a portrait-bust of myself, of which, after the publication of my articles, plaster-casts were sold in Hungary literally by the thousand.

Baron Paul Forster is one of the most widely-travelled members of the Hungarian diplomatic service, having served in China, Japan, Australia and the United States' as well as in several European countries until his retirement after holding the posts of Minister at The Hague and at Belgrade.

In Baron Forster, who was the first to welcome me to Hungary when I crossed the frontier in November 1938, one meets a man with an intimate knowledge of international affairs, and that cosmopolitan standpoint that comes from long residence abroad. His dignified presence and mastery of many languages have made him a most convincing exponent in foreign countries of the arguments in favour of revision.

No one has been more active in the Revisionist campaign than Dr. Otto Légrády, the proprietor and editor of the well-known daily newspaper *Pesti Hirlap*, which has been under his control since 1919.

It was in the columns of this organ of the Hungarian Press that Ferenc Herczeg, Eugene Rákosi and Nándor Urmanczy, together with other leading figures of the movement, mainly carried on their untiring propaganda.

Dr. Légrády has the distinction of having made the first appeal to public opinion in the countries which had imposed the Treaty of Trianon, by circulating throughout Europe in February, 1920, a special Revisionist number of the *Pesti Hirlap* printed in English, French, Italian and German.

He gave, from the first, most valuable and continuous 'support to my efforts on behalf of Hungary. He himself, in 1932, produced a well-documented book entitled "Justice for Hungary", and followed it up by many other publications. He also invited groups of British and French parliamentarians to visit Budapest and make enquiries on the spot.

When the Municipality of the Hungarian capital, in 1937, gave my name to one of the principal thoroughfares in the city, he paid me the compliment of placing on the wall at the entrance to it, in the name of the *Pesti Hirlap*, a marble tablet commemorating, in the English and French languages as well as Hungarian, my efforts to obtain redress of the Treaty of Trianon.

There are countless others who have co-operated in keeping their country's claims constantly before world-opinion. Mr. Gyula Vermes de Nagybudafa is typical of the country gentlemen of the lost provinces, who, undiscouraged by the loss of their estates under the confiscations entailed by the Peace Treaty, set out to create another existence for themselves, and at the same time gave freely of their time and energy in the cause of revision. As head of the Magyar Touring Club, he made contacts with all the automobile associations in Europe.

Dr. Sipacz, Lord Mayor of Budapest, has done much to bring the city finances of the capital through a time of unparalleled strain, and to relieve the distress of the masses of refugees from the lost provinces who automatically gravitated to it for relief and shelter.

Mr. Nándor Urmanczy, born in 1868, fought in the world-war as a volunteer, though nearing his fiftieth birthday. He has never ceased to work with his able pen and organising ability for the reconstitution of Hungary, and in 1928 headed a deputation to myself in London.

Dr. András Tasnádi-Nagy, Hungarian Minister of Justice, was another of the leading Hungarians whom I met on my visit to Budapest in November, 1938. He is one of the outstanding lawyers of his country, and a very capable administrator. Dr. Endre Fall, Secretary of the Hungarian Revision League, is another whose systematic work for the cause had been of inestimable value to its success—whether only partial, as hitherto, or in whatever greater measure it may be fulfilled in the future.

This incomplete reference to the leading men and women who have so patiently supported their national claims under the most discouraging conditions must also include the name of Mr. Géza Szüllő, one of those Magyars who, by force of the Peace Treaty, became an unwilling subject of the Czecho-Slovak Republic, and in that capacity led the Magyar party in the Czecho-Slovak Parliament. The courage which this energetic, lionhearted exile displayed, under constant threat of imprisonment and ruinous forfeiture of his property, won the respect even of the better elements in the country to which he had been attached by the decree of the treaty makers. Defying the penalties that befel so many of his fellow-Hungarians, he immediately responded to the lead given in my articles, and even expressed his appreciation of them in a session of the Parliament at Prague.

To work with such men, and their many equally devoted compatriots, in the cause of justice for a gallant people, has been for me an education in the greatness of human nature.

## CHAPTER TEN

### THE MONTH OF MUNICH

IN another *book—Warnings and Predictions—I* have told the story of my campaign for British rearmament, which I launched in 1933, when the people of Britain were disinclined to heed warnings of peril and their Government was even derisory about “alarmists” who tried to point out the menace.

Towards the end of August 1938, after the visit of Admiral Horthy to Germany, events moved in such a way that the two campaigns, that for British readiness against attack and that for redress of Hungary's wrongs, converged.

We came to September—the month of Munich.

This is not the place to relate in detail the march of events which led to Mr. Chamberlain's three flights to Germany. The broad position was that in Czecho-Slovakia there were 3,500,000 Sudeten Germans whom Herr Hitler claimed as citizens and subjects of the Reich. It was alleged that these unfortunates since the creation of Czecho-Slovakia had suffered intolerable tyrannies and degradations at the hands of their governors. To bring them and their land back to the Reich, Herr Hitler was ready to take any needful action, even to that of accepting, if necessary, a world war.

The sequence of events is still fresh in the public memory. On the last day of August Herr Bürckel, the German Commissioner for Austria, made a speech at Stuttgart which was an admirable expression of the German point of view. Little attention was paid to it in the British Press. He said that the "nationalities State" of Czecho-Slovakia was an outmoded conception, an obsolete survival of nineteenth-century Liberalism. The conception of the twentieth century, and the meaning of the Third Reich, was that of a "racial State," containing peoples of the same blood.

For Germany, he declared, the realisation of this conception was necessary that she might fulfil her destiny as a Central European nation—but that destiny did not imply domination over non-German peoples.

"We are preparing no war, but want to prevent one," he said. "Better standards of Living are a better blessing than cannon and grenades. Our mothers and the French mothers did not bear their sons to let them be slaughtered in some foreign affair. . . ."

Despite this avowal of pacific intention, when, on the first day of September, Herr Henlein reached Berchtesgaden to confer with Herr Hitler, Field-Marshal Goering, Dr. Goebbels and Herr Hess, apprehension of some forceful move by Germany grew mote widespread. France had avowed her determination to stand by Czecho-Slovakia" to the last man ", and Britain, although under no pledge to the Czechs, would obviously—said Mr. Chamberlain—have to stand by France.

Whatever was to be the result of the Sudetenland situation, it was obvious that it would radically affect the Hungarian position. If what Herr Bürckel had called the twentieth century conception triumphed, and the Sudeten Germans returned to the Reich, then Hungary's claims for her exiled Hungarians could no longer be ignored.

In political principle, the situation of the Germans under Czecho-Slovakian rule was no whit different from that of the Hungarians under the same rule. If the principle applied to the alien subjects of Czecho-Slovakia, it must also apply to alien subjects under other rules. A solution of the Sudeten German problem would virtually compel a solution of the Hungarian problem.

What would balk this development would be the outbreak of another European war.

In the Czecho-Slovakian hour-glass the sands began to run out with increasing and alarming speed. Lord Runciman's well-meant efforts were patently futile. On September 12th the Czech Government refused the suggestion of a plebiscite, as it well might, since in the disputed lands some 90 per cent. of the population was German. Tension grew.

On September 14th the British Foreign Office issued a momentous announcement. It read: -

"The Prime Minister has sent to the German Führer and Chancellor, through H.M. Ambassador in Berlin, the following message :—' In view of increasingly critical situation, I propose to come over at once to see you with a view to trying to find a peaceful solution. I propose to come across by air, and am ready to start to-morrow. Please indicate earliest time at which you can see me and suggest place of meeting. Should be grateful for very early reply. Neville Chamberlain,'

"The Führer has replied to the above message to the effect that he will be very ready to meet the British Prime Minister on September 15th. The Prime Minister is accordingly leaving for Germany by air to-morrow morning."

This exhibition of realistic initiative and action by Britain's seventy-year-old Premier was received in his own country with the greatest admiration and enthusiasm. Its effect abroad was shown when the German newspaper, the *D.A.Z.*, described his visit to Germany as a manly action, adding that Mr. Chamberlain was known to be a friend to peace, and that the extent to which the leadership of the British people lay in his hands was shown by the way that the British Opposition, hitherto agitated for war, had wished him success.

That first visit to Germany by Mr. Chamberlain was not from the viewpoint of detail a success—but it did prevent an immediate war. Mr. Chamberlain himself described his experience to the House of Commons in a speech delivered on September 28th in which he said:-

“On September 15th I travelled to Herr Hitler’s mountain home at Berchtesgaden. . . . In courteous, but perfectly definite terms, Herr Hitler made it plain that he had made up his mind that the Sudeten Germans must have the right of self-determination and of returning, if they wished, to the Reich. If they could not achieve this by their own efforts, he said, he would assist them to do so—and *he declared categorically that rather than wait he would be prepared to risk a world war.* . . .

*“I have no doubt whatever now, looking back, that my visit alone prevented an invasion, for which everything was ready. . . .”*

In that same speech the Prime Minister fully confirmed my own conviction of the importance to Hungary of the settlement of the German Sudeten question, for he said:-

“We had hoped that the immediate problem of the Sudeten Germans would not be further complicated at this particular juncture by the pressing of the claims of the Hungarian and Polish minorities. These minorities have, however, consistently demanded similar treatment to that accorded to the Sudeten minority, and the Anglo-French proposals, involving the cession of the predominantly Sudeten German territories had led to a similar demand of cession of the territory predominantly inhabited by Polish and Hungarian minorities being advanced by the Hungarian Government. . . .”

Mobilisation measures, said Mr. Chamberlain, had been taken to double the strength of the Hungarian army.

On the 22nd of September Mr. Chamberlain made his second visit to the Führer, who had appointed Godesberg as a meeting-place, this township on the Rhine being more convenient to the English statesman than the more remote Berchtesgaden. The meeting there was also unsatisfactory.

After the Prime Minister’s return from Godesberg there was much coming and going of others to try to save peace. In particular Sir Horace Wilson, on behalf of Mr. Chamberlain, resumed conversations with Herr Hitler. On September 28th describing the events of the previous day, the Prime Minister was able to say :—

“ . . . once more the differences and the obscurities had been narrowed down still further to a point where really it was inconceivable that they could not be settled by negotiations. So strongly did I feel this, that I felt impelled to send one more last letter—the last last— to the Chancellor. I sent him the following personal message :—‘ After reading your letter I feel certain that you can get all essentials without war and without delay. I am ready to come to Berlin myself at once to discuss arrangements for transfer with you and representatives of the Czech Government together with representatives of France and Italy, if you desire.’”

With that letter to Herr Hitler had been dispatched another to Signor Mussolini, soliciting his co-operation in the cause of peace.

Herr Hitler responded by inviting Mr. Chamberlain to meet him again at Munich the following day—the 29th—and also invited Signor Mussolini and M. Daladier.

Thus was born the Conference of Munich, on which so much was to turn for Europe in general, and for Hungary in particular.

The Memorandum of Germany’s terms which Mr. Chamberlain brought home from Godesberg was, in his own words, an ultimatum. The Conference of Munich succeeded in having that ultimatum

modified in no fewer than eleven different directions, which Mr. Chamberlain lucidly listed in his speech to the House on October 3rd, 1938. One of the modifications was important to Hungary, for at Munich the four Powers represented there declared that if the problems of the Polish and Hungarian minorities in Czecho-Slovakia were not settled within three months by agreement between the respective Governments, another meeting of the four Powers would be held to consider them.

Both when Mr. Chamberlain announced his departure for Munich and when he returned, he was greeted by the unstinted gratitude and applause of his countrymen. He was to suffer very speedily from an exhibition of the shortness of men's memories and to become the object of bitter criticism, but on the day of his return the people—of all parties—knew that he had saved them from the devastation of war, and behaved fittingly towards him.

When he first read through the microphone the half sheet of notepaper signed by him and the German Führer there could be no question of the reality of his achievement. That joint declaration read

“We, the German Führer and Chancellor and British Minister, have had a further meeting to-day and are agreed in recognising that the question of Anglo-German relations is of the first importance for the two countries and for Europe.

“We regard the agreement signed last night and the Anglo-German naval agreement as symbolic of the desire of our two peoples never to go to war with one another again.

“We are resolved that the method of consultation shall be the method adopted to deal with any other question that may concern our two countries, and we are determined to continue our efforts to remove possible sources of difference and thus to contribute to assure the peace of Europe.”

By party politicians the meaning of Munich to Britain has since been strangely perverted.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

### WHAT MUNICH MEANT TO BRITAIN

JUST before Parliament rose in August this year ('939) a strong plea was made by the antagonists of Mr. Chamberlain that Parliament should continue to sit so as to avoid another Munich. Could these Members have had any idea What was the underlying fact about Munich? Did they know that at the end of September last (although there has been a miraculous change since) Britain was quite unable to go to war? If she *had* gone to war, she would have entered a war without victory.

Those who, like myself, had been hard at work for five years endeavouring to arouse the public in regard to rearmament, were perfectly aware of this. No Prime Minister has rendered such signal service to his country as did Mr. Neville Chamberlain when he decided there should be no war over the German Sudeten question. Incidentally, and perhaps to some extent unexpectedly, Mr. Chamberlain found that by the Pact of Munich he had gained precious time to rearm his country, and splendid have been the efforts made by the Government to do so during the last eleven months.

I had a haunting fear that there might be a breakdown at Munich and that our great country would have found itself embarked on a war the outcome of which might have terrible consequences although every day that passes increases Britain's armed strength. She is to-day unquestionably more powerfully armed than she was in 1914, and with the present rate of expansion of her armaments she will, before long, be numbered among the most heavily armed countries in the world.

For myself I had the additional apprehension that the success of the claim of the Sudeten Germans would lead to a great ebullition and commotion in Hungarian Sudetenland. I was not wrong. All



through October feeling was mounting higher and higher. News I was receiving from Budapest and elsewhere, and the reports in the Hungarian newspapers, showed that powerfully armed forces of Hungarians were collecting on the Rumanian frontier. There was a feeling that a clash might take place at any time between Hungary and Rumania which would inevitably drag in the other Powers of Europe, including inadequately armed Britain; so the good work of Munich might be completely undone by an analogous explosion in another part of Central Europe, and Britain deprived of any time to rearm.

Herr Hitler, twice at Godesberg and again at Munich, had given the explicit assurance that Germany's territorial claims in Europe were now satisfied, and that any other question that might arise would be settled by discussion and conference. With this assurance in mind, and acting on my personal acquaintance with Herr Hitler and Herr von Ribbentrop, I suggested to them that they might be the sponsors of an effort to persuade Rumania—who at that time, so kaleidoscopic are the changes in the European situation, was under the influence of Germany—to return, as a measure of appeasement, that part of the lost lands of Hungary occupied by a population of something like 700,000 Hungarians. Britain was not immediately interested, because neither Hungary nor Rumania at the time had any political association with her. Moreover, such an arrangement would have removed an immediate risk of war.

At the same time I used all my personal influence to slow down the war spirit, reminding the Hungarians that under the Munich Pact they had already been assured of the return of quite a large area of territory which they had previously lost to Czecho-Slovakia. Hungary's great statesman, Admiral Horthy, was also using all the influence of himself and his Government to solve the problem without resort to arms.

*The conviction always uppermost in my mind—and still uppermost—was and is that no sacrifices were or are too great to purchase time. When Britain's security is absolutely assured, foreign politics will enter upon a happier and more peaceful phase.*

I heard nothing from Herr Hitler or Herr von Ribbentrop, but when a little later I was in Budapest I was gratified to hear that the German Government had used its influence to prevent the outbreak of a war that at one moment had seemed inevitable.

So, largely unknown in England, a crisis between Hungary and Rumania, quite as dangerous as the Munich crisis, had come and passed.

## CHAPTER TWELVE

### THE BEGINNING OF REDRESS

IT was on October 2nd that the Hungarian Government announced that it had agreed to a proposal received by telegraph from Prague that a mixed Commission should be appointed to discuss the question of the Hungarian minority in Czecho-Slovakia. Seven days later a conference opened at the ancient Hungarian town of Komarom—then in the hands of Czecho-Slovakia—between Czech and Hungarian representatives.

The current impression in Great Britain at that time was that Czecho-Slovakia was a land of Saints being brutally dismembered by German ogres. How false was this image, born of long years of propaganda, the circumstances of Komarom amply demonstrated. It was as if Kent had been for twenty years in the hands of Czecho-Slovakia and British representatives were called to Canterbury to negotiate for the return to the British rule of their Kentish comrades. The local administrators in such circumstances would by no means seem injured Saints, but tyrants to whom retribution had justly, if tardily, come.

After four or five days of proposal and counterproposal, with the Czechs reluctantly making offers far below Hungary's justified expectation, the Conference broke down. The Hungarian Foreign Minister read a

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was more important, the arbitrators of Vienna had shown that ,wrongs could be redressed, though for a score of years their righting had seemed a mocking and hopeless dream.

It was little wonder that Hungary saluted Germany and Italy as her deliverers.

Of the essence of the Arbitration of Vienna was the speed with which it was to be made effective. The Czechs were to begin their evacuation of the ceded territories on November 5th and end it by November 10th.

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

### A NATION'S GRATITUDE

WITH the arbitration of Vienna, and its assurance that Hungary was to regain at least some of her lost lands and have restored to her some of those unhappy exiles who had been wrenched from their homeland by the shifting of a frontier, my campaign entered a new phase. It was not victory, but it was partial victory. It was the redress of one injustice in which we might venture to see the promise that other injustices would later be redressed.

When the news of the award came, my thoughts and sympathies were, naturally, very much with those who had laboured and hoped for so long for this rectification. I wished much to be with them in their hour of triumph, but I did not think it fitting that one of another race should seem to force himself into their rejoicing. In wiring to the Regent an expression of my own joy in the award I was careful to conceal any desire that I had to visit his country at such a time.

My intention to absent myself from any celebrations was to be broken in a strange and romantic way.

Two years earlier I had written in *The Daily Mail* an article, called "Hungary's Joy-Bells Will Ring Again," in which I had said :—

"I firmly believe that, before the present decade is over, the territories of which the Hungarian nation was so unjustly robbed will be restored. "It is long since joy-bells were rung in Hungary. Poverty, unemployment, humiliation and suicide have been the conditions amid which the present younger generation of Magyars has grown up.

"From the time when I published my first appeal for Hungary in June 1927 I have not been in Budapest, but I look forward confidently to the day when I shall visit that historic city once again and hear the bells of the Coronation Church on the heights of Buda ring out across the Danube the joyful message that Hungary is free once more!"

The joy-bells were indeed to ring out from the heights of Buda for the new freedom of the Northern Territories; my self-imposed ban not to re-visit Hungary until justice had been done to her had been lifted; but my mind was made up that I would postpone my visit until after the rejoicing and the excitement had died down.

The event which changed that new resolution was the arrival late one November evening of a telegram. It was an invitation from the Hungarian Government to be their official guest on the occasion of

the national rejoicings at the restoration of the Northern Territories and to be present at the restored town of Kassa when the Regent and his troops formally took possession of the liberated lands.

The invitation was extended to me, I was told, as an expression of the nation's deep gratitude for my strong advocacy through the years of Hungary's claims. Such an honour could only be accepted with reciprocal gratitude. I felt indeed, when I compared what I had been able to do with the labour, hardships and devotion of the Revisionists in Hungary itself, that Dr. Imrédy and his colleagues, with characteristic generosity, were over-rating their nation's debt to me.

The arrangements were that I was to arrive in Budapest on the night of November 8th, 1938. A desire had been expressed that Mr. G. Ward Price might accompany me. He flew from Palestine and reached the Hungarian capital on the morning of that day, and later motored on with an English colleague, to join my train at Vienna. There was a thick fog along the line from the old Austrian capital to the Hungarian frontier, but the train kept excellent time.

We were discussing affairs generally when the train stopped at the little frontier town of Hegyeshalom. Instead of the late night darkness and quietude which one expects at a frontier station, there was a blaze of light and a sudden burst of martial music.

"This ", said one of my travelling companions, "is in your honour."

I had barely time to deprecate what I thought was a rather indifferent joke, when Baron Forster, of whom I have written earlier, entered the compartment and led me through the narrow corridor to the platform.

It was a most stirring and touching sight.

The platform was crowded with cheering citizens, massed behind a kind of guard of honour which was composed of women and children in their native Hungarian dress. Confronting me was a gigantic portrait of myself which had been flood-lit and which was wreathed in flowers.

We stood bareheaded while the band played appropriate national airs and the crowd repeated their cheers of welcome. Baron Forster, delivered to me first an English and then an Hungarian address of welcome, and presented to me the leading citizens of the little township.

No man, however stolid and unemotional, could have remained unmoved by such a welcome, which was completed by three tiny little tots in national dress advancing to bestow upon me bouquets quite as big as themselves. The all-too-flattering address of Baron Forster, an elder statesman of his country, followed by this shy tribute from these diminutive maidens, made me feel—as I was meant to feel—that all generations were trying to show to me the gratitude of their country.

This demonstration, so obviously spontaneous and so quickly and well organised by my friends in this little township, was to prove symbolic of what was to come.

It was nearly midnight when we reached Budapest, but the concourse which packed the huge station and its approaches could not have been greater or more vocal had it been mid-day.

As the train came to a halt, the door of my compartment was opposite to the red carpet on which stood a welcoming group of Hungarian notables. My friend, Major Stephen de Bérczy, the Secretary of State, made me a speech of welcome, which the amplifiers carried to the square outside the station, where thousands of cheering voices emphasised its cordiality. No visiting monarch could have had a more fervent welcome. I was saved from a sense of complete unworthiness of such a demonstration of friendship only by the knowledge that it expressed not only gratitude to me as a foreign friend of Hungary, but the joy which they felt, and which they knew I shared, in the fulfilment of the hope that we had cherished in common for over a decade.

A way was made for me through the great throng. As we moved towards the outer square, hands were thrust out to greet me, and bouquets in the national colours were pressed upon me by leaders of various societies.

The outer square made a remarkable spectacle. It was lined by the men of the Hungarian ex-service Legion, in their military greatcoats and steel helmets, bearing the banners of their regions and units, and illuminated by a corps of torch-bearers.

Field-Marshal Count Takach-Tolvay, in the uniform of the Legion, invited me to inspect the guard of honour thus romantically drawn up. These were the men who had known the bitterness of an undeserved defeat, who in the last war had maintained Hungary's reputation not only for courage but for chivalry.

As I entered a car to be driven to my hotel, I felt that Budapest had given me a royal welcome. I deceived myself, for she had only begun to welcome me.

The Dunapalota Hotel stands on the bank of the Danube, with its windows looking over the river to where, on the heights of Buda, stand the Royal Palace, the Ministerial residences and the Coronation Church. Just below it is the great span of one of the world's most famous and beautiful suspension bridges. It abuts upon a large public garden in which stands the equestrian statue of one of Hungary's patriots of an earlier age. The streets to the hotel were lined with waving people, seen dimly as we sped through the darkness of a November midnight. About the Hotel Dunapalota was a river mist, but it was powerless to veil yet another great concourse which had filled the garden, for the historic buildings of Buda, the hotel, and the Corso along the river were flood-lit; and the bridge and the Parliament building beyond, and the Island beyond that again, were illuminated with fairy-lamps.

There was an interlude while I greeted and was welcomed by the Lord Mayor of Budapest and the many Members of Parliament who had assembled in a salon of the hotel. Then I stepped on to a broad balcony overlooking the public garden—and Hungary's first welcome reached its climax.

Through the swirling, white mist, I looked down upon a great sea of upturned faces. Suddenly the cheers stopped, and there came from a massed choir of the Hungarian Singers' Association the British National Anthem, followed by that of Hungary and a fantasia of Hungarian national songs. As the songs ended, Dr. Ripka, a former Lord Mayor of the city, mounted the platform on which I stood and after making me a speech of welcome, presented me with a gold Memorial Medal in the name of 60,000 members of the Singers' Association, which had just romantically serenaded me, hailing me as "The Father of Hungarian Restoration".

I have had many difficult tasks in my life, but perhaps none more difficult than that of trying to thank all the unknown friends about me, and below me in the gardens, for such a welcome and such expressions of friendship. I could only congratulate them that at last part of their claim to restoration had been met, that a million of their fellow-countrymen were to be brought out of bondage and restored to the fellowship of their native land, and that Hungary through twenty years had shown the world a marvellous example of pacific patience and devotion. "The recovery of your lost lands proves", I said, "that peace and faith can triumph without the shedding of blood." I think nothing that I said then, or during the remainder of my visit, was more warmly acclaimed.

As I rejoined the smaller gathering in the salon, somebody said to me, "You must be tired after your long journey and all this excitement." I replied, "Nobody could be tired under the stimulus of such a remarkable welcome and in this atmosphere of palpable joy and triumph."

It was impossible at the end of such a day to avoid the thought that if this nation were so grateful for what one foreign citizen had been able to do to support its just claims, its gratitude for the support of another nation, officially and freely given, would have been overwhelming. Had British foreign policy in the blind years between 1919 and 1938 included a determination to have redressed the grievances of Hungary, the political gratitude and devotion of the smaller Power could never again have been shaken. This was a thought which increased in intensity during the days I was to spend as the guest of Hungary.

Despite the late hour at which I reached Budapest on the Tuesday night of that memorable week, my arrival had evoked the tumultuous popular welcome which I have just described. I made it my first duty the following morning to lay a wreath upon the grave of Hungary's unknown warrior. The performance of that solemn ceremony was graced by still more touching signs of the people's affection.

The grave of the unknown warrior lies in the centre of Hero Square, which is at the end of Budapest's finest avenue. Behind the tomb stands a semi-circular row of noble statues commemorating the past Kings of Hungary. Beyond it is the greenery of a spacious park. The whole setting is of unusual dignity.

Gathered there were the widows of the war dead, and the men of the Ex-service Men's League, many of them still crippled by their wounds. The Avenue leading to the square was brave with the British and Hungarian flags.

The purpose of my errand forbade any vocal demonstrations of welcome, but as I talked afterwards with those who had come to join in my tribute to the dead, I was again struck by the warmth and reality of their emotion of gratitude for anyone who had upheld their country's cause in the years when the outer world seemed content to allow the exiled Hungarians to languish in their complete divorce from Hungarian nationality.

That day I was to be formally welcomed by the Regent and the Prime Minister. As the Government was my host, I drove first to the Premier's residence. Dr. Imrédy received me warmly, and opened a long private talk with an elaboration of the sentiment which he and his colleagues had expressed in their original invitation—that they had felt that one who had rendered what he was kind enough to call “most valuable service to the Hungarian cause” should share the first happy day that the Hungarian nation had known for twenty years.

The Regent, Admiral Horthy, had bidden me to luncheon. In the reception-room of the ancient Palace, overlooking the enduring Danube, memories of the troubled history of Hungary since her Constitution was founded so few months after our own Magna Carta was signed crowd quickly to the mind. This nation, whose people are so like our own in appearance and tradition, has suffered much. It might well be forgiven for despairing. But there is nothing of despair possible under the rule of the Regent. This man who embodies Hungary; embodies hope. In stature of the middle height, he moves with the briskness and purpose which long tradition associates with daring and audacious sailors. His keen, fresh face, the poise of the alert head, his fluent but disciplined speech, his courteous dignity are only incidental qualities of a personality which is striking not for its qualities, but for itself.

As he entered that famous room to greet his guest, he radiated joy at the successful fulfilment of the first part of his hope, to see all those who were wrenched from Hungary restored to their birthright. In his gratification there was nothing of arrogance; it was a deep and a quiet satisfaction, frankly expressed.

The luncheon-party was a private matter of the family circle, save for one incident, when His Highness invested me with the insignia of the First Class of the Hungarian Order of Merit. I have more than once sought permission of Foreign Governments to refuse high decorations, as I sought permission from France when some years, I was conducting with Senator Menier a campaign for French rearmament. This decoration, conferred upon me at such a time and occasion, I could not refuse. It was yet another mark of the warm-hearted gratitude of Hungary that its ruler should confer on me a distinction given outside Hungary to two others only, each the head of a great State.

The Prime Minister that evening honoured me by a banquet in his official residence, which captured again something of its magnificence of former and more happy years as we gathered about Dr. and Madame Imrédy to celebrate the restoration of Hungary's northlands.

After two such days, one might have expected the enthusiasm of the Hungarians for their English friend to wane a little, if only from sheer physical exhaustion. It was not so. The following morning I was invited to visit the Hungarian Parliament, which in its architecture and procedure is closely modelled upon that of Britain. As I entered the Distinguished Strangers' Gallery, Mr. Nagy von Tasnád was addressing the House. My entrance caused a dramatic interruption of his speech, for every Member rose in his seat to face me and to welcome me with a burst of applause that lasted for several minutes. When this ended, Mr. Nagy von Tasnád continued his speech with expressions of gratitude to me for my faith in Hungary's cause.

I left the House to visit Liberty Square. In that square stand—or stood—four pathetic statues. Each one symbolised one of the lost Provinces, to the north, south, east and west of the mutilated Motherland. It was my desire to lay a wreath at the base of the statue representing the restored Northlands, for to the recovered North that statue was to be moved. This I particularly wished to do, for the pedestal is inscribed with a sentence from one of my own articles.

I found gathered to welcome me some 100,000 people, of whom in a moment I must write more fully.

Facing the four statues which symbolised Hungary's grief—three of which still remain—stands a marble forum. To this I was conducted, and was there formally welcomed by the famous author and poet, Ferenc Herczeg, and Field-Marshal Count Takach-Tolvay, head of the War Veterans' League, who in their orations again caused me to feel how greatly the gratitude of Hungary exceeded any service that I had been able to render her.

As I stood to reply, my gaze rested upon yet another memorable scene. As far as eye could see, the great square and the approaches to it were packed with people. In the foreground were drawn up the War Veterans in their khaki great-coats and steel helmets. Behind them stood the Youth Organisations, with feathered caps and service dress, aligned with a deputation of- Hungarian youths from Rumania—the Szeklers in their national dress, a picturesque costume surmounted by blue velvet head-dresses adorned with eagle feathers. Hungarian Boy Scouts lined the curbs. Suspended between two high buildings were two lines of large white letters that spelt the words: -

ÉLJEN  
ROTHERMERE

which is the Hungarian equivalent of "Long live ..." The dozen avenues that converge on the square were gay with bunting. It was with profound emotion that to such an audience I made my reply, and with profound emotion that I moved through such ranks to lay my wreath at the base of the statue.

I was not allowed to depart without some further mark of the approbation of the people of Budapest.

I was asked to take the salute of a march-past. Five thousand war veterans, 2,000 members of the Youth Battalions, Boy Scouts, and bodies of pupils from the High Schools of the city moved past with their banners and pennants, while 80,000 of their fellow-citizens cheered them to the echo.

The intensity of both old and young during that march-past was striking. It made one realise that the Hungarian cry of "*Mindent vissza!*"—which means "Everything back!"—was not an idle or a vicious political catchword, but was a genuine expression of a nation's fidelity to those who had been placed under the rule of alien governments. To these marching veterans, to these marching young men and boys, the question of the lost lands was- obviously the main preoccupation of their lives. We, in Britain, might regard treaty-drawn frontiers and boundaries with academic interest, but to these Hungarians of all ages it was a matter of personal suffering—of families split by some arbitrary line on a map, of careers thwarted, development retarded, hopes and aims stultified. Probably not since the days of the Italian *risorgimento* had there been in Europe such an intensity of devotion and hope, such a single-mindedness in a nation.

It was apparent everywhere and in all grades of society. After that stirring experience in the Square, I was entertained to luncheon by the present Prime Minister of Hungary, Count Paul Teleki, that I might talk to a group of leading statesmen; that night I was given a banquet by my old friends of the Revisionist League. Both in the formal speeches and in the innumerable snatches of private conversation that one motif was dominant: to the righting of a great wrong and to the relief of the exiled Hungarians everything must be devoted. Art, letters, business—au must serve that end.

In such talks it was made very vivid that this was not a political cause only; it was a religious cause. Those who has been torn from their native land by the arbitrary tyrannies of Trianon had been torn also from the Holy Crown of Saint Stephen. To all Magyars, that Holy Crown means more than we British can readily realise. It is sacred alike to Protestants and Catholics. It is the symbol of the high destiny of the race.

It is easy for the Northern cynic to sneer at such an attitude as a piece of almost medieval superstition—but in Hungary it is *real*.

Anybody who does not grasp that the sorrow and resentment of Hungary is compounded of this deep, traditional feeling, as well as of the emotions aroused in every human being under injustice and the thought of suffering, does not grasp the heart of Central European politics.

As I went from the celebrations of the Revisionist League to the special train that was to carry me to the old town of Kassa—to which the inhabitants of Budapest and other Hungarian towns had been pouring by the thousand for two days past—I realised this even more acutely than before. At Kassa, by one of the most moving demonstrations of national unity and fidelity its truth was to be even more forcefully displayed.

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## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

### HOW THE NORTH CAME BACK

IN the celebrations to mark the return of the Northlands, the entry of the Regent into Kassa was to be the culminating chord in Hungary's crescendo of rejoicing.

The ancient town meant much in the nation's history. It had been created a town by King Béla IV in 1235, twenty years after our King John had signed Magna Carta, and raised to the status of a Royal Free Town by King Stephen V in 1270, two years before Simon de Montfort was slain in England. Its long history had been a tumult of wars. Russians, Turks and Austrians bad at times assaulted and held it.

Situated where the uplands drop to the plain, surrounded on three sides by forested hills and vineyards, its ancient Hungarian founders had raised there between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries the magnificent Gothic cathedral of St. Elizabeth, which a later generation had transformed to a Renaissance interior.

For twenty years this town of such memories had been in the possession of the Czechs.

If, for a score of humiliating years, Canterbury or Winchester had been held by some alien race, regarded ~ by the English as inferior in history and culture, the ancient cathedral inaccessible and the inhabitants subjected to ignominious regulation, and was about to be freed—we should have some faint analogy to the restoration of Kassa.

The tyranny had been real. Hungarian parents had been forbidden to speak their native tongue to their children, who were taught in the schools the language of the alien masters. Historic names had been changed to new names. The cherished native dress had been forbidden. Petty functionaries exerted their little tyrannies; greater officials dealt contemptuously with age-old customs.

It was little wonder that as the train ran, through the very early morning, towards the town, every little hamlet and village sent its contingent of excited Hungarians to cheer it on its way. It carried the Prime Minister and his chief colleagues, who were to wait in Kassa to greet the Regent when he entered at the head of his troops.

As part of the symbolism of the day we walked from the station to the house of the Archbishop. It was then very early morning. The Regent was not to make his entry until some hours later, but already every roof, every window, every street was lined with hoarse citizens—hoarse because many of them had been for twenty-four hours cheering the necessary advance guards who had entered the town the day before to make arrangements for that day's celebrations.

In the ancient house of the Archbishop was gathered an assembly as romantic as any I can conceive. High clerics, monks, Protestant clergy, the most famous statesmen of Hungary, the local notables who had endured twenty years of suppression, army officers, educationists, representative men and women from the surrounding rural districts filled the modest-sized rooms. After an all-night journey by road or rail, many were cold and hungry. They clustered round the medieval stoves and drank hot coffee, or stood in little groups on the balconies watching the packed streets below them. Some who had been under the oppression greeted friends and relatives from the Motherland whom they had not been able to see for twenty years. All were affected, as I was affected, by the sense of relief that at last so much suffering was ended.

At the appointed time the Prime Minister and his colleagues and their special guests walked from the Archbishop's house to a dais that had been raised on the border of the town, fronting the roadway along which the entering troops would march. It was chock-a-block with representative figures in contemporary Hungarian life. As we mounted this dais, the crowd cried again and again the names of those who had patiently worked and waited for this one glorious day. There were there, to receive these plaudits, not only those who had worked patiently in Budapest, but such figures as the heroic Count Johan Eszterhazy, whose youthful personality had led and comforted the Hungarian minority in Czecho-Slovakia during the later years of their captivity.

I had barely taken my seat on this dais when, to my surprise, and no little embarrassment, there arose a great cry of "Eljen the Lord—Eljen the Lord!" and I realised that I had been recognised by the excited crowds about us and was being acclaimed as if I, too, were an Hungarian hero.

Whatever I had done, or tried to do, for Hungary had been done because I was irked by the patent injustice which such a noble country suffered, and because I knew that in that injustice lay the seeds of future conflict in Europe. To be thus applauded on such a day, in such a place, made me feel again that I was being over-praised, and that my own country, with its traditional love of fair play, had been mistaken in not officially and diplomatically upholding the rights of this nation, which would have rewarded such friendship by a devotion beyond description.

We waited tensely—the notables on their dais, the populace at windows, on roof-tops, precariously poised on swaying trees, even more precariously clustered about chimney-stacks and every possible point of vantage. The streets of the twisted old walled town were one mass of waiting citizenry. And then—a roll of cheering that came like a wave from the rural outskirts, until it mounted to a deafening roar. For what? For the sight of a trim, upright man in a blue uniform, riding a white horse, and leading a winding column of khaki-clad troops? Yes— and for more than that. For the assurance that by his entry into the streets of the old Cathedral town of Kassa, the Regent was symbolising to the whole world that one million Hungarians were again free to enjoy the rights and privileges of their own nationality, and that the twenty-year-long night of oppression was over.

What followed was like some page from an old romance. The Regent, in his trim naval uniform, dismounted and addressed the delirious populace! The Prime Minister, Dr. Imrédy; the gallant Count Johan Eszterhazy; a woman of Kassa; a child of Kassa, the Mayor of that long-exiled people—each in turn greeted their Regent and publicly rejoiced in their new-found freedom.

The speeches ended, a procession formed, and with the Regent afoot we walked through the crowded streets to the old Cathedral. There came the most affecting scene of all. While the organ rolled out its *Te Deum*, we passed up the dim nave between two ranks of beautiful Hungarian girls in their folk dress—costumes that had been hidden during the twenty years when the dress was forbidden, dresses that had been handed down from grand-dam to grand-daughter for this day of freedom and rejoicing. As we moved towards the high altar between these symbolic lines, the great Cathedral echoing to the organ, these young maidens, born in exile, and their mothers and grandmothers behind them, wept with unrestrained emotion, nor were the eyes of soldiers, statesmen and diplomats dry. It was an interlude of indescribable emotion. These people were free again, free to pursue their own modes of life, free to carry forward the tradition of their own race, free to come and go without spies about their ways, free to talk to each other in their own language. Free!



And after, at a saluting base, the Regent reviewed the horse, foot and guns of the Hungarian Army, an army trained in secret for two years for this day, an army forbidden to Hungary by a treaty which permitted her hereditary enemies fully to rearm. There was something particularly significant about that long parade of men before the Regent, for it was a reminder that the Hungarians are among the most formidable fighting people in Europe, and that they had waited twenty years in heroic patience and fortitude to secure the rights which had now come to them through the pacific arbitrament of Vienna.

To mark my own satisfaction at this glorious end to the first phase of a long campaign, I did that day in Kassa two symbolic things—I laid a wreath on the tomb of Hungary’s great patriot, Rákóczi, and I presented the town with a flag of commemoration, for it was fitting that a representative of the British race, which has spoken and done so much for freedom, should by such tokens be associated in the memory of the Northern Hungarians with the restoration of their freedom.

## CHAPTER FIFTEEN

### “THE LITTLE FATHER OF HUNGARY”

**FROM** the tumult and shouting of the town of Kassa I went that night to the rustic quietude of Radvány, the ancestral seat of the Karolyi family, which the vicissitudes of the country has converted into a hotel, itself another poignant reminder of the way in which the social and economic fabric of the nation had been torn asunder by the talons of Trianon.

But the following morning provided a reminder more pleasant, a reminder of the tenacity and purpose of this noble race even in the deeps of adversity. On my way back to the capital I visited the Academy of Sárospatak— known, significantly, as “the English school “. This academy was founded as long ago as 1531. It suffered through the centuries the ups and downs of success and hardship which followed in the trail of the country’s political and military history. In the last war it gave no fewer than ninety dead to Hungary’s roll of honour.

In form rather like an English college, the Academy trains boys and girls both in learning and the humanities. I was welcomed with faultless orations in English from a boy and a girl student each in the mid-teens, and was shown by justifiably proud guides the old library and the extensive buildings and playing fields. The organisation and spirit of this school, set in the heart of rural Hungary, we should have some faint analogy to the restoration of Kassa.

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them had been for twenty-four hours cheering the necessary advance guards who had entered the town the day before to make arrangements for that day's celebrations.

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I had barely taken my seat on this dais when, to my surprise, and no little embarrassment, there arose a great cry of "Éljen the Lord—Éljen the Lord!" and I realised that I had been recognised by the excited crowds about us and was being acclaimed as if I, too, were an Hungarian hero.

Whatever I had done, or tried to do, for Hungary had been done because I was irked by the patent injustice which such a noble country suffered, and because I knew were a great lesson in the indomitable qualities of the people, pursuing and extending their national culture through poverty, revolution and depression.

As I re-entered Budapest, I felt that my eleven years of effort had been well crowned. Time, money and thought had been amply repaid by the sight of the rejoicing in which I had been summoned to participate.

But the kindness of my hosts was not even yet exhausted. I was still to be feted by the Municipality of Budapest and to be the recipient of a farewell banquet at the National Club.

The National Club of Budapest is like one of the English clubs of which Thackeray writes. One of its members was Edward VII. During the war, when hostilities forbade it to keep members who were of antagonistic countries, it outrivalled the Hungarian Government in chivalry to the British. Hungary refused to intern the British who were within its borders. The National Club, unable to retain them as members, discovered that there was no legal objection to their being retained as honorary members. Through war and defeat, through Bolshevism and invasion, the Club has remained as the political heart of Budapest, where, with no party distinction, the leaders of thought and action have met, free from the hindering publicity of a Parliamentary Chamber, to discuss the needs and aspirations of their country.

Baron Sigismund Perényi, in proposing my health that night, said some words which I shall always treasure, for they explain and interpret my attitude towards Hungary. He said: -

"I believe that in these few days you have spent in our midst, here and in Kassa, and everywhere, you have seen the heartiest demonstrations of our affectionate friendship. The source of this enthusiasm is the profound gratitude we all feel towards you, who were the first and powerful crusader for Hungarian justice. We know that it is not merely pity for a friendless and suffering nation which made you our friend. You convinced yourself that Hungarians are a brave, honourable, and loyal race with a glorious past, that Hungary deserved to live, that it had a claim to protection as it had a claim to justice, and that, having no responsibility for the world war, our only crime was that we were loyal to our allies— and surely that is rather a virtue. I want to tell

you that the Hungarian people do not call you friend, but *Rothermere-apó*, which means *father—and* that is much more. . . .“

Of the affection of his people, of which Baron Perényi spoke, I could not doubt, for as I walked away from the Cathedral of Kassa the peasants—calling me “The Little Father”—had knelt in the mud of the gutter to kiss my hand as I passed, and one day in Budapest, as I crossed, unheralded and almost by impulse, to greet the Archduke Joseph-Francis and his Archduchess and the members of the International Club, of which they are the patrons, some workmen trenching a road recognised me and saluted me with cheers and the ringing cry of “Éljen Rothermere!” and “Rothermere-apó.”

To be saluted, thus, as such rulers as the Tzars had been saluted, was for a Briton in a foreign land a strange experience. The phrases rang with the sincerity of simple, grateful people.

From his Serene Highness, the Regent, down to the humblest worker, my campaign for Hungary had received a reward of kindness greater than I could possibly believe it deserved. After the strenuous and crowded days of celebration and rejoicing which I have described, I tried to slip quietly away by taking a train that left soon after dawn on the Sunday morning. The courtesy of my hosts would not allow even an early hour after such tiring days to interfere with what they thought a fitting farewell. The station when I reached it was prepared for my departure. The Royal waiting-room was ready to receive me, and Major Stephen de Bérczy, Baron Perényi and others were there to wish me God-speed, while the leaders of some of the women’s movements were there in native dress to strew my way to the train with flowers.

I record this because it is so thoroughly typical of the thoroughness and sincerity of Hungarian hospitality.

As the train sped across Europe, my mind was filled with the problems which still confronted the country I had left.

The enormous impression made by the reception which had been given to me by everybody in Hungary, from the Regent down to the humblest peasant, had not been without reactions in certain official quarters. There was aroused in some minds the fear that the arbitrators of Vienna, Germany and Italy, might assume from the magnitude of my welcome that I was present in Budapest and at Kassa in some kind of diplomatic capacity, representing Great Britain.

In some official quarters in Budapest this caused perturbation. At their suggestion I sent to Herr Hitler and Signor Mussolini identical telegrams, in generous terms approved by my Hungarian hosts, designed to remove any misapprehension. In these telegrams I was able with truth to report that everywhere in Hungary where I had heard Germany and Italy mentioned I had seen every evidence of the national awareness of, and gratitude for, the aid of those nations in achieving the restoration of the North.

Although I had been saluted as “Little Father” by the people, my visit, as this book has told, was that of a private citizen, and not of a diplomatic representative.

The many speeches which I had had to deliver during my visit had not been easy to frame. The Northlands—the Uplands, as they are called in Budapest—had indeed been returned to Hungary, but there were still territories to which she had laid what I considered a just claim. It was stated that there were, for example, well over 2,000,000 Hungarians still subject to the alien rule of Rumania. Of these, 600,000 were just over the Trianon frontier, in land which was as much Hungary as Kent or Surrey is England. These, I well knew, constituted a problem very similar to that which had brought Herr Hitler to the rescue of the Germans in German Sudetenland. It was, indeed, so analogous that I had given to it the name of Hungary’s Sudetenland.

Although I felt that a day must come when these exiles, also, must be returned to their Motherland, and the territories restored, I had had to be very guarded in my references to this consummation of Hungary’s wider hope.

Until the restoration was made, I well knew that between Rumania and Hungary there could be no real peace or trust. To my mind Rumania would have been well advised to make a gesture of grace by surrendering these lands and people, thereby gaining a good neighbour, and immensely strengthening her internal situation by setting free the most dangerous fighting men within her frontiers.

As events moved from the date of my leaving Budapest to the time when this book is written, these Southlands have proved a constant source of worry to Europe. Throughout the winter of 1938 and the spring and summer of 1939 there have been incidents and clashes which have caused a perpetual expectation of conflict.

On my return home, the whole of my effort was directed to counselling my friends of the Revision League and others in Hungary to maintain that steady patience which had already resulted in the return of 1,000,000 northern Hungarians, and not to allow the open possession of a new and vigorous army to lead them into advocating the application of force to the problem.

Throughout my campaign for Hungary I had assured those who sought my advice or valued my help that the way to redress was through a reliance upon the European sense of justice. Hungary, I was convinced, had been left to suffer not through the wanton cruelty of Britain and the other major Powers, but because the justice of her claims and the terrible results of the Treaty of Trianon had not been properly appreciated. It could not, of course, be denied that the restoration of the Uplands by the arbitration of Vienna had only come about by Germany's threat to apply force to secure the return of her own Sudetenlanders. It was to Berlin and Rome that Hungary owed not only the award of Vienna, but the possibility of any such award being made. None the less, Hungary's role, I was convinced, was not that of a militant Power. For her to force a conflict would be to jeopardise the sympathy and understanding which over a decade of exposition and appeal had at last gained for her.

## CHAPTER SIXTEEN

### A CLASH OF LOYALTIES: THE CAMPAIGN GOES ON

FOR my part, I did not intend to relax my efforts merely because something of Hungary's claim had been granted. As will have been seen in earlier chapters, I was realist enough to know that the absolute *status quo ante* of 1914 could never be restored, and I realised that the Hungarian cry of *Mindent vissza!*—all back—did not mean this, but meant that all true Hungarians should be brought back.

I watched with apprehension the increasing strain between Hungary and Rumania, until, eight months after the entry into Kassa, the course of British foreign policy compelled me to write to my old and good friend Francis Herczeg in his capacity as President of the Revision League a letter which virtually ended my active participation in the campaign for the restoration of Hungary's lost lands.

7th July, 1939.

“MY DEAR EXCELLENCY,

“This morning's papers here are circulating the news that Hungary and Bulgaria may seek a joint settlement with Rumania of their territorial claims

“As you know, over the last thirteen years I have urged every effort should be made by peaceful means to get back from Rumania what, for want of a better

expression, I call Hungary's Sudetenland I have, as you know, actively associated myself with propaganda to secure this end.

“I was one of the many millions of people who blissfully thought that Munich opened an era of long and lasting appeasement. I was hopeful when Germany declared she had no further territorial claims in Europe and was willing to discuss any question that might arise at a Conference, that Rumania, in order to secure a loyal and helpful neighbour, might be induced to return the disputed territory to Hungary.

*“What I wish to make clear to you is that, as the British Government now has what is almost an alliance with Rumania, I cannot, so long as such an alliance has an existence, help Hungary in any further propaganda.*

“I believe that in time by peaceful means the justice of Hungary’s claim for the return of the Rumanian territory in dispute will be wholly recognised.

I do therefore hope that every influence will be brought to bear against any armed intervention. Armed intervention just now might lead to a great war. I cannot endure the thought that the present generation of young Europeans might have such an experience of a blood bath—the Great War—as the previous generation endured.

“Yours very faithfully,

“ROTHERMERE”

I had come to a clash of loyalties. It has been well said that the real problems of life do not arise from a choice between right and wrong, but from a choice between two rights. My sympathy for Hungary and my overwhelming desire to see her injustices redressed and her tortured people made free again from their agony had not abated. But, as a British subject, I could not run counter to the considered policy of my Government, whether I approved it or not. If Great Britain had established an almost paternal relationship to Rumania, it was no longer possible for me even to seem to condone—much less to encourage—a neighbour of Rumania to action against her.

In the early days of my support for treaty revision for Hungary I had realised that the campaign would be no short one. I had often speculated on what would be its end. Here I was faced with the knowledge that, having seen its partial triumph, I was no longer—for a time, at any rate—able to participate in it. But I could, and do, count myself fortunate that I had been able to return to Budapest to the sound of those joy-bells that I had always said would some day ring from the heights where stands the old Coronation Church.

But, although my part in the campaign is, for the time being, ended, the campaign goes on. It is unthinkable that a proud people, with a magnificent record of loyalty and gallantry, should ever rest content while millions of their fellow-citizens remain in political captivity just beyond frontiers arbitrarily drawn by what they rightly consider an unjust treaty.

It is not only for the sake of Hungary, but for the sake of Europe, that the large Magyar minorities should be freed by their present rulers, and that they and their lands should be returned to Hungary. If justice did not dictate this course, expediency would.

Hungary is now a nation with 11,000,000 people. They are of the finest stock in the world. By custom and habit, they are closely allied to the British. They are the only race in Central Europe that has maintained, through good and evil, the British Parliamentary system unimpaired, which is an indication that their social and political ideals are exactly those which Britain has rearmend herself to protect. They have suffered and defeated that Bolshevist rule which is the worst menace to our own institutions. As military allies they are immensely formidable. To-day, Hungary has an army of 800,000 men, heavily armed. To me it has always seemed incredible that Great Britain has not taken every pains to succour and protect this nation in its undeserved adversity. By so doing the British ideals would have been upheld, and a gallant and worthy friend secured. I have described, even at the risk of seeming egotistic, the affection and gratitude which were shown to me, as a solitary Briton trying to help the Hungarian cause. Such affection and gratitude would have been poured out in equal measure to the British Commonwealth had it been alert to detect injustice and swift to protest against it on Hungary’s behalf.

That we have chosen, for reasons that seem adequate to Mr. Chamberlain’s Cabinet, to give our friendship to Rumania, does not prohibit—indeed, it prompts—the use of our good offices in trying to have restored to Hungary those hundreds of thousands of citizens and those Hungarian acres which Rumania holds almost by a mere accident of treaty-making, and to her own constant discomfort and anxiety.

At the time of Munich I urged repeatedly that Britain had given self-government to Southern Ireland when the people involved were fewer than the German community in Sudetenland. I urged the same argument about Hungary's Sudetenland.

It is economically necessary to Hungary that she should be friendly with Germany, for the new Germany takes some 60 per cent. of her produce. After the arbitration of Vienna she has, too, every reason to be politically grateful to the Reich. But this does not mean that Hungary and Britain are debarred from economic and political friendship. Far from it! Those who would divide Europe into two camps by allotting friendships in such a way are defeatists.

If an amicable adjustment of Hungary's claims could be devised, with the good-will of Rumania, the present suspicions and hatreds which fret Central Europe would be largely dissolved. In justice for Hungary, in short, there lies the key to a far wider pacification.

I believed this when, in 1927, I first raised my voice in Hungary's cause; I believe it even more firmly now.

## POSTSCRIPTS

MY campaign for Hungary, started twelve years ago, and my campaign for British rearmament, which I began in 1933, have both, after some years of apparently fruitless effort, been rewarded by action and result.

These two campaigns ran parallel, until, as I have told in this book, they converged at Munich.

\* \* \* \* \*

In 1927 it was obvious to me that whatever excuse or reason there might have been for the stringency of the Treaty of Versailles, there was neither excuse nor reason for the brutal and provocative clauses of the Treaty of Trianon.

In both Treaties Britain—with her Allies—had inaugurated a new set of international relationships fraught with danger. At the same time she had—in what now seems almost fatal chivalry—faithfully implemented the treaty clauses and had almost completely disarmed herself.

Hungary, with rare patience, and despite her fighting qualities, had endured her wrongs while pleading vainly for redress.

Germany, under the National-Socialists, would, I knew, not be so patient.

Either the crying mistakes of the Peace Treaties must be amended, or those who refused amendment must be strong enough to defend themselves against the inevitable revolt of the sufferers.

This was the logic behind my two campaigns.

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The motive behind my two campaigns was simple. It had nothing whatever to do with financial loss or gain. It had nothing to do with newspaper circulations. It had nothing to do with my opinion about the contemporary Administration.

It was rooted in my political conviction that one thing, above all other things, was needed for Britain.

In politics I am a fervent and realistic pacifist.

Having, with all my generation, suffered the needless agonies of the last war; having seen the flower of the generation younger than mine killed, mutilated, and thwarted by four years of insensate slaughter; having seen the progress of mankind delayed and diverted by the creation of new national animosities, I know that peace is the greatest aim to which any statesman or citizen can direct his energy and apply his powers.

It was primarily because peace was our need that I flung myself into the effort to have the wrongs of Hungary redressed and into the slightly later effort to have Britain armed, for an unarmed Britain was a standing invitation to attack.

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Men differ about the root causes of war. Belloc and his school say that fundamentally all wars are religious. Marx and his disciples declare that fundamentally all wars are economic.

I have often thought that not Religion and not Materialism is the fecund father of war—but the fetish' of "Prestige".

In the Western world we are apt to laugh at the Orientals for their extreme anxiety about "face" and "saving face". But our own pernicky anxiety about national Prestige is in no way different.

I would not be misunderstood. National prestige of the right kind is something for which men should always be ready to fight and suffer. It would be better for Britain to perish utterly in the flames and fury of a last terrible Armageddon than for Britons to exist miserably as helots.

But false "prestige" is the enemy. There is no loss of true prestige in admitting error and making amends. There is no loss of true prestige in making the first approach. There is certainly no loss of true prestige in recognising facts.

\* \* \* \* \*

When the National-Socialists took power in Germany in January 1933 I realised that the political world of Europe had changed.

A Germany under such young and virile leadership would not be content to endure much longer what it considered the wrongs and outrages of Versailles. It would not remain unarmed, since the forced disarmament of Germany had not been followed by the promised voluntary disarmament of the other Powers.

\* \* \* \* \*

The British Government showed no signs of being aware of the significance of the change in Germany. I waited for some months, and then published, in 1933, the first of my rearmament articles "We Need 5,000 War 'Planes.'"

\* \* \* \* \*

It will not be disputed, looking back over the events of the past two years, that had my plea for 5,000 'planes been immediately heeded, the history of the world would have been changed, for the better.

The abandonment of the obligations of Versailles by Germany would almost certainly have been achieved by multilateral denunciation.

There would have come into being no Axis as we know it, for Italy would never have been forced out of her alliance with Britain.

Had a well-armed Britain existed in the formative years of Germany—and had there been no display in 1935 of British impotence—it is extremely unlikely that the Sino-Japanese war of 1937 would have developed. Germany would not have been driven out of the League, and Germany, Italy, France, and

Britain would have formed a Western combination powerful enough to deter Japan from strong action in the East.

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Part of the fault in British policy was that it was largely conducted and commented upon in Parliament and Press by men *who had never been to see things for themselves*.

The story of my Hungarian campaign, as told in this book, has shown, that it was not possible even in 1927 to talk to Hungarians and to see their situation without realising that their wrongs were real wrongs, and not figments of the heated imagination of a defeated people.

In the years of inflation in Germany it was not possible to doubt, if one visited the country, that the penalties of Versailles were too rigorous to be for ever endured. After the accession to the Chancellorship of Herr Hitler it was not possible, if one went to Germany, to doubt the determination of the new regime to bring the nation back to the equality of status with its neighbours it had held in 1914.

How many of the most vocal of British commentators, and how many question-asking, Parliamentarians, had visited Germany in either phase?

\* \* \* \* \*

Had the few hours journey to Germany, or the one-day journey to Hungary, been more frequently taken after the signing of the peace treaties by statesmen and editors, Britain's apparent blindness to the suffering and danger of the situation which the high tempers of 1918—20 had created would not long have persisted.

There would have been an early realisation that either redress and readjustment must come by the good will of the ex-Allies, or it would come by the revival of German will and power.

There would certainly have been a more sympathetic attitude towards the men who had undertaken the task of restoring their fellow-citizens from the slough of despair into which a too-harsh penalty for defeat had flung them.

\* \* \* \* \*

The sufferings and dissatisfactions of the transferred minorities in Europe have been, and remain, such potent sources of trouble that British foreign policy should surely be directed to their redress

Germany's Sudetenland brought us within sight of conflict at the time of Munich. Danzig is now a danger. When the Danzig question is settled, there will remain the question of Hungary's minority in Rumania. This will be followed in time by similar questions. Relief for the Bulgarian and other minorities must in turn become pressing demands.

Each one of these questions makes for tension. Tension at any moment may lead to turmoil—and to that war which all sane-minded statesmen are striving their utmost to avoid. As these problems have some day to be faced—why not now?

\* \* \* \* \*

In the body of this book I have not dealt with the incident of the march on Prague, for it was not germane to my story of Hungary. That is an episode which undoubtedly changed the course of history. When Mr. Chamberlain on September 28th, 1938, told the House of Commons of his visit to Godesberg he said: -

“(Herr Hitler) will join the international guarantee of the remainder of Czecho-Slovakia once the minorities questions are settled . . . and *I have no hesitation in saying, after the*



*personal contact I had with Herr Hitler, that I believe he means what he says when he states that.*  
...“

There can be no question that Mr. Chamberlain was impressed with the sincerity of Herr Hitler's statement that Sudetenland would, be Germany's last territorial claim in Europe. So were the members of his Cabinet. So too was M. Flandin, the ex-premier of France, one of his country's elder statesmen, who sent a telegram of congratulation to Herr Hitler. So, too, were millions of people up and down the world.

\* \* \* \* \*

In my own mind I had always regarded Herr Hitler as one who—once he had restored Germany to her old status—would find his true fulfilment, and his historical place, as one of the world's greatest sociological reformers. For that role and task, I know, his capacity for achievement is enormous.

In the physical rebuilding of Germany's ancient cities, in the establishment of a hardy race well housed and nurtured in a revived national culture, a leader of his qualities might well find his truest monument. He would live in history as the great exemplar to all who care for the true welfare of the people.

It was in that sphere I thought his star would shine the brightest.

\* \* \* \* \*

I was in Johannesburg when the news of Prague broke. To me it came almost as a personal blow, because, after Munich, as I have stated, I felt a hundred per cent, sure that all future developments on the Continent of Europe would be conducted without the application of force. I fully believed in the sincerity of what was the professed policy of the German Government—adjustment without bloodshed. I was wrong.

\* \* \* \* \*

I thought Munich had once more re-established the conference table at which all questions could be thrashed out by the four Powers.

I had always hoped that as time wore on there would be a slowing down, and then a cessation of the furious Press wars between the Democratic and Totalitarian States.

I had always hoped that in newspaper and public statements of all kinds there would be more butter and fewer guns than have distinguished these controversies during the last three years. I am still hoping such will be the case.

When once we reach that stage, we shall find ourselves in much smoother waters than at present.

\* \* \* \* \*

I end this postscript to the story of my Hungarian campaign at a moment when the relations of Europe are again troubled.

At Kassa I saw the joy of people—simple, ordinary, work-a-day people—released from an alien tyranny.

While men and women are compelled to endure such tyranny, in punishment of a fault for which they had no responsibility, the fault of 1914—18, international relations must be strained.

To me the lesson of my long effort in aid of Hungary, and the lesson of Munich, is this—that wrongs can be righted without war.

War can only produce a fresh crop of wrongs and injustice.

\* \* \* \* \*

This I maintained when Britain had disarmed, and war might have meant her ruin. A Britain more heavily armed than she is at present must be an immense factor in the cause of peace.

There is no reason for conflict': there is overwhelming reason for conciliation and conference. I still believe that conciliation and conference will prevail

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But Britain can never again afford to present herself in conference as a virtually unarmed Power. Rearmament must go on. It is still our prime necessity.

Britain needs 20,000 war planes always in immediate readiness for action. At sea she needs a modern fleet so strong that, while all European waters are adequately guarded, a fleet can be dispatched to the Far East of such a size and of such power that Tokyo will realise that there is a limit to the affronts and insults which Britain will tolerate.

\* \* \* \* \*

I am, I repeat, a pacifist, but I am realist enough to realise that a Britain unarmed invites attack from those who envy her her great possessions, and that a Britain which can be browbeaten is a factor in international affairs making for assault.

The British Empire represents the greatest civilising power the world has ever known. The qualities which made it persist in our people.

We cannot afford ever again to place it in jeopardy.

*July 10th, 1939.*

## AFTERWORD

THIS book was prepared for the September publication season of 1939. While it was still in the Press, the action of Germany in attacking Poland brought Britain into war.

Mr. Chamberlain and all those who worked honestly and strenuously for better relations with Germany - of whom I was one—insisted always that such efforts must be accompanied by vigorous rearmament.

Had my own original plea of six years ago for an immediate 5000 fighting 'planes been listened to, there would today have been no Nazism as we know it.

There is, however, no use in bewailing the tardiness of British rearmament, which, when it was eventually embarked upon, proceeded with almost miraculous speed.

\* \* \* \* \*

Britain has entered upon the new war with a united people, a Prime Minister in whom all trust, a patriotic Opposition, and a cause which we all know and feel to be right.

To the cause of human liberty and freedom every Briton today is devoted.

This war will be won in the workshops. It knows no civilians; all are in the fighting line.

The resources of Britain and Prance are enormous. Their tenacity of character and their power of endurance have been well proved in the past, and will not fail now.

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Whatever sacrifices may be demanded of us, we can look forward with stout hearts and good consciences.

Sacrifices there must be, but as long as all suffer equally in a common cause, no sacrifice will be grudged. To the principle of equality of sacrifice Sir John Simon in his forthcoming Budget will no doubt give first consideration.

\* \* \* \* \*

With a united people behind a strong and resolute Government everything is possible. The addition of Mr. Winston Churchill to the War Cabinet is worth a squadron of battleships to our war effort. His inclusion is a sign to the world that the war will be fought with every ounce of determination that our people possess.

\* \* \* \* \*

In such a conviction of rightness the war has begun. It would be unwise if at this time we laid down conditions on which peace will eventually be made. The whole prospect will be changed before even a year of hostilities is over. But one thing we can determine: that not again will Britain consent to hasty and ill-informed peace treaties that themselves contain the seeds of new wars, as Versailles and Trianon contained the seeds of this war.

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In this book, and the postscripts to it written in July, I have shown the strong and persistent efforts I made to have removed one set of injustices from Europe and to have Britain equipped against any assault upon her, or her principles) by antagonist Powers.

I have paid tribute to the magnificent work of Mr. Chamberlain at Munich in securing an invaluable year for us in which to further our preparations.

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By her departure from her avowed policy of adjustment without bloodshed, Germany has lost the sympathy of the whole world. Even on the very brink of war I trusted that the method of conference and conciliation would prevail. It has not prevailed. With Mr. Chamberlain, I feel that all that I have cherished and worked for has crashed to the ground—peace and the security of the race against the attacks of physical force.

There remains for us now only one purpose. It is, “with malice towards none and charity to all,” to rebuild a world in which justice shall prevail and tyranny be no more.

To that end the British and their allies are implacably dedicated. At such a time I allow this book to go forward in the hope that from one lesson of the past we may learn wisdom for the future.



**KEY**

- Hungary under the Treaty of Trianon*..... 
- Area restored to Hungary by the Vienna Arbitration, November 1938*..... 

IN JUNE, 1927, LORD ROTHERMERE PUBLISHED IN THE DAILY MAIL A MAP DEPICTING HIS PROPOSAL FOR A RECTIFICATION OF THE FRONTIER BETWEEN HUNGARY AND CZECHO-SLOVAKIA. ABOVE IS ILLUSTRATED THE CLOSE RESEMBLANCE BETWEEN THE "ROTHERMERE LINE", AS IT BECAME KNOWN IN HUNGARY, AND THE FRONTIER ACTUALLY DRAWN MORE THAN ELEVEN YEARS LATER AT THE VIENNA ARBITRATION ON NOVEMBER 2, 1938.