

THE DANUBE BASIN PROBLEM

by

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It is gradually becoming a commonplace in European publicistic that the peace treaties which ended the Great War created an intolerable situation in the Danube Basin. The guarantee of equilibrium in economic, military and political respects alike afforded by the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy was abolished by those treaties of peace; the place of the ancient Habsburg Monarchy was taken by small States whose nationalist and exclusive policy, besides involving economic decline, contains in it the germs of eternal conflicts affecting the whole territory of that Monarchy and threatens to bring about a state of disunion and to upset the balance of Europe. The British public was made familiar with the problem of the Danube Basin and with the undivided attitude of the public opinion of Hungary by a series of addresses on the subject delivered a few years ago by Count Stephen Bethlen, who was Prime Minister of Hungary for more than ten years. So, while calling the attention of our readers to those addresses, which have appeared in book form too,¹ we cannot do better on the present occasion than quote by way of introduction to our present article the pregnant description of the situation given by Count Bethlen in a passage briefly characterising to the full past and present. When speaking of the Succession States, Count Stephen Bethlen said: —

"Each of them needs the operating knife of the surgeon, which alone will be able to restore them to vitality and measure that some impartial and educative power shall keep their unbridled ambitions within the proper limits in order to prevent them from doing harm to themselves and — what is worse — to other peoples.

"This power was represented in the past by the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, and it would be impossible to deny — whatever our opinion be in judging its policy now — that all these small races as well as the whole of Europe profited a great deal by the rôle the Monarchy played in this part of the world.

"Its very existence prevented the minor disputes between the various races living in the Danube Basin from becoming more than domestic quarrels and jeopardising the peace of Europe. It assured the position and superior importance of a Great Power to the interests of all those small races whose voice would otherwise have had no weight at all in the concert of the European States. By its military power it safeguarded their security

— much more efficiently than they themselves could have ever done separately — and, finally, it united them into one great economic system which gave a firm basis to the economic life of them all.

"To-day all this belongs to the past. The antagonisms of the small races, far from being limited in importance to tiny domestic disputes, have developed into European problems. The small peoples became independent, but they have to pay heavily for this independence since their voice is of but slight weight among the great nations of Europe and the safeguarding of their security involves extraordinary efforts bearing heavily upon their States Budgets. But their greatest trouble is that in place of an economic unit with a population of 50 millions, within which both the production and the market for the output of each of these nations had been assured for centuries back, now quite a number of tiny national customs territories have been created all of whom lack either raw material necessary for production or a market for the latter, and very often even the very earning opportunities for their population. I make bold to state that — quite apart from the world crisis — all over this territory the conditions and the standard of life of the peoples, as well as their civilisation in general, show a most striking decline if compared with the pre-war situation. It goes without saying that these conditions contribute a great deal to making circumstances even worse: political and racial discontent is increasing as well as the struggle for life which each race has to carry on against all other races, both within the several States and in the neighbouring countries.

"We seem to have arrived at a point where the rivalry of the great nations of Europe is asserting itself with a view to securing political influence over the peoples of the Danube Basin. The former position of the Monarchy as a Great Power successfully withstood this rivalry and — although there were cases when one or the other of the Slav races living within the Austro-Hungarian Empire was trying for support from Russia in its political ambitions, or even may be the Serbs of the southern regions were leering at Serbia, and the Rumanians at Rumania beyond the frontiers — the power inherent in the Monarchy was always sufficient, on the whole, to keep aloof all illegitimate interference with the affairs of the peoples. Today the nations of the Danube Basin are being reduced to the standard of those pre-war Balkan States where the emulation of Russia, the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and Italy, each intent intensifying their influence and upon realising their political aims, had in the past so often kindled conflagrations between the peoples or where, on the other hand, some of these small peoples contrived from time to time to secure the interest of one or the other of the Great Powers willing to help them in their selfish aims, which of course, invariably led up to complications of international importance.

"A similar and no less fatal process was started after the war by the so-called Little Entente treaty and by the alliance between this Little Entente and France. Is it not strange that all this should be due to that same Great Power whose populations were advocating the new

¹ *Bethlen, Stephen Count: "The Treaty of Trianon and European Peace"* (London, 1934. Longman, Green & Co.).

organisation of peace based upon the principles of justice?"

The statements made by Count Bethlen could safely be endorsed today by every person engaged in political life who is at all familiar with the Central European questions. As is only natural, the peoples affected by this situation either politically or economically are not content to merely establish the facts, but have set out to find a remedy. This was the origin of all those conceptions originating from the brains of theoreticians of diverse nationality aiming at a reorganisation of the Danube Basin which would attempt to discover the theoretical conditions essential to the construction of a more virile Central Europe.

Apart from deviations in details of a quite insignificant character, these conceptions may be divided into four general types, — the so-called "New Hungary", "Danube Confederation", "Zwischeneuropa" ("Mid-Europe") and "Habsburg Restoration" types. All four types — with each of which we shall deal separately below — rest primarily upon economic considerations and aim at the construction of a vast economic territory. At the same time, however, all four types fully realise the dominant role of the political "rocks of offence" which appear to impede a far-reaching association of nations of the kind. One of the chief "rocks of offence" in this category is the "nationality question". For, as is well known, the Habsburg Monarchy was not a homogeneous national State like England or France. There were some ten different "nationalities" living in it — nationalities large and small; and for that reason it was usually referred to as the classical example of a so-called "nationality State". With the appearance of nationalism as a political creed, in the nineteenth century the "nationality principle" began to make rapid headway in politics, the establishment of the unity of Germany and Italy and of the status as independent States of the small Balkan countries proving that principle to be one of the most important history-making factors of the new age. It was only after the dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy — or rather as a consequence of that dissolution — that people began to realise that the assertion of the nationality principle had its disadvantages too. The catchword employed to ensure the dismemberment of that Monarchy was that its peoples were oppressed and that they were entitled to form independent States. Those who urged the destruction of the "nationality" States and proclaimed that the only criterion for the formation of a State was a uniformity of language and that only those States could be sound which were built on the foundations of a homogeneous population, were by the peace treaties given unrestricted possibilities of enforcing their ideas. But it transpired at once that the nationality principle as sole State-forming factor had proved a fiasco; for the purpose of ensuring their so-called virility the new States claimed territories to which they were not entitled at all on ethnographical grounds and which they annexed by the aid of pseudo-historical, strategical and economic arguments, the annexation of these territories converting them too

— the would-be "national" States — into new nationality States. The former unified Danube Basin thus became occupied by a mosaic of tiny nationality "Statelets" the inner life of which is full of unrest due to racial, cultural and social antagonisms, their economic functioning (owing to the innumerable new customs barriers, to the reciprocal policy of isolation, to the forced increase of armaments beyond their capacity which is due to the tension prevailing at home and in their international relations) being subject to impediments and continuously threatening catastrophe.

The result is that the conceptions relating to the re-construction of the Danube Basin which are serious and well thought out all take into consideration the national principle as being today indubitably a very powerful factor to move the masses, but reject the idea of that principle being the only State-forming force and suggest solutions calculated to establish a harmony between the nationality principle and the other State-forming forces (geographical, economic, historical, cultural, religious forces). For that reason each of the conceptions proclaim a solution of the nationality question on an autonomist-federative basis within a large unit which they deem it necessary to create in harmony with the economic, geographical, historical and cultural postulates. On these two principles all types of conceptions alike agree; in practice, however, each of the conceptions offers a different idea of the re-construction of Central Europe in keeping with its author's principles and sentiments and probably with review in turn — at least cursively — the four main types of the Danube Basin conceptions referred to above.

"New Hungary".

The "New Hungary" theory was explained by Ladislav Ottlik in a series of articles published in the "Magyar Szemle" ("Hungarian Review"). His idea is that we ought to return to the two fundamental conceptions of the older Hungarian civilisation and of "Pax Hungarica". The first is the idea of the primacy of space, which teaches us that the starting point must be the elementary fact of the community of destiny of the peoples belonging to one and the same geo-economic space: the second is the idea of equal liberty for all the peoples which are thus interdependent — to use the words of the old Hungarian legal precept "*una eademque libertas*". Ottlik is of opinion that in the "Pax Hungarica" conception characteristic of pre-War

"It is very desirable that the immense importance of Article XIX should once more be emphasized and every means considered for facilitating its application. It is the first business of the League to provide for peaceful change as an alternative to war. No society can ever be entirely stationary; and yet Article XIX, which was framed for the purpose of making peaceful change possible, has never been allowed to operate."

(The Times, September 21, 1936.)

Greater Hungary which has been defined in outline above there is nothing that could not be extended — with due regard for its fundamental principles — to the whole Danube Basin. We see the concrete ambitions of a practical politician in the conception put forward by Count Stephen Bethlen, who in point of principle adopts an attitude absolutely identical with that adopted by Ottlik, in the following words: —

"What the racial principle really demands is not that every race, be it ever so small, must form a separate State, but that it should enjoy self-government in territories where the bulk of the population belongs to a certain different nation; that self-government should enable them to decide for themselves all questions vital to the preservation of their national character... that within the organisation of a greater State they should be able to assert an influence corresponding to their racial importance.

"On the other hand, in considering the question of which would be the races with whom they would wish to live in community, from the moment that the local autonomy is unassailably safeguarded no great importance need be attached to the other races speaking languages derived from a common root in ages past. What is of importance is that economic interests of paramount advantage link them together; that their community should be a voluntary union based upon natural geographical conditions, upon common historic traditions and a common view of life."

The New Hungary of the Danube Basin re-adjusted on the basis of these fundamental principles — Count Bethlen is concerned only with the Hungarian sector of the Danube question — would present the following aspect: — The Slovaks and Ruthenians would be given full autonomy and the right to decide for themselves — under international supervision — which State they wish to belong to. The "Bácska" and Banate districts — in which there is no racial element, either Magyar or German or Serbian or Croatian or Rumanian, constituting an indisputable majority — would also decide their future in this way. In the case of Transylvania, annexed to Rumania, a province which, though the Rumanian element does constitute a slight majority as against the Magyar and German minorities, for the whole long period of the Turkish occupation of Hungary lived an independent State life of its own and as such was of Hungarian (Magyar) character and acted as the upholder of the idea of Hungarian independence and sovereignty, Stephen Bethlen proposes the restoration of its original independence — the establishment of an independent Transylvania belonging neither to Hungary nor to Rumania.

The "Danube Confederation" Conception.

As contrasted with the "New Hungary" conception, which — as pointed out above — has been elaborated concretely, the "Danube Confederation" theory is far less definite in its outlines, the details varying according to the interests represented by the particular propagator. Its origin dates back as far as the middle of the nineteenth century; it was first suggested by C. Fr. Henningsen, according to whose scheme the confederation was to include Hungary, Serbia, Rumania, Croatia and Poland. On the basis of this conception M. Balescu, a Rumanian emigré, elaborated a less extensive scheme to include

Hungary, Serbia and Rumania (1850). Under this scheme the Confederate Danube States was to be a union including Hungary, Rumania and South Slavia (Yugoslavia), the "nationality" regions of Hungary to be annexed on the majority principle to the other two States to be formed. The common affairs of the Union (Federation) were to be managed by a Parliament of 150 Members (50 from each country) and by a Government consisting of three common Ministers (War, Foreign Affairs, Commerce and Communications). Balescu submitted his scheme to Louis Kossuth, then in exile, who rejected it and declared that he approved of the "nationalities" being given the right of unrestricted social organisation within the boundaries of historical Hungary and would in addition be prepared even to grant the Saxons, Rumanians and "Széklers" territorial autonomy in Transylvania, but insisted upon the unity of Hungary. As a consequence the plan of an agreement was frustrated. In 1862 the Milan "Alleanza" published under the name of Kossuth a so-called "Danube Confederation" scheme which, taking Switzerland as its model, suggested the establishment of a State Federation to include Hungary, Transylvania, Rumania, Croatia and Serbia. The scheme proposed in respect of Transylvania that a general suffrage of the people should be taken to decide whether that province should belong to Hungary or should be taken an independent State? It was however stipulated unconditionally that it should remain in personal union with Hungary. The part of the scheme relating to Transylvania was repudiated by Kossuth. In a "Danube Confederation" of the kind suggested the Hungarians would have certainly occupied a position differing entirely from the position they would occupy today, for instance, in a similar State Federation based on the *status quo*. The Danube Confederation conceived by Kossuth foresaw a Hungary which had shaken off the Austrian yoke and was destined to play the leading role in the Danube Basin, — a Hungary which was to gather round her the small peoples living in that basin which were still groaning under the Turkish yoke (the population of the Serbia of those days, even if we include Montenegro, must have been less than 3 millions) and was far in advance of those peoples in numbers, in historical traditions, in international prestige, in the capacity to organise state life and in cultural progress. In this group of States which was destined to ensure the balance as against the German and Russian predominance, the leading role would indubitably have been in the hands of Hungary.

This is not the case, however, with those "Danube Confederation" schemes which have kept cropping up since the Great War and have since 1920 been constantly increasing in number in the writings of the French publicists who treat Central European questions — evidently inspired from Prague. According to the ideas bruited by Czech and Rumanian publicists and politicians the establishment of a State Federation of the kind is extremely desirable, — though naturally only on the basis of the territorial *status quo* of today. In the now familiar words of Titulescu, what is need-

ed is not a change of frontiers but a pacification, a "rendering invisible" of those frontiers. These publicists and politicians of a Danube Confederation to be absorbed in the Little Entente — an alliance of a purely military character organised primarily as an offensive weapon against Hungary —, that being effected by the two disarmed and dismembered States, Austria and Hungary, which have been deprived of every right of initiative, joining that alliance, their inferiority being thereby perpetuated: while the Danube Confederation would thus be under the control of the new Triple Alliance of the Little Entente States. It is doubtful, however, whether these "peaceful" attempts at a *rapprochement* dangled so temptingly before the eyes of Austrians and Hungarians are really seriously meant despite the alluring perspective offered to the Little Entente; for there are many the other side of the frontiers who fear that in the event of the establishment of a State Federation even of the kind described above the restoration of unrestricted economic trade and intellectual intercourse will lead to a considerable increase in the importance of the Hungarians due to the central position of the latter, and are afraid further that those nationalities of the Succession States which, though on paper figuring as "State-forming factors", are in reality being prevented from living their nationality life, — the Slovaks, Ruthenians, Croatsians, etc. —, which even today betray strong magyarophile tendencies or a desire to achieve independence respectively, — many be enabled to enhance their efforts to emancipate themselves from the Little Entente yoke. These considerations impel us to regard it as more probable that talk of co-operation launched periodically by the Little Entente — or rather by other quarters inspired by and materially supported by the Little Entente — is not evidence of any serious intentions — even on the basis of the *status quo* —, and that it is merely political "stumping", — serving on the one hand to convince international public opinion, which is so poorly informed in such matters, of the sincerity of the "pacifist" longings of the Little Entente, and on the other hand to secure the goodwill of the Austrian and Hungarian public.

In this connection we would note that a few years back — at a time, it is true, when the balance of forces was far more in favour of the Little Entente — publicists were treated (mainly from Czech sources) to "solutions" of the Austrian and Hungarian questions written in a far different tone and far less conciliatory character, — the scheme for the demarcation of a Czech-Yugoslav "corridor" surrounding the whole of Hungary, the suggestion of the partition of the whole of Austria and Hungary, the idea of forcing Austria to join the Little Entente and thus of completely isolating Hungary, etc., etc. That these "schemes" were not merely *ballons d'essai*, is shown by the bloody events that took place in Austria in February, 1934, when Chancellor Dollfuss was only able after a bitter struggle to suppress the insurrection of the Czechophile Republican Guards who were provided with Czech ammunition. According to the official *communiqué* the fight cost the troops engaged in main-

taining public order 421 casualties (102 killed and 319 wounded), the losses of the Social-Democrat Guards having been 137 killed and 339 wounded.

"Zwischeneuropa" (Mid-Europe).

Although in externals resembling the conceptions included in the "Danube Confederation" schemes, there is a complete difference in essentials in the German conceptions that may be grouped under the heading of "Zwischeneuropa". So far as we know, the most exhaustive and the most interesting explanation of these conceptions is that given by Giselher Wirsing,² Editor of the "Tat" and one of the most eminent members of the younger generation of German publicists. The main points in the conception in question may be summed up as follows: — the Greater Germany to be brought into being as a consequence of the "Anschluss" of Austria will on the basis of geopolitico-economic expediency establish a big State Federation to include the peoples of the Danube Basin, here called the "Südostraum" (South East). Neither of these peoples would be leaders or led; as contrasted with the principle of quantity, which may be regarded as exploded, the principle of quality would be enforced; the majority would not oppress the minority: on the other hand, of the peoples all of equal rank and equal rights that people would obtain the leading role which was shown by its capacities and its will-power to be predestined to play that role. This would be the Reich of the future: it would comprise — apart from Greater Germany — the following States of the "Zwischeneuropa" lying between East and West which forms a *frontier region*, — Esthonia, Lettland, Lithuania, Poland, Czecho-Slovakia, Hungary, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and Rumania (Greece, being already a Mediterranean State, and Turkey, an Asiatic Power, would not be bound by any close ties to the new State Federation and would therefore not be included in that Federation). The basis of co-operation within the Federation would be federalism. This German Imperial conception (the "Reichsidee") is very popular with a section of the younger generation of the Germans of Germany and among the German minorities of the Succession States too, in particular in Czecho-Slovakia, where the German minority had a periodical — "Der Weg" — of its own. Until the editors were indicted for treason, — it had many adherents.

The "Habsburg Restoration" Conception.

The German "Reichsidee" is diametrically opposed in principle to the conception behind the "legitimism" which has for its aims the restoration of the House of Habsburg. The programme of this movement makes its appearance indeed — for tactical reasons — in various guises, — sometimes as the domestic concern of Austria, at other times as a "dualism" of Austria and Dismembered Hun-

² In his work entitled "Zwischeneuropa und die deutsche Zukunft" (Jena, Diederichs Verlag). Naumann's "Mitteleuropa" — a book which created a great stir during the Great War — today possesses only a historical importance.

gary, or as a "trialism" of Austria, Hungary and Bohemia under Habsburg rule, or as a State Federation of Austria, Hungary, Bohemia, Croatia, Slovakia and Transylvania, — or again in a more romantic form extending the scheme to Catholic Bavaria: but the pivot of all the suggestions is undoubtedly the restoration of the whole Habsburg Monarchy of former times subject to the stipulation of absolute equality for all the racial units living in that Monarchy. Of all the various conceptions so far broached this is the only one to stress the Catholic character of the peoples it desires to unite.

This conception takes into account only those peoples which belong to the Western cultural community, — the Monarchy which it proposes stretching eastwards only as far as the crest of the Carpathians and to the Lower Danube — i. e. to the frontiers of Historical Hungary —, and south-eastwards as far as the Croatian seaboard. The scheme leaves entirely out of account the peoples living to the east and south of these frontiers — the Balkan peoples proper — as representing a world quite foreign to us the prospects of the organic incorporation of which in the Latin culture of the West are not very encouraging. An interesting corollary to the original conception is the idea broached in certain legitimist quarters that this Catholic Danube Habsburg Monarchy should enter into a close alliance on the north-east with Poland, that country adjoining the Hungarian frontier which is also Catholic in character, and on the south with Italy — also a Catholic country —, co-operating with these countries to form a firm block ensuring the maintenance of peace which would be strong enough to guarantee the free development of the peoples of the Danube Basin and to *ab ovo* to check all endeavours to secure a hegemony coming from without — serving in particular as a breakwater to stem the advance of any pan-German ambitions on the part of Germany and to counteract any threats of pan-Slav interference and oppression on the part of Russia.

The Danube Basin Question — in Practical Politics.

May be we have dealt too exhaustively with the conceptions aiming at a readjustment of the Danube Basin; but we have done so deliberately, for it is only by means of a thorough investigation of the kind and by the analysis of the theoretical constructions that we can hope to reveal the complicated nature of the problem or to show interdependence and disclose ambitions which the official diplomats of certain countries — in particular of the Little Entente — would appear to be doing all in their power to disguise and which those diplomats are certainly not anxious to proclaim or to elaborate.³

The events of importance occurring in the Danube Basin since the conclusion of the treaties of peace — events which may be regarded as veritable milestones — may be summed up under a few outstanding dates, as follows: —

In 1921 occurred the attempt to return to Hungary of King Charles, this being followed by the formation of the Little Entente alliance, an alliance with a military character aimed primarily against Hungary. In 1931 Germany, already considerably strengthened, made an attempt to establish a customs union with Austria (the scheme — behind which France and the Little Entente suspected the presence of a political object, viz. the "Anschluss" —, as is well known, was frustrated by a finding of the Hague Tribunal). In 1932 was broached the Tardieu-scheme, which though on paper proclaiming an apparently purely economic co-operation, in reality aimed at stabilising the *status quo*, — the scheme for an economic confederation of the Danube States which was ultimately rejected by practically all the countries concerned. In 1933 the Little Entente in reply declared its formation into a State Federation, — an event which did not however involve anything new in respect of either internal or international politics, there being no change either politically or economically.⁴ There was promise of great things in the Four-Power Convention signed in Rome on June 7th., 1933, which aimed also at securing the practical effectuation of the clause relating to treaty revision (it is a pity that it remained merely a suggestion). On March 17th., 1934, Italy, Austria and Hungary concluded the Rome Pact which afforded the two latter States guarantees respecting their security and at the same time secured those two countries important economic support. The importance of this political agreement was proved the same year, at the time of the Socialist "putsch" and the murder of Chancellor Dollfuss and later on too in connection with the anti-Hungary campaign ensuing after the attempt on King Alexander of Yugoslavia and M. Barthou in Marseilles, for it on both occasions saved the cause of peace. April, 1935, brought promises of an adjustment of the Danube Basin question; at the Conference of the Great Powers at Stresa the draft of a Danube Pact was submitted for discussion. But the hopes of a settlement were rendered dubious by the Franco-Russian Treaty with a very military tang concluded on May 2nd., 1935, which was supplemented by the Mutual Assistance Treaty between Russia and Czecho-Slovakia concluded in the same month — a treaty which ensured the aerial forces of Russia aviatic bases in the very heart of the basin of the Carpathians. The question of a re-adjustment of the Danube Basin was also relegated to the background for a considerable period by the Abyssinian war, which undermined the agreement of the Western Powers

³ For the question of the distribution of forces in the Danube Basin see the series of articles by Comte de Vienne published in the current volume of the "Nouvelle Revue de Hongrie". For the Austrian question see articles by George Ottlik and others in the March and April issues of that periodical.

⁴ On this points see the very illuminating article by Alexander Körmeny Ékes ("La co-operation économique des états de la Petite Entente") in the February, 1934, and the article by Philippe Develle ("La Petite Entente économique") in the December, 1935, issue of the Nouvelle Revue de Hongrie".

directly concerned in the war, from the Danube Basin. This situation was exploited by the diplomacy of Czecho-Slovakia for the purpose of attempting to oust Italy from the Danube Basin. In February, 1936, the Czecho-Slovak Premier, Hodža, who was at the time Foreign Minister also, visited Paris and Belgrade, proceeding to Vienna in March — in all probability for the purpose of weaning Austria from the Rome Pact and cajoling her into throwing herself into the arms of the Little Entente. The Austro-German "gentleman agreement" concluded on July 11th., 1936, wrested the trump card Czecho-Slovakia had been playing out of that country's hand; under that agreement the independence of Austria was guaranteed by Germany, the country traditionally represented as an aggressor, and not by the Little Entente. In September, 1936, the Hodža--scheme again cropped up, — though without much prospect of success.

What is, then, the situation today in the Danube Basin? There are two groups facing one another, — the Little Entente and the countries belonging to the Rome block. The former has been kept united by the desire to maintain the *status quo*. That is why the countries forming that group have had the backing of the most orthodox factor in European politics — of France, which country has supported the group through thick and thin for the purpose of securing for herself the unconditional assistance of the Little Entente against a Germany continually increasing in strength which was — and is still — adopting a more and more decided attitude. The scheme which France had in mind succeeded allright on paper; but only a blind man could have failed to notice that the influence of Germany was constantly increasing in Rumania and even more so in Yugoslavia, so that the utmost efforts had to be used to force Yugoslavia to take part in the Bucharest meeting of kings which was intended to serve as a demonstration of the unity of the Little Entente. As for Russia — France's and Czecho-Slovakia's latest ally —, Yugoslavia is not only not inclined to enter into an alliance with her, but has actually so far refused to resume diplomatic relations with her: while recently — after the fall of Titulescu — Rumania and Yugoslavia effected a *rapprochement* to the disadvantage of russophile Czecho-Slovakia.

It may seem paradoxical, but is a fact, that the failure of Germany to obtain that footing in the Danube Basin which might have threatened the balance of power was frustrated, not by the co-

operation of the declaredly anti-German French-Russian-Little Entente block, but by the circum-spect foreign policy of the States forming the Rome block. The three States belonging to that block have always opposed the demand for an "Anschluss" and endeavoured to ensure the recognition of Austria's independence and of her sovereignty. That did not of course mean any rigid insistence upon the *status quo*, the intention being on the contrary to give full play to organic development in the Danube Basin. It is this that has lent the Rome block — as opposed to the static character of the policy of the Little Entente, France and Russia — a certain dynamic character which has rendered it to some extent akin in conception and procedure to the German diplomacy which moves in other grooves and to the British diplomacy which pursues a policy aiming at a just and righteous settlement.

This essential difference between the two Danube groups has so far prevented any serious *rapprochement*: it has proved impossible to reconcile the statics and dynamics, while the renewed attempts at co-operation employing economic catch-words have been shipwrecked on this deep-seated difference. This circumstance was pointed out quite recently by Dr. Gustavus Gratz, who is well known to be in favour of the establishment of better relations with the Succession States, in an article⁵ in which he shows that today — in this age of nationalism — it is impossible by economic means to bring about any political *rapprochement*.

The only possible solution of the questions is therefore that to be obtained by political means. The Hungarian opinion on this point has been repeatedly defined. According to that opinion co-operation with the Succession States must be made subject to the following conditions, which are the minimum demands and are of a "real political" character: — first, the conditions of subsistence of the Hungarian (Magyar) minorities numbering 3.5—4 million souls must be really ensured; then, guarantees must be given to ensure political development and to provide that the present intolerable conditions shall be changed by peaceful means — either by enforcing the provisions of Article 19 of the Covenant of the League of Nations or by means of other effectual international agreements.

Hungarian public opinion believes that the "gentleman agreement" concluded between Austria and Germany on July 11th. last was a step in this direction — the only direction, it is convinced, in which we may hope for a Danube Basin living in an atmosphere of peace and justice and for the realisation of general peace in Europe, which depends so much upon conditions in the Danube Basin. The "gentleman agreement" in question eliminated from the life of the Danube Basin a problem which had continuously threatened to lead to an armed conflict, — eliminated it, let us hope, for a long time to come. It has thereby indubitably paved the way for a hearty co-operation

The unveiling of General Bandholtz's statue in Budapest on the 12th August was seized on by the "Universul" that extreme Magyarophobe Rumanian newspaper, as an opportunity to agitate against Hungary. Lacking a better argument, the ceremony was described as a revisionist provocation. We understand the indignation of the "Universul", for the ceremony drew the attention of foreign countries anew to the unprecedented acts of plunder committed by the Rumanian army at the time, not only in Budapest, but all over the country, Hungary's losses estimated at several thousand million gold crowns.

⁵ "Politique et économie en Europe Centrale" ((Nouvelle Revue de Hongrie", June, 1936).

between Germany and the States forming the Rome block. This co-operation is naturally bound to be dynamic in character and must contribute to create an atmosphere of peace and justice in Europe generally. Hungarian public opinion would be delighted to welcome a *rapprochement* — leading to their entering a common path of action — between the Rome block and Poland and Germany which are on friendly terms with that block on the one hand and the policy of Great Britain, which has already on innumerable occasions saved the cause of peace by intervening as mediator aiming at the realisation of a compromise. A continuation of the previous traditions of British foreign policy — supported by a utilisation of its splendid relations with France — would undoubtedly enable

the great nations of Europe by means of mutual understanding and compliance to begin at last the great task which the fulfilment of the unfortunate treaties of peace that brought the Great War to a conclusion have for the last fifteen years been making more and more urgent, — viz. the reconstruction of Europe in general and of the Danube Basin in particular. There can be no doubt that, if the big nations prove able to unite in this work of understanding which postulates an uncommon degree of moral elevation, the smaller nations will also be impelled to yield to the moral pressure and will on their part too make those sentimental and material sacrifices which the Europe to be reborn in consequence is demanding — and which that Europe deserves.

JAMES FITZJAMES IN THE CHRISTIAN ARMY AT THE SIEGE OF BUDA

by

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England always took a lively interest in the desperate struggles of Eastern Europe against the pagan Turks, the most formidable enemy of the Christian Continent in modern times. This lively interest was not only increased by the tragic battle of Mohács, at the beginning of the sixteenth century, but was more and more converted into a desire of active help. As early as the middle of the sixteenth century England, as one of the civilized nations of Europe, realized that the invasion of the Turks was not directed against Hungary alone, whose unfortunate geographical situation had rendered her defenceless against it; England saw that after the complete subjugation of Hungary the Turks would turn against the whole of Europe. For in these wars there were two conflicting forces fighting against one another: Christianity with its fundamental doctrine of love on the one hand, and a Paganism desirous of recapturing its former dominion over the world on the other. It became thus the universal interest of Europe to check the invasion of the Turks.

The year 1526, which was the year of the first great Turkish victory, brought into being almost at once the common front of the Christian world. Various companies of English volunteers, filled with enthusiasm, set out towards the distant East to show their manly valour in the wars raging there.

Unfortunately, our records of these brave men are very scanty and rare, especially with regard to those English soldiers who came to Hungary in the sixteenth century. We know that there

were Englishmen fighting in the army of Nicholas Zrinyi, the Hero of Szigetvár, and that they often distinguished themselves by their gallant conduct.

Two of these soldiers, who rendered a lasting and great service, deserve to be mentioned by name. These are Sir Richard Grenville and John Smith. Sir Richard Grenville, who became a famous naval commander in his later years, was quite a young man when he fought in the Turkish wars in Hungary on Emperor Maximilian's side, between 1560 and 1568.¹

About the turn of the century John Smith visited Hungary, he is known in English history as Captain Smith, Governor of Virginia, in 1608.² After serving his time in Austria he came to Hungary, to the city of Komárom; later he took part in the siege of Székesfehérvár, where his invention, the "fiery dragons", was used with great success by the Hungarian troops. In the spring of 1602 he was in Transylvania; at the siege of the castle of "Regall"³ he cut off the heads of three Turks in a combat, whereupon he received rich gifts from Sigismund Báthory, Prince of Transylvania, in addition to which he was raised to the rank of a Hungarian nobleman; he was allowed to carry the three Turkish heads in his crest, which may still be seen in the family crest of John Smith's descendants.

¹ *Dictionary of National Biography*. XXIII. p. 122.

² *Pallas' Encyclopaedia*, XV. p. 44.

³ The exact place of this castle is unknown. — Cf. "Turul", 1888., pp. 164—68. *Louis Kropf*: Captain Smith.