

# THE DANUBIAN VALLEY AND THE RUSSIAN ADVANCE

BY

LANCELOT LAWTON

**T**wenty years ago, the world believed that it was the Peace Treaty of Versailles which changed the map of Central Europe; we see now that Versailles only prepared the way towards a really thorough change. It was 1938—39 that brought about the real transformation. The *Anschluss* in the beginning of 1938 brought Germany considerably nearer to the so-called South Eastern Europe and the latest partition of Poland at the end of 1939 sees the Russians established more than 200 miles nearer to the West. And we have the impression that Russian Dynamism does not regard the present stage of development as final.

Both of these advances were justified by their perpetrators "on ethnographic grounds." The *Anschluss* has been a current problem of the last 20 years: we do not therefore propose to dwell upon it and would confine ourselves to the quite new and unexpected event, the Russian advance.

For Central Europe, Bolshevism is not new: Hungary had a taste of it in 1919 and Poland in 1920. It came to Hungary as Saviour against the threat of the Peace Conference to partition this ancient country; to Poland, to mutilate this nation against the integrating efforts of the same Peace Conference. Both efforts collapsed and there has been a relative silence from this quarter during the past decades.

Those who have studied and analysed Bolshevism, know that its source is to be found not so much in Marx, as in Russian thought and character. Bolshevism is not a non-Russian phenomenon; on the contrary: it is Russian to the core.

It is not surprising then that the Bolsheviks should have

inherited the grandiose imperialist ambition of the régime which they superceded. The first stage in the realisation of this limitless ambition was to be an empire from the Carpathians to the Pacific. The Bolsheviki have accomplished it; because Europe is divided against itself they have succeeded where tsarism failed. Today the Red Empire stretches from the Carpathians to the Pacific. Will it expand still further, like a great fang thrusting itself deeper into Central Europe, and thus threatening to overpower western civilisation as a whole? Just as there were no limits to the aims of tsarist imperialism, so there are none to those of Bolshevism. Fan-slavism was pan-russianism; Bolshevism is pan-sovietism. In tsarist times Moscow was to be the third and last Rome; today Moscow is to be the Red capital of a Red Soviet Empire. As I have said, the first stage in the realisation of this ambition has been accomplished. In a night, so to speak, the frontier of the Soviet Union has swiftly moved forward 250 miles until now it almost overlooks Europe's western wall, the Carpathians.

Honest students of Soviet Russia know well what are her plans. A hundred quotations or more could be given to prove that she has but one fixed unalterable purpose; to incite the European nations to destroy each other, so that upon their ruins she may impose her creed and rule. Nothing is more amazingly symptomatic of the present degeneration of European civilisation than the confidence, the audacity, with which the Communists now boldly proclaim their aims. Listen to this, for example; it is an extract from the current issue (November 18th) of the Comintern journal, *World News and Views*: "*A spectre is haunting Europe — the spectre of Communism*", wrote Marx and Engels in 1848. "*All the powers of old Europe have entered into a holy alliance to exorcise this spectre; Pope and Tsar, Metternich and Guizot, French Radicals and German police spies!*" *Communism, no longer a spectre but clothed in Soviet flesh and blood, is again haunting Europe in this period of the second imperialist world war. Its frontiers were advanced in Eastern Europe within three weeks of the war breaking out; not a step is taken by the warring imperialist Powers without having to take into account the power of the Soviet*

*Union and the revolutionary spirit of the international working class."*

If Bolshevism now stands, as it were, upon the very threshold of European civilisation, the blame rests solely with certain vain, short-sighted politicians in Central Europe, who with the motto: Destroy *Austria-Hungary*, friend of Germany, willfully misled statesmen of the great Western Powers, and who today, posing as martyrs, are conspiring to regain their lost eminence. For such an accusation there is abundant and convincing evidence. A little while before the war, Dr. Beneš made a speech in Chicago in the course of which he said that, prior to Munich, he had taken care to ascertain whether Soviet Russia would give military aid to Czechoslovakia. She was, he added, quite willing to do so, but the Agrarian Party in Czechoslovakia threatened to revolt if Red forces were allowed on Czechoslovakian territory. This statement, taken in conjunction with events that have recently happened, makes it clear that Soviet Russia took over the pan-slavist ambitions of the tsarist regime and transformed them into pan-soviet designs. In other words, she was determined to gain admission into Central Europe; and only the opposition of a large section of the Czechoslovakian people frustrated this purpose.

*Historically speaking, it is the Peace after the last war that must be made responsible for what can only be described as the present invasion of Europe by Bolshevism. In their anxiety to close the door to the East against Germany, the Allies opened a door leading to the West for Russia. The form which this open door to the West has taken may best be described in the words of no less an authority than the League of Nations itself, which, in spite of its political futility, has occasionally, and it might be almost suspected accidentally, performed a useful, service through the media of experts. In a volume of *Danubian Studies* issued under its auspices, it was written:*

*Before the war all the different countries of the Danube from Passau to a point below Orsova enjoyed with each other a condition of substantial freedom of trade. Industries developed in advantageous localities, relying upon the fact that over the wide extent of Central Europe raw*

*materials could be obtained and finished products could be distributed, without crossing any frontier. — The cutting up of this single customs area so that it is now divided among seven different states, each politically independent of the other and desiring to be economically and industrially independent of the world, has fundamentally changed the economic situation. Raw materials are separated from the former factories, which in turn are separated from their former customers. Of practically all these States it may be said that each is trying to exclude the other from its own market, so as to preserve its existing industries and to build up new ones to supply its inhabitants to the extent that they have heretofore drawn their supply from industry beyond their present boundaries.*

One of the chief, if not the chief, cause of the last war, was Tsarist Russia's desire to establish itself in Central Europe by destroying the Austro—Hungarian Empire. This empire was destroyed and with it, as we have seen, went Europe's barrier against the Russian hordes.

In its place was erected a disjointed, ramshackle and artificial structure which could endure only so long as it was propped-up by the Allied Powers and subjected to no severe external pressure. To put together the pieces of this shattered structure and re-erect it now, is impossible. Those who think otherwise, and who advocate that an attempt should be made to return to the former conditions, are either ignorant of the danger of Bolshevism or not unwilling to be its allies.

A quite new system is called for — the bloc system. In various publications, as the originator of this system, I have described how it should be developed in detail, and I have been gratified by the large amount of support with which it has been received. From many influential quarters all over the world, messages of approval have reached me.

I have only space here to give a very brief summary of my ideas. First, the frontiers of Europe must be re-shaped so as to take account of ethnical realities; that goes without saying. Once this re-shaping or re-division has been accomplished, the problem will remain: how can nations relatively weak live a progressive and dignified existence



alongside powerful nations? As a rule, the relatively weak nations are mainly agricultural, and the powerful nations are highly industrialised. I suggest that the time has come for the association over wide areas of nations, large and small, in the form of blocs. In each bloc industry would need to be distributed on a just and agreed basis, and the exchange of commodities so regulated that the exploitation and degradation of agricultural nations, so conspicuous under present conditions, would be brought to an end. Naturally, the bloc would aim at self-sufficiency as far as possible. But there would still be abundant scope left for orderly world commerce. Instead of nation competing with nation, bloc would deal with bloc. I cannot attempt within the limits of an article to define the limits of each proposed bloc, but such definition should not present insuperable difficulties. Already to those who have some vision the natural outlines of various blocs are plainly discernible.

We earnestly hope that the peoples of the Danubian Valley will have the constructive political mind to re-build in a modern form what the above mentioned *Danubian Studies* of Geneva described as an economic unit by eliminating all the causes of friction, misunderstanding, jealousy produced by the pernicious political propaganda which preceded and followed the World War and which, fortunately, seems to ebb down under the effect of the danger of the Russian shadow.