

# POLITICAL MOSAIC

## HUNGARIAN REGENT'S NAME-DAY CELEBRATIONS EVERYWHERE

The name-day of the Hungarian Regent, Admiral Horthy, which falls on 6th December, was celebrated in Hungary with the stirring scenes of enthusiasm that every year witness to the loyalty and affection with which his subjects regard the great statesman to whom the country owes its resurrection as a State, its peace and its progress. The Hungarians are pleased and proud to think that their Regent is respected all over the world. Fresh signs of this fact were afforded by the spontaneity with which his name day was feted in the international Press and by the broadcasting stations in the capitals of three great countries.

In the London radio, on 5th December, Admiral Kerr broadcast in English a greeting to Admiral Horthy.

"Although I have never met the Regent of Hungary in person" — the British Admiral said — "I have always greatly admired him. Since the conclusion of the world war, in the naval battles of which we were opponents in 1916 and 1917, we have had occasion several times to exchange friendly greetings. In the old war days I was commander of the fleet operating in the Adriatic. Admiral Horthy, as commander of a ship of the line, was in command of one of the cruisers belonging to the Austro-Hungarian fleet, but he was also frequently in command of other cruisers and destroyers. On one occasion we closed the Adriatic with a chain of fishing-boats about a mile apart from each other. Steel netting had been stretched between them in order to capture the enemy's submarines, which otherwise might have run out to the Adriatic and attacked our warships. On 15th May 1917 Commander Horthy attacked with the "Novara". Two other light cruisers, the "Helgoland" and the "Saida", the latter under the command of Ferdinand Pruska, and two destroyers commanded by Prince Lichtenstein, attacked at the same time. We had only one light gun to each of the gunboats, and their crews consisted merely of a captain of the line and two seamen. This fleet might easily have fallen a prey to the two cruisers and the destroyers. They might have sunk us or captured our ships without any losses to themselves. But that was not what happened.

*"Towards a weaker enemy Commander Horthy behaved with a gallantry worthy of the noblest traditions of naval warfare. When he signalled our ships to surrender, one of the gunboats refused to do so and engaged his warship in battle. The cruiser*

took up the challenge, but at *Commander Horthy's orders all its guns, with one single exception, were fired into the air.* The one which took aim fired at the bows of the gunboat, and as soon as it had put the one gun out of action, *the cruiser drew away and set off in pursuit of another ship.* Any nation in the world, whether friend or foe at the time, might be proud of a naval officer who behaved with such gallantry towards the enemy as did that young commander. I therefore feel highly honoured at having been asked to send greetings to Admiral Horthy, the Regent of Hungary, on the occasion of his name day. May God give him health, happiness and complete success in his difficult work! With all my heart I wish that great mariner, the leader whom the whole Hungarian nation has followed through thick and thin with loyalty and unflinching confidence ever since the close of the world war, many happy returns of the day."

When Admiral Kerr ceased speaking the Hungarian Anthem was played by the British Broadcasting station. This was followed by a Hungarian translation of the Admiral's speech.

#### HUNGARY ANXIOUSLY WATCHING STRUGGLE OF FINNISH NATION

It is only natural that the wonderfully heroic struggle of the Finns, which has won the sympathy of international public opinion, should make a deep impression on the Hungarian nation. The Magyars and Finns are kindred peoples, the descendants of one race. In prehistoric times they roamed the Asiatic steppes together and spoke one language. The feeling of kinship is still so strong that the Finnish language is taught in the Faculty of Philosophy at the Budapest University, while, vice versa, Magyar is taught in Finland; and since 1893 there have been societies in Budapest and Helsinki devoted to the cultivation of fraternal relations between the two countries. Both nations love liberty and independence and for centuries fought to achieve these ideals. It was the impulse of a passionate self-sacrificing longing for liberty that raised the literature and poetry of both peoples to the heights of sublimity, ennobling and beautifying them.

The entire Hungarian nation — Government, Parliament, old and young — has given expression to its sympathy for the Finns. On 6th December, the anniversary of Finnish independence, great celebrations were held at the Finnish Legation in Budapest, at which the Speaker of the Hungarian Parliament, the representatives of official Hungary and a number of other distinguished Hungarians were present. M. Onni Talas, Finnish Minister, thanked the Hungarian people for their sympathy. He said that nobody could foresee the outcome of the chaos threaten-

ing the whole of Europe; one thing, however, was certain: a nation that was capable of making such a superhuman effort to defend its liberty had a right to live. Ex-Minister M. Emil de Nagy, President of the Hungarian-Finnish Society, declared that the marvellous heroism displayed by the Finns was an uplifting sight amid the horrible and ignoble events taking place in the world today. *He trusted that Divine Providence would not forsake that valiant people.*

On 8th December, the "Turul", an association of university students, marched in procession to the Finnish Legation. In reply to their cheers the Finnish Minister said that *the Finns were hopeful, for a nation so full of vitality as they were would be able to rise again even if momentarily crushed.* On 9th December, first the "Hungaria", an association of students of the Budapest Technical University, and later the *Emericana*, a Roman Catholic youth society, staged demonstrations in front of the Finnish Legation. To them the Finnish Minister said *that the spirit of the great Hungarian poet Petöfi was alive in the souls of the Finns.* Similar demonstrations were also made at the Szeged, Debrecen and Pécs universities.

The Hungarian Parliament, too, has expressed its deep anxiety and warm sympathy for a kindred people. After heartfelt words spoken on 3rd December by M. Zoltán Meskó (Extreme Right) and on 4th December by M. Nicholas Mester (Government Party), M. Géza Malasics (Social Democrat) and M. Gabriel Vajna (Extreme Right), the Hungarian Prime Minister, on 5th December, said: —

"A new war has broken out between our kindred, the little but brave Finnish nation and Soviet Russia. This is a separate war, not a phase of the war between the Franco-British Allies and Germany, yet it is not unconnected with the relations existing between the States of Europe. *It fills us with anxiety, and when we think of the Finnish nation, with sadness.*"

The Bench of Bishops of the Hungarian Lutheran Church on 14th December issued a circular letter, which, inter alia, contained the following passage: —

"The joy of Advent, the season of preparation for the birth of Jesus Christ, has been disturbed by the appalling events taking place in the far north. The Russian giant, ironclad from head to foot, has set forth to destroy one of the finest and bravest peoples, the little Finnish nation. With sledgehammer raised to strike, the giant is preparing to deal a blow under which churches, cultural institutions, and family altars will collapse in ruins. The Finnish nation holds the standard of the Gospel aloft and puts its trust in the mercy of God made manifest therein. The civilized nations of the world, aghast and filled with righteous indignation, watch the stage where the curtain threatens to rise on a historical tragedy in which Godless



Soviet Russia's 185 million inhabitants are preparing to trample to death the Godfearing Finnish nation of 3 and a half million souls." —

Baron Louis Villani, who formerly occupied an important post in the Hungarian Foreign Office, has been appointed Hungarian Minister in Helsinki. It will be his task to strengthen the ties of friendship between the two countries.

Hungary, it is true, is no longer a member of the League of Nations, but she follows its work with great interest and hopes that justice will triumph.

#### STATEMENT BY COUNT STEPHEN BETHLEN

The December 23rd. issue of the "8 Órai Ujság" contained a statement by *Count Stephen Bethlen*, former Prime Minister, relating to the international situation in which, *inter alia*, he said: —

"The situation in which Hungary has been placed by the outbreak of war resembles that of Italy. We too have refrained from taking part in the war on Germany's side; but we have not made any declaration of neutrality in the struggle: *we are watching events with our arms ready* and are taking care of our interests, prepared also to intervene in the event of our interests making such intervention necessary. *Hungary is not however in the least eager for adventures or at all anxious to fish in troubled waters* — a circumstance very wisely stressed on several occasions by our Foreign Minister. On the other hand *we naturally expect the injustices inflicted by the Treaty of Trianon to be at long last — after twenty years — eliminated. The war may be expected to provide an opportunity to repair these wrongs — not perhaps before it is over, but without fail after hostilities have been suspended and peace is made.* Without a liquidation of the treaties of peace drafted at Paris there cannot be any peace in Central Europe; and that means that there cannot be any peace in Europe generally. This is realised already by the great democracies of the West too, which were responsible for the Treaties of Trianon etc.; consequently the public opinion of the world at large is fully prepared to accept the new adjustment. We must therefore keep our powder dry pending the coming of that time; not that I believe that we shall then have to use our arms to vindicate the justice of our cause: but we must remember that not much weight attaches to the interests of a nation which is unarmed or is not prepared to fight too in defence of its vital interests.

"As I have said, it is conceivable that eventualities may force us to intervene even before that time comes; but the statements made by the Hungarian Government have made it clear to the whole world that Hungary is not out to find either

opportunity or pretext for intervention in any direction. Hungary is indeed leaving no stone unturned to ensure the elimination of every source or even possibility of controversy or antagonism, that country having indeed made concrete proposals for that purpose."

*No Clash of Interests between Hungary and Russia.*

"In my opinion, therefore, it is very desirable that these proposals should be taken seriously on the other side too' — continued Bethlen — "and that they should find an echo beyond the frontier; for, though perhaps that might not result in the settlement of every question at issue, the mere opening of negotiations is nevertheless bound to create an entirely different atmosphere against the time — of such decisive importance — when the Great Powers once more redraft the map of Europe. Since the outbreak of hostilities there has been a very material change in the situation both of Hungary and of Rumania — the latter being the country in question. As a consequence of the collapse of the Polish nation — the tragic fate of which has evoked our profoundest sympathy — Russia has taken the place of Poland as our neighbour. *Sentimentally, this change is to us a painful one; but, grave as it undoubtedly is, it does not involve disaster, as so many people would fain have us believe:* for the Russian advance has come to a standstill on the line of the Carpathians; and we would fain believe that in the future too that line will mark the limit of the Russian advance. Rumania has also experienced a change of the kind; in her case, however, this change may really be described as disastrous seeing that as a consequence of the downfall of Poland she has lost the neighbour who was her most trustworthy ally, the result being that *today Rumania has no neighbour except Yugoslavia — the common frontier on this side being however a very short one — from whom she did not annex territories under the Paris treaties — no neighbour not anxious to recover the territories allotted to her.*

"If we leave out of account the questions of political philosophy — the question of systems of thought —, there is no serious clash of interests between Hungary and Russia; for the Russian Government regards the line of the Carpathians as a final and definitive frontier. *Indeed, in certain respects it may be said even that we have common interests.* The international relations thus existing as between Hungary and Russia are not prejudiced either by the fact that in the armed conflict that has ensued between Russia and Finland we sympathise wholeheartedly with our sister nation. This is only natural; our fellow-feeling for the Finns is a matter of course: *we deeply regret that it is not in our power to intervene with the Russian*

*Government in order to bring about a restoration of peace between Russia and Finland — and to prevent the liberty and independence of the gallant and high-minded Finnish nation being unnecessarily made the prey of the biggest European nation, which is already in possession of the largest area of territory owned by any European country."*

*Maintenance of our Present Position.*

*"There is already a neutral South-Eastern European bloc" — continued Count Bethlen — "though it does not possess any generally accepted organisation; it is, namely, my conviction that it is the decided intention of all the States in question — including of course Hungary too — not only to keep aloof from the European war, but also to avoid any armed conflict even among themselves. And these countries are moreover in the fortunate position of having the direction in this connection of Italy, the Fascist Great Power whose Foreign Minister, Count Ciano, in his recent exhaustive *exposé* offered them the advice and good services of Italy for the reconciliation of any differences that might arise between them — a circumstance which may in any given case prove of immeasurable value for the maintenance of peace in this part of Europe.*

*"Our situation in respect of the procural of raw materials is beset with exceptional difficulties, seeing that the bulk of our agrarian exports are sold against payment in marks and lire — very little trade being indeed carried on except with these markets —, whereas the raw materials we require have for the most part to be paid for in Western exchanges. The task facing us is therefore not capable of solution unless both the principal belligerent Parties — both Great Britain and Germany — show a certain appreciation of the difficulties which Hungary has to face in this connection. This must however depend primarily upon the international valuation of Hungary as a political factor and is not exclusively an economic question. There does not seem to be any likelihood of any infraction of our interests. In the first place because our friendship with Germany is as strong as ever, so that we may not even dream of such an eventuality from that quarter; and in the second place because it is the interest both of France and of Great Britain that the war should be restricted to the territory already involved, so that we have every reason to hope that these countries too will fully respect our important vital interests. The surest guarantee that we shall be able to continue to safeguard the peace of our country is that we should accommodate our action absolutely to that of Italy, co-operating with that country in every respect, seeing that Italy and Mussolini are our best friends and that — as we have experienced so often in the past — Mussolini is*



ready in any given case even to make sacrifices on our behalf and has never kept us in the lurch."

### MINORITY CITIZENSHIP IN RUMANIA

#### *At Last — after Two Decades — a Satisfactory Law*

Sad to say, two decades had to elapse after the ratification of the Peace Treaties before the Rumanian Administration decided to settle the question of minority citizenship in a satisfactory way. The Rumanian official gazette, the "Monitorul Oficial" No. 243, of 20th October 1939, contains the text of a new law. In terms thereof, all that is now required of applicants who wish to be enrolled *de post facto* in the list of Rumanian citizens is proof that they *were living* in the area attached to Rumania, or at some place in the Old Kingdom, on 1st December 1918 (the date of union) or on 26th July 1921 (the date on which the Trianon Treaty was ratified), and that in the interim between these dates and the present day they have not applied for citizenship of another country. Applications are to be investigated by the Minister of Justice. The date up to which applications for citizenship may be filed has been prolonged to 1st February 1940, and until this term expires the law provides all applicants with facilities of complying with the necessary formalities.

What gave rise to the difficulties attending the question of minority citizenship in Rumania was the difference between the provisions contained in the Rumanian minority treaty of 9th December 1919 and those contained in the Trianon Treaty. The minority treaty stipulates *permanent residence* and descent from parents who were permanently resident in the areas attached to Rumania. According to the Trianon Treaty, on the other hand, all persons who possessed domiciliary rights in any territory formerly part of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy automatically acquired citizenship of the State exercising sovereignty over the territory in question (Article 61.). The Hungarian Peace Delegation wished to substitute "place of dwelling" for "rights of domicile", but this suggestion was rejected by the Peace Conference. The first Rumanian Citizenship Act, passed on 24th February 1924, in conformity, not with the minority treaty, but with the Trianon Treaty, established the principle that to obtain Rumanian citizenship it was necessary to have been in possession of rights of domicile in the attached areas on 18th November 1918 (Article 96.). Besides this, the recognition of a man's Rumanian citizenship was conditional on certain formalities (application for enrolment in the citizenship lists had to be made in person, etc.). In consequence, the citizenship of hundreds of thousands of minority subjects became uncertain. No special importance having been attached anywhere during the Hungarian era to a formal acquisition of rights of domicile, very few people

were in possession of the required certificates. The possession of those rights on 18th November 1918 presupposed — in terms of the Hungarian (Parish) Act XXII of 1886 — that the person concerned had lived for at least four years before that date in the village in question and had been a ratepayer there. It may be imagined that people of the lower classes, such as agricultural labourers and industrial workers, changed their places of abode pretty frequently, not staying long enough in any one place to acquire rights of domicile. Any chance of these people being enrolled in the lists of Rumanian citizens was therefore forfeited as soon as it came to the point of proving rights of domicile, and as a result the citizenship of large sections of the minority population became uncertain. This proved a great disability, for citizenship is the basis of most civil rights, of all political and many private rights too. It will suffice to point out that for two decades the chaos surrounding the question of citizenship was responsible for the circumstance that the minorities lived under a constant threat of dismissal from public posts, the loss of their pensions and, in the case of merchants and craftsmen, of their trade and commercial licences, to say nothing of the danger of being expelled from the country. The number of people whose Rumanian citizenship is a matter of doubt is approximately 400.000, and of these 90% are of Magyar nationality.

By not requiring proof of rights of domicile, the new Rumanian Citizenship Law will undoubtedly in principle do away with the old uncertainty surrounding the question of citizenship. All we would ask is why it was necessary to wait twenty years and keep millions of minority subjects in the greatest suspense for such a long time, despite the fact that the representatives of the minorities continually urged a satisfactory solution of the problem. Another question we should like to put is: will not this law share the fate of so many others that were passed by the different Rumanian Governments, but have never been put into execution?