

INTERNAL CRISIS IN SERBIA

BY

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The latest reports from Serbia inform us that, despite the public amnesty promised early in the autumn and despite the exceptionally severe winter, there are still groups of insurgents active in various parts of the country. This is proved also by the broadcasts and grave warnings addressed repeatedly and at rapidly recurring intervals to the Serbian people by General *Neditch*, the Prime Minister, and Members of his Government: for the information of our readers we give below certain passages from these broadcasts and warnings: —

On February 8th. General Milan Neditch, Prime Minister, broadcast from Belgrade an appeal to the workers of Serbia. In his speech he laid particular stress upon the fact — very remarkable in itself, in any case — that a *considerable section of the Serbian intelligentsia brought up on money provided by the State had placed themselves at the head of the bands of insurgents devastating the country. There were no workers or members of trade unions to be found among the communist murderers, thieves and incendiaries.* The Serbian workers had repudiated the allurements of the Red Internationale of Moscow, for they were well aware what those allurements meant. While the "partisans" (irregulars) hiding and fighting in the forests and mountains were engaged in incendiarism, plunder, devastation and murder, the Serbian workers were toiling with the sweat of their brows from dawn till late at night and doing their share of the work of re-constructing Serbia. Unfortunately, the communists included in their ranks many well-fed members of the intelligentsia educated at the public expense — officials, teachers, school-masters, doctors, etc. *The women found in their ranks were all suffering from some form of hysteria, — the spoiled daughters of wealthy*

parents, women teachers, university students or perverse women in quest of adventure... Such were the persons of whom the general staff of the provincial and urban murderers and thieves was recruited... In contrast to these persons the workers had shown that they were true Serbians upon whom the Government could rely implicitly under all circumstances... So labour must be given the rights to which it was entitled: for when those who had been educated by the Serbian people were murdering and devastating the country, the Serbian workers had loyally and honourably stood their ground: and for that they deserved a full meed of gratitude and appreciation.

In terms of a resolution of the Serbian Cabinet Council, the example of Premier *Neditch* was followed by certain Members of the Government, who toured the larger towns in the country for the sake of enlightening the inhabitants. At *Nish*, for instance, a speech was made by the Minister for Agriculture, who stressed that the Serbian people had had enough of political adventures. *Serbia would never again be a theatre of war, and was not prepared to sacrifice herself for the sake of soi-disant friends who were really her enemies.* At *Valjevo* the Minister of Education spoke at a mass meeting. He spoke in terms of the severest condemnation of the attitude of the "refugee" Serbian Government now in London which was so terribly detrimental to the interests of the country. That Government had plunged the country into war and had then acted disgracefully in leaving the people to its fate and fleeing to London. These Serbian "refugees" had forfeited the right to call themselves Serbians. Further on in his speech the Minister spoke in terms of disparagement of the British Government too, which, not satisfied with having plunged the Serbian people into war, was still — after the disastrous issue of that war — causing unrest in the country. Serbia must revert to the older Serbian national idea. Communism must be nipped in the bud, and the lying propaganda of London and Moscow must be defied. At *Shabatz* the Minister for National Economy made a speech in which he stressed that it was only by maintaining order and peace that the difficulties could be overcome, the State

re-built and the future of the Serbian people ensured. (Belgrade papers and "*Reggeli Ujság*", February 21st.).

Of the numerous articles of a similar tone and tenor published in the Serbian Press of Belgrade we would refer only to the article by Dr. Dragutin *Jankovitch*, former Minister, which appeared in the February 24th. issue of the "*Novo Vreme*" (New Age), from which we quote the following passages: — "*A senseless coup d'État*" — writes *Jankovitch* — "*plunged the Serbian people into utter misery. Scarcely had the Yugoslav State collapsed, when a civil war demanding further serious sacrifices broke out. And now that a state of tranquillity is beginning to return, siren voices are heard once more broadcasting from London. We must realise fully that these siren voices have lurking behind them, not only the destruction of individuals, but the annihilation of the whole nation. What is it that London wants the Serbians to do? It was on behalf of British interests that the Serbians entered the war and lost the war. It was British interests that unleashed the dogs of civil war — a war that has already plunged into deep mourning thousands of Serbian families. Great Britain never moved a finger to help the Serbians... But we hear the same enticing strains broadcast from Moscow too; only there is a difference in the words... In the name of Slav brotherhood we were expected to go to the aid of the Soviet Russians; but when the first blow fell, the assistance promised by the Slav brother never came... Why should the Serbians bleed to death again in a civil war? For the national ideals, say London and Moscow. These ideals were realised by us in Yugoslavia; but the Serbians were nevertheless incited to war. For democracy and liberty — is again the message of London and Moscow. This democracy which they praise and laud to the skies — which was introduced into Serbia on March 27th., 1941 — was of such a character that a general was placed at its head with dictatorial powers... After their bitter experience in the past the Serbians can keep in mind one object only, — the need to be united, that they may preserve their existence...*

From the broadcast of General *Neditch* addressed to the Serbian people on March 8th., 1942, we quote the

following interesting and remarkably characteristic passages:

"We are on the threshold of the spring of the year 1942; and the secret forces are again attempting to undermine the peace and order of the country. Everywhere attempts are being made to dig the grave of the Serbian people and of Serbia. You will still remember what last year was like, and how the people stood on the brink of the precipice of destruction. Then we escaped, because the Serbian people supported me and trusted me. *The secret forces are again doing all in their power to drive the people into suicide. That is what London and Moscow desire. The agents of Moscow and London, who trade in human blood and human flesh, keep advising you not to cultivate your fields.* These men are the evil geniuses of the Serbian people. What they want is that the Serbian people shall once more wade in blood, incite to civil war and bite the dust. That is how they would fain destroy the Serbian people and engineer the disappearance of Serbia from the map of Europe. You who hear the satanic voice of London, tell me frankly whether the voice that speaks to you through the London radio is the voice of a Serbian, or not? Certainly not, you will say. Then whose voice is it? The answer you can guess yourselves. It is the voice of the corrupters of the soul of the Serbian people!"

"A life-and-death struggle is being fought today in the world", continued *Neditch*. "The Powers now facing one another have thrown into the balance themselves and everything they possess. *The poor peoples of the world are fighting against those who have accumulated all the wealth of the world. The struggle is being fought therefore to ensure an equitable distribution of natural resources.*

"What business have we Serbians with this struggle? The consequences of the war will be incalculable all over the world; but to us it matters precious little who is master of Singapore. Maybe the weak-minded English lords regard the Serbian people as Zulu Kaffirs in duty bound to defend the British colonies, as well as their shares and dividends? The Serbians have on two occasions already fallen into the trap. And when we had the brightest prospects in view — when no danger whatsoever threatened us —, we were betrayed.

For whom or for what was all this done? You saw how Britain supported us, — how she supported those eight other European States too! The only thing she cares about is how to save her wealth. Yugoslavia fell to pieces in the twinkling of an eye; and the Serbian people has paid a horrible price for the collapse. Everywhere in the country may be seen cemeteries, destitution, towns and villages burned to the ground, starvation. Was there any need of this, I would ask. None at all. Could it all have been avoided? Certainly. To save a country and its people is a matter for the wisdom of statesmen and politicians. *To demolish and destroy — any fool can do that. After the collapse of Yugoslavia the Serbian people was guilty of the greatest historical folly. Allowing itself to be guided by London, which had cast it into perdition, and by the advice of Moscow — of that Moscow of which King Alexander for twenty years boycotted the very name —, a section of the Serbian people took up arms. The Serbian people had been trapped by Moscow and London.* You know the result of the insurrection. You know what happened at Rudnik, at Kraljevo, at Uzhitze, at Tsatsak, in the Matchva district, at Kragujevatz, at Gornij Milanovatz. . . . The Serbians have paid for the second time the price of their own stupidity. The Serbian people allowed itself to be cajoled by the "communist-national" troops and bled and bled . . .

"London and Moscow are now engaged in blazoning far and wide "warmed-up" lies. Their message to the Serbian people is to the effect that in the spring Britain will land troops on the Continent; while Moscow proclaims the gross lie telling us that the Russians will succeed in breaking through the German front. These glaring lies are being propagated orally among the people everywhere in the country by the agents of Moscow and London. The people must not allow itself to be duped by false news and must remember that *all the use London and Moscow have for the Serbian people is to use it as food or cannon.*

"The catchwork "Serbian punitive expedition" is splendid propaganda for the British Press and affords some amusement for the crack-brained English lords.

"The biggest battle known to history will soon be raging on the Eastern front for the possession of St. Petersburg,

Moscow and the Crimea. Both Parties are preparing vigorously for the spring engagement. We cannot either help or harm; we have neither the power nor the equipment required. There can be no doubt that the Germans will win in this great battle too. Yet the British and the Soviet keep inviting the Serbian people. They are inviting us to destruction and would fain plunge us into perdition. What they want you to do is to foolishly and unthinkingly sacrifice your lives and your property. They keep inciting us against the occupying forces, who treat us humanely! They keep shouting in your ears — "In the spring you must again to the woods, Serbians! In the spring you must once more take rifles in your hands!!" They are all old friends of yours!! Moscow and London and Drazha Mihajlovitch, the traitor!! Mihajlovitch the agent of Great Britain and the commander of the "communist-national" army of "liberators"!! What is his object? and that of his employers? To engineer the ruin of Serbia for foreign interests!! What they want is that in spring you should go out again into the verdant woods and there commit suicide in order that the lords may feel safe and secure. *What they want is that communism should master the whole of Europe and that you should be driven to your deaths!! I know that is not what you want!! For such an issue would hurl catastrophe on the Serbian people too and would involve the destruction both of the people and of the country. And these monsters — these foreign agents — presume to call themselves liberators.*

"So great is my affection for the Serbian people and Serbia that there is no power — no force, no treasure — on earth for the sake of which I would betray my people and my fatherland. That is why I am speaking to you now; for I see that the agents in foreign pay have wormed themselves in among you and are inciting you to rebellion. Do not listen to them, — only to your Serbian conscience. Twice already you have paid a heavy price for foreign interests; do not allow yourselves to be dragged a third time into trouble. For, should you attempt a third time to drag the Serbian people into perdition, you will succeed!! Serbia will then be one big cemetery. Then the knell of death will be tolled for the last time over the Serbian people!! Do not

perpetrate any foolishness; do not allow the enemy to plunge you into destruction!! Listen once more to me!! I cannot save you, if you listen to Drazha Mihajlovitch, to London and to Moscow!! Our very existence as a people, our future, is in your hands!! *Let this coming spring and summer be seasons of peace and order and work!! That is the only way out and the only salvation open to us. To choose any other course would be equivalent to exterminating the Serbian people root and branch, — the senseless, purposeless, treasonable extermination of the Serbian people!!* Do you love your Serbian family homes? I know that you too desire that the Serbian people and Serbia shall live on!! Listen, Serbian brethren, to the advice of Milan Neditch, and take it to heart, and listen to your own consciences, lest misery and misfortune should again visit us!! This is my spring message. The fate of the country and the people is in your hands — in your hands alone!!"

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