

HUNGARIAN PREMIER'S INAUGURAL ADDRESS AT DEBRECEN UNIVERSITY SUMMER MEETING

For the sixteenth year in succession the summer university courses at Debrecen were opened with due ceremony on 1st August. At this opening session were present M. Nicholas de Kállay, Hungarian Premier, M. Eugene Szinyei-Merse, Hungarian Minister of Education, M. Stephen Lossonczy, Minister of Public Supplies, and several State Secretaries and Members of Parliament. There were present also Herr Emile George Strauss, Vicepresident of the German Academy of Sciences and Deputy Speaker of the Reichsrat, Signor Anfuso, Italian Minister in Budapest, with several members of the Italian Legation, and Herr Lurtze, German Consul in Nagyvárad.

First M. Szinyei-Merse, Minister of Education, addressed the Premier, who with all the serious cares of administration on his shoulders still found time to visit Debrecen in order to welcome its distinguished foreign guests.

"It is by the power of the sword and the spirit" — said the Minister of Education — "that Hungary has always been able to perform her mission in Europe. *Hungarian heroism has always united with the spirit of Hungarian culture to shape the destiny of this part of the Continent.* It is important to remember this today when our soldiers are holding their own in Russia and winning the increasing admiration of our friends and allies; and now, here in Debrecen, we proclaim to all that, while the Hungarian sword is taking an active part in the struggle for a new Europe, Hungarian brains are engaged in the gigantic task of building up that reconstructed Europe.

"Our past is here in the soil beneath our feet. Where the ploughshare bites into the earth, it turns up the bones of

Magyars of the Árpád era, of warriors who sacrificed their lives for Hungarian independence in the frontier fortresses. But the courage and pure spirit of that subterranean Hungary live in our souls. The true-born Magyars of the Great Plain and the lands beyond the Tisza may well be said to have been the European nation that suffered most in the course of history. *This nation has remained faithful to its traditions, and even in its darkest days preserved intact its original Magyar cultural heritage.* It is these Magyars who are standing fast on the battlefields; it was these Magyars who with heart and soul adopted the idea of a new, more just and more humane Europe. These Magyars have always regarded loyalty as one of the major virtues, *have always looked upon liberty and independence as their greatest treasure, but at the same time have always been ready to co-operate with the rest of mankind.*"

Speaking of the programme of work of the summer university courses the Minister made special mention of the *minority lectures*, which were proof that it was Hungary's intention to settle the affairs of her minorities according to the principles laid down by St. Stephen. He then addressed a welcome in German and Italian to the foreign students assembled in Debrecen.

"*In this country*" — he said — "*whatever circumstances arose and whatever world crises threatened, we were never able to live any life other than the Magyar life based upon our thousand-year-old Magyar traditions.* Our place, our destiny, have been determined by the fact that we are Magyars. We beg our foreign visitors to take note of everything they see. We have nothing to hide, nor shall we ever have. For centuries, at the cost of great sacrifices, we defended European civilization. *The Magyars have always won admiration by the way they have remained Magyar and by their ingrained honesty, patriotism, courage and chivalry.*"

THE PREMIER'S SPEECH.

"Europe and the Magyars."

When the applause following the Minister of Education's speech had subsided, the Premier, M. Nicholas de Kállay, delivered an address on "Europe and the Magyars". Recalling the time when Hungary was first occupied by the Magyars, he pointed out that even then the Carpathians and the Danube Valley were a key position, the importance of which was shown by the continual struggle for their possession waged by the various peoples. How important this position was and how difficult to hold, might be seen from the very short periods of time it usually remained in the possession of one people. Then came a race, much smaller in number and with much fewer fighting men than the nations that preceded it, which for the first time in history was able to take permanent possession of this land full of the nameless graves of people of other nations. *The strength and stability of the Magyars unexpectedly stopped the gap through which ever-recurring dangers from the East had been swooping down on Europe, and thus made European security possible.* "This in itself" — continued the Premier — "should be enough to make the nations of Europe pay special attention to this thousand-year-old country and its even more ancient people. But this is not all. Hungary's role did not consist solely in standing fast and creating security in this restless part of Europe. *Her role was also to adopt and spread Western Christian civilization and later on to defend it.* Great European historians never tire of emphasizing the importance of the circumstance that when St. Stephen made his choice between the two then known systems of Christian civilization, *he adopted the Western, Roman form.* And they are not at fault in attributing great importance to his choice. Not only the fate our own country, but also that of the whole of Europe would have been radically different, had the saintly king chosen the other alternative. The fact may be established, and in these historical times it is a source of courage and strength to me to be able to say, that had the king of Hungary chosen the East, Western civilization would not be what it is today, or at the best its influence would be confined

to a narrower area than at present. *In this sense Europe as we know it was certainly saved by the Hungarian nation.* It is most probable that the basin of the Alps would not have provided Europe with an equally strong line of defence, and it is certain that without Hungary peaceful development in Europe would have been retarded for several centuries.

"Hungary is the only country to the east of the Alps and the Western coast of the Adriatic through which all the vibrations of the great European movements have passed. The only country which completely adopted all the modern ideas of the West. *She did not, however, copy them slavishly, but assimilated them to make them fit her own individual pattern, adding to them values of her own. Hungary does not imitate the West, is not its unthinking vassal; she is its worthy partner who labours together with the nations of the West for common aims and common ideals.*"

Here the Premier passed in review the intellectual development in Hungary from the Middle Ages on. In connection with this subject, amongst other things, he said:

"In Hungary's intellectual development we find, not only the achievements, knowledge and ideas of Europe, but also a European soul, a European spirit: the consciousness that we must be ready to do things for what in a wider sense is our home, that we belong to it, and that what benefits it will benefit us too. When after the victorious conclusion of the present war the reconstruction of Europe actually begins, there will be a great need of those who for centuries have been working to establish a brotherhood of European nations.

"All the developments achieved by Europe during the past thousand years, the very spirit of Europe, are to be found in Magyar culture and in the Magyar spirit. Hungary is also the last outpost of European civilization; for what lies beyond Hungary — though I do not wish to deny that it possesses a past and a civilization of its own — is different from us and from the rest of Europe. The factors of which I have spoken as having shaped Europe stopped short at Hungary's eastern frontier, and it was therefore impossible for the same spirit, the same European ideas which so easily penetrated as far as the circle of the Carpathians and flooded their western basin, to spread beyond them . . .

"Such was our role in Europe, and such is Europe, and this is what will shape our future too. *We must remain Europeans.* Our past shows that this people of the wide steppes cannot bear the close atmosphere of a restricted space; we have always had our windows wide open to the whole world, and the freer the air, the more we feel our own strength and individuality. We have discovered that *the more European we are, the better Magyars we shall be.*"

Later on the Premier said:

"So far the development of European civilization has on the whole been uniform, but now it faces a crisis that will determine whether unity can be preserved or not. If the next few years or decades preserve that unity, it will be easy for us with our thousand-year-old European spirit to remain in harmony with the new spirit of Europe. If they do not, it is Hungary's duty to join her friends in the struggle for a better, a more humane, Europe, a Europe calculated to satisfy Hungary's needs; for our role in Europe is determined also by the circumstance that *we never wish to be anything but Magyars.*"

The conclusion of the Premier's speech was greeted with a storm of applause by his audience, who thronged round him to express their congratulations.

Dr. Ernest Flachbarth, university professor, then outlined the programme of the nationality courses, M. Vid Mihelics that of the Press courses, and Dr. Béla Pukanszky, university professor, that of the higher courses for teachers of German. After the Mayor, M. Alexander Kölcsey, had delivered a welcoming address, the ceremony concluded with a closing speech by Dr. John Hankiss, university professor.

When the ceremony of inauguration was over M. de Kállay had a long conversation with the foreign students attending the summer courses and then paid a visit to the Vice Chancellor of the University.

State Secretary Pataky on Hungary's Nationality Policy.

At the opening of the nationality courses Dr. Tibor Pataky, State Secretary in the Prime Ministry, spoke of Hungary's nationality policy and described its principles as

follows. In our dealings with the nationalities we must adhere to the principles rooted in our historical Constitution. The nationalities were entitled to develop freely their spiritual and economic resources, in particular they were entitled to the free use of their mother-tongues. A further fundamental principle was that the form assumed by a full assertion of nationality rights and its methods were determined by our own peculiar forms of development. Dr. Pataky outlined the attitude that must be adopted by the administrative departments. A uniform plan must be carried out so far as our nationality policy is concerned. People could not be permitted to think everybody was free to save the country according to his own ideas.

The fulfilment of minority aspirations would have to be made to harmonize with the security of the Hungarian State. This imposed duties on the Magyars and the nationalities alike. The members of national minorities must behave with absolute loyalty towards the State and each one of its citizens. This was an imperative condition. Let them show in all their activities, in their organisations, their cultural and economic institutions, their literature and their Press, that they were loyal sons of Hungary. The national life of minorities must not be allowed to develop to the point of nationality exclusiveness. If here and there excesses were noticeable, it was to be hoped that they would soon cease.