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BANQUET IN LONDON

BY

FRANCIS HERCZEG

The fires of war are still blazing; but the parasites who batten on destruction are beginning to creep out of their dens. What can the appearance of those men, popularly described as "the hyenas of the battlefield", mean? Is the end near? Or are they so impatient that they cannot wait till the day of plunder and a division of the spoils arrives? For them the world war is merely a gamble in which they hold no stakes, though determined to share in the winnings.

In the bucket-shop of war speculation the boldest and most cynical broker is perhaps Edward Beneš. After the most woeful political bankruptcy ever known to history, in which he and his republic were swept away, he has turned up again and is seriously attempting to give the Allied Powers council and advice. What does this mean? Does he really believe that people have such bad memories? or does he count upon the commonsense judgment of the world having been upset by war-psychosis?

At the birth of the Paris Peace Treaties, which entrusted the maintenance of peace in Central Europe jointly to Czecho-Slovakia, Rumania and Yugoslavia, Beneš played the rôle of a busy midwife. It will be remembered how the geographical, historical and ethnographical data on which the new Power system was based were falsified: *When they could make patriotic capital out of it, Beneš and his accomplices themselves boasted of the trick with which they had improved their position in Trianon.* Their Power system was in fact like a pyramid set on its apex in mockery of all the natural laws of equilibrium.

The criterion of the value of any political system is the power of resistance its machinery is able to display in difficult circumstances. The three Trianon States collapsed,

two of them in heaps of rubble, at the first breath of wind denoting the advent of changing conditions. A telephone message from Berlin was enough to do away with the Czecho-Slovak Republic and send its President flying. Without attempting to resist, Greater Rumania became Lesser Rumania the moment she was given to understand that this was the wish of the neighbouring Powers. And when the van of the German army approached the frontiers of Yugoslavia, that country split in two. During the twenty years of their existence these three States did not even attempt to accomplish the mission for which they had been created.

Not long ago the former President of the Czecho-Slovak Republic made a speech at a banquet in the Liberal Club, London. On reading what he said we are struck by the fantastic assurance with which he reckoned on the political ignorance of his audience. A few months ago the slogan adopted by public opinion in Western Europe was that the mistakes of the Paris Peace Treaties must not be repeated; *and now in London Beneš again recommended the Little Entente, that inverted pyramid, as an ideal war aim.*

An interesting fact is that he is less bitter against Germany than against Hungary, upon whom he would fain invoke the vengeance of the Allied Powers. The reason is that Germany *merely* put an end to the independent Czech Republic, while Hungary is a country that in given circumstances might be plundered. It will perhaps be worth while to examine more exhaustively the part of his speech dealing with Hungary. *His most serious accusation against this country is that it is ruled by a feudal aristocratic class.* We heard the same accusation from his lips in Trianon; but both there and in London he was careful not to cite the Hungarian code of laws in support of his statements. Yet if class-rule exist, there must be *some* trace of it in the laws of the country. Beneš, however, is content to trust the axiom that if something — even a lie — is repeated again and again, the average man will come to believe it. But it is curious that he should inveigh against Hungarian feudalism in England, the only country in Europe where there are still many romantic remains of aristocratic class-rule. The most casual observer of Hungarian life must see clearly that

there has been no trace of class-rule in this country for a hundred years. And in the field of social provision the plundered and impoverished Hungarian State has made greater progress than the victors of the last war.

Another of Beneš's indictments is that Hungary joined the war with the same methods and for the same aim as Germany: the wish to destroy the pre-war States of Central Europe. This statement reveals a cynical contempt of the political maturity of his hearers; for every newspaper reader in London ought to know that when Hungary entered the war it was too late to destroy Czecho-Slovakia or Yugoslavia, since both of them had already ceased to exist. Bohemia was by that time a German Protectorate secure against any design to destroy her that Hungary may have cherished. Rumania, the third State of the Little Entente, is today Hungary's comrade-in-arms on the Russian front. Beneš is naturally as well aware of all this as we are; but he seems to have had great faith in the ignorance of his British audience.

Beneš went on to say that Hungary had violated the obligations voluntarily undertaken by her towards her neighbours. She had occupied considerable areas of their territories by violence. Did Hungary actually violate any obligation *voluntarily* undertaken? It is to be hoped that even Beneš does not regard the Trianon Edict, which Hungary was forced to accept and against which she has always protested, as a *voluntarily* undertaken obligation! The only other obligation was the treaty of perpetual friendship concluded with Yugoslavia. *This treaty was favourably received by Hungarian public opinion; for the Magyars to a certain extent sympathized with the brave Serb people, though their feelings were not reciprocated.* And now, how did matters stand as regards the treaty of perpetual friendship? Shortly after it had been ratified a peculiar situation arose: by means of a military *coup d'état* the Head of the Yugoslav State and the Government with whom Hungary had concluded the treaty, were driven away; at the same time all the political foundations upon which that friendship were to have rested were demolished; and on 10th April the Yugoslav State itself ceased to exist. All

this was a domestic matter concerning Yugoslavia alone; it was none of Hungary's business; but by the elementary rules of logic, if one of the contracting Parties had ceased to exist, the other could neither honour nor violate the contract. *From the ruins of Yugoslavia two new States arose, Greek Oriental Serbia and Roman Catholic Croatia.* A state of guerilla warfare that still continues broke out between the two. To which of them was Hungary linked by ties of perpetual friendship? To Croatia, or to Serbia? The sympathies of the Hungarian people turned more towards the Croats, with whom for eight hundred years they had lived in a close and peaceful alliance probably without a parallel in the history of the world between peoples of different races. The ancient Magyar areas wrested from Hungary by Serbia in Trianon (areas in which the Serbs had always been in the minority) were left unclaimed and at the mercy of predatory bands of Chetniks. There was no organized executive power in those areas; and in these circumstances the Regent of Hungary did no more than his duty when he ordered the Hungarian army to place those unclaimed areas under the protection of the mother-country. Emphasis must be laid on the point that the Hungarian army did not advance beyond the thousand-year-old Hungarian frontiers and did not enter Serb or Croat territory.

At the London banquet Beneš raised the question: "Is Hungary to be allowed to keep the areas that she *stole* from her neighbours?" In one and the same speech Beneš accused the Magyars of arbitrarily *occupying* considerable areas and of *stealing* them. This is a gross confusion of terms; yet, judging by Edward Beneš's past as a statesman, one would have expected him to have a better knowledge of the legal definition of a crime. It would be interesting to know whether any of the members of the Liberal Club could refrain from smiling when Beneš set himself up as the champion of honesty and the defender of right, and whether in their hearts they did not ask what sort of sense of historical right could lead a man to invoke a system of oppression that lasted twenty years as a legal title to those areas and refuse to take cognizance of the thousand years during which the Magyars had lived, worked and shed

their blood for Southern Hungary. *It is true that this was ignored also by the drafters of the Trianon Treaty; but the world now sees the consequences of that mistake.*

There is one passage in Beneš's speech that throws a vivid light on his involved mentality and audacity, — the one in which he says that Hungary and Germany must be educated afresh and must go through the same political and ethical revolution. In another place he reveals the aims of his educational programme for them. A régime of a socialist nature must be established in Hungary that would enable the Magyars to enter into new and close co-operation with their three neighbours, the Rumanians, Yugoslavs and Czecho-Slovaks, and would once and for all end the era of lamentable rivalry and territorial disputes. *Beneš's aim is quite clear: he would like to lop off as many Hungarian counties as he could make use of for "strategical" and "economic" purposes, and then put an end to all territorial disputes.* In a word, he would like to educate the Magyars not to feel themselves Magyars any longer.

It would be desirable that the London Liberals should be made to realize that it is the fond wish of the Magyars to live on peaceful, brotherly terms with the Czechs, Yugoslavs and Rumanians, but also that no amount of education and no kind of revolution would ever bring to the surface a section of the population ready to apathetically acquiesce in the dismemberment of the country. There is no such unprincipled section of the population in Hungary, and such probably does not exist in any country. Has Edward Beneš forgotten what the first act of the Hungarian Dictatorship of the Proletariate was as soon as it had organized its red army? Its first act was to drive the Czechs out of Upper Hungary; for in the heart of every Magyar there lives and will continue to live the determination to win back at the first opportunity every part of our ancient heritage wrested from us by force of arms or guile. Were this not so, we should not deserve to be called a nation. Our people have always been content with the soil bequeathed by their ancestors; *they have never wished to go beyond the natural boundaries of the Carpathians; but they have always regarded all alien occupation as illegal,*

unjust and transitory. Even a hundred and fifty years of Turkish occupation was not able to root out national feeling.

But there is something that Beneš forgot to mention. He did not tell his audience that it was only under the protection and with the support of the Great Powers that the States of the Little Entente had been able to exist at all. What a piece of historical irony! For centuries, while the Magyars were in possession of the ridges of the Carpathians, the whole of Europe naturally expected Hungary to act as a bulwark against dangers from the East; but when for the time being the Czechs and Rumanians occupied the Hungarian frontier ranges, they considered it natural that Europe should protect them. *The difference between these two points of view entitles the Magyars to insist upon their being the nucleus of order and civilization in the Danube Valley.*

Beneš has already given proof of his power to harm Hungary. This is undeniable. But he has yet to prove to history that he can be of any use either to his own people or to Europe. The London banquet again witnesses to the fact that European civilization has no greater enemy than the type of adventurer who is out to make a profit from human suffering and the death of millions.

BIRTH OF ALEXANDER PETŐFI — 120 YEARS AGO

BY

MICHAEL DARABOS

The Hungarian nation has recalled with affectionate reverence the fact that on New Year's Day, 120 years ago, — during an unusually bitter-cold night, while travelling by cart from one village to another — the wife of a poor butcher gave birth to that marvellous genius whose death was as mystical as his birth had been. This child was Alexander Petőfi, most aptly characterized perhaps in the words of the great French poet, Francois Coppée, who declared — an opinion not inspired by the natural prepossession of Petőfi's own people, but by the objective appreciation of a fellow-poet: — "*Petőfi ranks among the ten greatest poets in the world*". And it would indeed be difficult to determine which of the ten immortals may claim to rank first and which must rank tenth; for they are all peers — all of equal rank. There can be no doubt, however, that *among the greatest poets in the world not one has voiced a love of liberty and independence, a yearning for the advancement of the lower classes of his countrymen and a fanatical devotion to his race, in more fervent strains of lyrical enthusiasm than the wonderful Hungarian poet who was ready to die for the ideas he professed and died on the field of battle fighting in defence of the liberty of his nation in that struggle for independence (in 1848—49) in which the Hungarian National Defence soldiers humiliated one of the greatest Powers in the world — the Austrian Empire — so utterly that that Empire was compelled to plead for the aid of another Great Power (Russia) to overthrow the small but heroic Hungarian people.*

Alexander Petőfi was born in the Great Hungarian Lowlands and met his death in that part of Transylvania which today is not under Hungarian rule, — thus bridging

over the distance separating the mother country and the "lesser homeland". He was a son of the people, and amid the roar of cannon and the clash of steel was buried in a common grave with his Hungarian brethren, — as in one of his poems he had desired and foreseen. But the vista of time has not dimmed the brightness of his figure; and he is still the most living and the youngest of Hungarian poets.

His genius broke through the narrow limits prescribed by his mother tongue, forcing its way over frontiers of countries and continents; *today he is being read in twenty different languages, and foreign countries have accorded him a place among the small number of the titans of world literature.* Bronze statues have been raised to his memory, streets and *public squares, parks and a literary society have been named after him; and his statue stands in Buffalo, in the United States of North America.* He was only twenty-six when he died; but he has risen to the stratosphere of world-fame. We Hungarians, when we mourn his premature loss, *wonder to what heights he might have risen, had he attained the age of a literary patriarch, — if he had not been pierced to the death, in the battle of Segesvár, by a Cossack lance.*

Not his poetic genius alone, — other spiritual forces too helped to spread the all-conquering spell of his name over the whole world. His life was a poet's dream come true. The young hero who sword and lyre in hand served the cause of liberty and in the flower of his youth was swept into the dark mouth of Hades, in his career shows a moving resemblance to the tragic fate of the young heroes of ancient poetry, — of *Adonis and Achilles and Siegfried*, who would seem to symbolize the nostalgia of mankind for eternal youth and a never-fading spring. Petöfi's fate has touched the deepest and most sensitive chords of the folk-soul; and that is why his inspiring force still lives and radiates its influence.

Petöfi was a man of moderation and of the strictest probity, — a man of a proud, strong and pure character who took himself and his fellow-men seriously. The revolutionary restlessness of his age swept him too off his feet; but he held himself far aloof from its Bohemian superficiality

and shallowness. He showed a touching tenderness in his love of and provision for his parents; he repeatedly wrote of them in his poetry, speaking of his "old folks" with the same cordial affection as Burns of his father: while he wove round the brow of his wife a starry diadem composed of the most beautiful love-poems in world-literature. Hungarian literature he enriched with the gift of a peerless collection of songs in celebration of married love. The simplicity and grandeur of his personality is revealed by his relations with his fellow-poets. He greeted John Arany's great epic, "Toldi", with estatic delight; Maurice Jókai, the novelist, he regarded as his brother; — while for Michael Tompa, a poet much younger than himself, he showed a loving appreciation.

His incredibly sensitive soul — a characteristically lyrical soul — echoed the currents of thought of his age as sea-shells echo the murmur of the waves. In his soul love of his country and a yearning for liberty blared and thundered. His patriotism was no mere rhetorical theme; nor was his art a game being played about his own person: both were life in deadly earnest. He loved his nation; and to him that meant feeling responsible for everything happening in the country. *He was one of those March youths who in a spirit of revolution started the Hungarian movement for liberty; and the poem written by him at the time became the battle-song of that movement.* Petöfi in himself always identified poet and man. He was ready to answer for every word he had ever written either in verse or in prose; — and he always answered as a man of honour answers for his word.

KING FERDINAND OF RUMANIA (V.)

BY

ZSOMBOR DE SZASZ

V. THE PEACE¹

In the previous article it was briefly mentioned that Field-Marshal Mackensen, dissatisfied with the Rumanian attitude and the endless delaying of the peace negotiations, denounced the armistice. This led to the fall of the war Cabinet of J. Brătianu, who had been the soul and moving spirit of the war against the Central Powers and of the dilatory policy in regard to the peace negotiations. The king entrusted General Averescu with the formation of a peace Cabinet, and the latter chose for his Ministers men who had not served in any previous Administration and who had no pronounced leanings towards any Party. He offered a seat to M. M. Manoilescu, who refused it on the plea that he was a Francophile. "This, — "commented General Averescu in his Memoirs," — may be an aspect of patriotism, but I confess I do not understand it. To view the interests of one's country from the point of view of one's personal sympathies and relationships is a thing that passes my comprehension. The General shut his eyes to the fact that the reason why the victors refused to have any dealings with Brătianu, and why at first the Germans had refused to have dealings with the king, was because they nourished "personal sympathies" towards the British and the French and were held responsible for the war. Averescu himself owed his appointment to the circumstance that he was regarded as being sufficiently neutral towards both sides. His all too simple policy was "to start negotiations but not to conclude peace at any price." This was a lofty axiom, but somewhat difficult to

¹ See previous articles in the August, October and December 1942 issues and January 1943 issue of this review.

realise, since the Central Powers wanted peace at any price — the price, of course, to be paid by the vanquished.

Averescu's first act, as was told in the previous article, was to ask for a prolongation of the armistice and for a personal interview with Mackensen for the purpose of discussing the possibilities of peace.

The prolongation of the armistice for another 20 days, until the 22nd of February, was granted without any difficulty, and the meeting between the two soldiers took place in Buftea, at the country house of Prince Stirbey, on the 18th.

The discussion was conducted in a friendly spirit. Averescu's impression was that the peace conditions would not be hard. The army would not be subjected to any humiliating proceedings, and might even remain mobilised in order, possibly, to be used against the Bolsheviks. A part of the Dobrudja would have to be ceded to the Bulgarians, but the frontier rectification on the Hungarian side would be a small matter.

The difficulty was the dynastic question. Mackensen represented the original German standpoint that the reigning House must be removed. He was probably unaware that the Austro-Hungarian statesmen had no desire for a change of dynasty. He returned to the subject as they were sitting at dinner.

"It is wrong," he said, "not to profit by this occasion to get rid of the dynasty; everyone in Bucharest has assured me that the present dynasty is a catastrophe for the country which should not be allowed to continue."

The Prime Minister could not say much in favour of the king, but he had such faith in his own powers of persuasion that he begged the Field Marshal to procure him an audience with the German Emperor. This the latter promised.

All this was most hopeful; Mackensen, says Averescu in his *Memoirs*, proved himself a real well-wisher of Rumania. The only drawback was, that these negotiations were of a "private" character; Mackensen had no power either to negotiate or to conclude peace. That was the domain of the diplomats, and their time was at hand, for the negotiations

at Brest-Litovsk had just been broken off and they had been set free. On February 23 Count Czernin and Kühlmann arrived in Bucharest. Thenceforth matters took a different course.

On the day after their arrival the two Ministers had a conversation with the Prime Minister. The discussion was confined to the question of the Dobrudja, which formed the crucial point of the peace negotiations. The Bulgarians were threatening to desert the alliance in case they did not obtain the Dobrudja, so the two Ministers had to be intransigent on this subject. Averescu suddenly found himself "in an entirely new situation." Czernin, to save that situation, proposed that Averescu should obtain an audience for him from King Ferdinand. "My idea, was," — writes Count Czernin, — "to explain to the King that he could now make peace, with some small territorial losses, it is true, but retaining his crown; whereas, if he continued the war, he could not count on our forbearance."

The meeting between King Ferdinand and Count Czernin took place on February 27 at Răcăciuni. Count Czernin has told the story of the meeting.

"We arrived at midday in Focșani and went on by car to the Rumanian lines, where I was received by a few Rumanian officers. We passed the lines in cars placed at our disposal by the Germans and drove to the railway station of Padureni. Here a special train awaited me in which we continued the journey to Răcăciuni, arriving a little after five o'clock.

"The King's train arrived a few minutes later and I immediately went round to his carriage. Our talk lasted about twenty minutes.

"As the King showed no disposition to begin the conversation, I took the initiative and said that I had not come to sue for peace, but solely as a messenger of the Emperor Charles, who notwithstanding Rumania's treachery was disposed to act with leniency and forbearance if King Ferdinand would consent to conclude peace *immediately* on the terms fixed by the four Allied Powers, to communicate which was the purpose of my present visit.

"Should the King refuse to accept these terms, the war

would inevitably be continued and this would mean the end of Rumania and of the dynasty. Our military superiority was already considerable, and now that our forces had been liberated from the Baltic to the Black Sea, it would be an easy matter for us to increase this superiority within the shortest possible time. We knew that Russia would soon be without ammunition, and if hostilities were to be resumed, the kingdom and the dynasty would have ceased to exist within six weeks at most.

"The King did not contradict me, but he complained that the conditions were terribly hard. Without the Dobrudja Rumania would be suffocated. The most that could be envisaged, if the worse came to the worst, was the restoration of the old Dobrudja.

"I said, if he thought our terms hard, I should ask him what would have been his if his troops had entered Budapest. For the rest I was prepared to guarantee that Rumania would not be cut off from the sea, but would be granted a free outlet towards Constanza.

"The King reiterated his complaints as to the severity of our conditions and assured me that he would never be able to find a Cabinet that would accept them.

"I observed that the formation of a government was Rumania's internal affair, but that in my personal opinion a Cabinet with Marghiloman at its head would accept the conditions in order to save the country. I could only repeat that the peace terms of the Four Powers were unalterable. If the King refused them, we should obtain four weeks hence a peace much more favourable to ourselves than the one which we now proposed and which Rumania should be happy to accept. I told him, "continued Czernin," that we were willing to lend our diplomatic assistance towards the acquisition of Bessarabia, so that Rumania would gain more than she lost.

"The King replied that he cared nothing for Bessarabia, which was 'polluted with Bolshevism' and that the Dobrudja could never be given up. For the rest it had needed the strongest pressure to make him declare war on the Central Powers. Then he returned to remove in his eyes some of the obstacles to the cession.

"We descended to details, and . . . I finally asked him to give me a definite answer within forty-eight hours, whether or not he was willing to negotiate with us on the basis of our proposals."

It may not be without interest to set beside this recital Queen Marie's description of Rumania's "Ordeal":

"It was awful, in every way awful . . . Czernin gave Nando no hope at all; the peace conditions are absolutely unacceptable, but if we do not agree to them we are, according to them, to be swept off the face of the earth. The country is to disappear, to be divided up amongst Austria, Bulgaria, Germany and Turkey. If Nando does not want to accept peace now and on the terms they dictate, then the two Emperors wish him to know that they will pursue him with relentless resentment and never more lift a hand to protect him or any member of his family."

"The result," — concludes Count Czernin in his War Memoirs, "was the appointment of a Marghiloman Cabinet and the continuation of the negotiations."

But the road to a Marghiloman Cabinet was not so simple.

On March 2 a Crown Council was held, at which Take Ionescu and Brătianu maintained their previous standpoint; the former advocating resistance *à l'outrance*, the latter urging delay and a cunningly organised drawing out of the proceedings, with the added advice that in case the government chose to conclude peace and the Central Powers insisted on the surrender of the Dobrudja, all the conditions should be accepted *en bloc*, without discussion, in order to demonstrate that the peace was not a negotiated peace but one accepted under duress. Such an attitude would, in his opinion, make a great moral impression on the world.

The Prime Minister adhered to his own standpoint; he was against further resistance. The Council dispersed without anything conclusive having been settled.

Next day, on the 3rd of March, another Crown Council was held. In the midst of it a Note was handed to the Prime Minister in which the Central Powers denounced the armistice, demanded the immediate demobilisation of eight

divisions, free transport for their troops to Ukraine, the removal of the foreign military missions, etc.

This, said General Averescu, was the result of the "Balkan policy of tergiversation."

But the tergiversation continued: again no decision was taken. The Prime Minister had a consultation with the army leaders, and from them gathered the impression that resistance was possible but not for long.

On the 5th a third Crown Council was held.

The king spoke first and, nearly weeping, announced that the government had decided to accept the conditions of the enemy and to appoint a peace delegation that same day. The present sacrifices, he added, would be compensated for in the future.

The Prime Minister gave it as his opinion that there was no other way of saving the dynasty.

Brătianu and Take Ionescu reiterated their conviction as to the advisability of resistance, and found an unexpected support in the young Crown Prince Carol, who not only on his own account but also "in the name of the Queen and all Rumanian women" declared that they wished to go on fighting to the finish. "It is our hope," he concluded dramatically — "that there will be found a man patriotic enough to keep the King from signing so ignominious a peace". As a matter of fact, there was such a man — Take Ionescu; but he was not the man to lead the country in times such as those which Rumania was then encountering.

After the conclusion of the Council Averescu saw the king and told him that in view of the Crown Prince's speech the Cabinet, impaled between two conflicting policies, did not feel itself entitled to remain in office.

The king exclaimed: "You, too, want to forsake me and make me bear the entire responsibility alone!"

"Sire, "— replied Averescu, —" we do not forsake you, but we do not like to be regarded as unpatriotic when we give proof of the highest patriotism and the most unlimited self-denial."

"The ebullition of youth..." murmured the king soothingly.

Meanwhile the preliminary peace negotiations (of which

more later on), had commenced and were advancing satisfactorily. Nevertheless a few days later Averescu was once again assailed by a doubt as to whether or not he possessed his sovereign's confidence. The king had expressed a wish to see Marghiloman, which could not but be regarded as a suspicious sign. Averescu pointed out that as things stood it would be a mistake for the king to see so decided a Germanophile as Marghiloman. But the king reassured him that his wish had nothing to do with politics, and there was nothing left for Averescu but to arrange the audience.

On March 12 Averescu again saw the king. The impression, he said, was universally gaining ground that his administration did not possess His Majesty's confidence. "I am used to that, — he said bluntly, —" but my colleagues are not... In the present crisis perfect confidence is indispensable."

The king hesitated, but finally confessed with some reluctance that he wished for a change of administration. Thereupon Averescu resigned, and a few days later, on March 19, Marghiloman formed a new government.

It had not been difficult to foresee that Averescu's term of office would be brief. He never had been *persona grata* with the king, and had possessed no clear-cut policy of his own. He was popular with the soldiers and with the great masses, but far from popular in the political circles of Yassi and Bucharest. More important than this, he enjoyed no favour with the victors.

"The present Government, — said Kühlmann to Marghiloman, —" with its constant tacking, must be handled with great caution. But how can we get rid of these men? We cannot hope to achieve anything serious so long as they are there to make mischief."

The king was perfectly aware that the man with whom the Central Powers wished to deal was Marghiloman. The latter had already had a conversation with Czernin and they had come to an agreement. Czernin had offered to make certain concessions and had declared that they would be made to none but an administration presided over by Marghiloman.

Czernin writes in his Memoirs:

"Before Marghiloman made up his mind to form a government, he entered into negotiations with me in order to learn the precise conditions of peace.

"The first and most onerous condition, the surrender of the Dobrudja, he accepted because he understood that in view of our binding obligation towards Bulgaria there was no getting out of it. As regarded our territorial demands, I explained to Marghiloman that my chief concern was to have permanently friendly relations with Rumania after the war, and that I consequently wished to reduce these demands to a measure which would not seem to her intolerable. On the other hand he, Marghiloman, must understand that I was bound up to a certain point to content Hungarian aspirations; and Marghiloman, as an old and experienced parliamentarian, saw clearly enough how I was placed. In the end we agreed that there should be no talk of the transfer of populous towns such as Turnu-Severin and Okna, and that in a general way our original demands should be reduced by about half. Marghiloman declared himself ready to accept this compromise."

While this ministerial crisis was going on, the peace negotiations were making good progress. On March 5 the armistice was prolonged, and on the same day a peace delegation which had been appointed two days before under the leadership of C. Argetoianu, settled the preliminary conditions of peace. The armistice was to last fourteen days, and under the preliminary settlement the final treaty was to be concluded within this period. The peace conditions were the following: 1. Rumania was to surrender the Dobrudja up to the line of the Danube; 2. the Central Powers must guarantee her an outlet towards the Black Sea; 3. Rumania must accept in principle such frontier rectifications as would be demanded by Hungary; 4. she must likewise accept such economic demands as might be made; 5. eight Rumanian divisions must be demobilised immediately, and the rest of the army as soon as peace was reestablished between Rumania and Russia; 6. the Rumanian troops must at once evacuate the occupied Austro-Hungarian territories; 7. the Rumanian Government must facilitate the transport of the troops of the Central Powers across Moldavia and

Bessarabia; 8. Rumania must dismiss all foreign military missions.

Thus the foundations of the peace were laid by the time Marghiloman came to form his Cabinet.

Negotiations were resumed on March 22, this time in the royal palace of Cotroceni, in the very same room in which, in 1916, there had been held the memorable Crown Council which had decided Rumania's entry into the war.

The leaders of the delegations were, for Germany, R. Kühlmann, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs; for Austro-Hungary, Count Czernin, Austro-Hungarian Foreign Minister; for Bulgaria, the Bulgarian Prime Minister Radoslavof, for Turkey, the Grand Vizier Talaat Pasha, and for Rumania, the Prime Minister A. Marghiloman.

The negotiations went smoothly on the whole. The representatives of the Central Powers were bent on hastening them, and the only question which caused any difficulty was that of the Dobrudja; but the Bulgarians insisted on its surrender.

Late in the night of March 25 the preliminary protocols were signed, and the leaders of the foreign delegations left Rumania, not to return until the signature of the definitive treaty would require their presence.

Although full agreement had been reached in principle in regard to fundamental matters, more than a month passed before the treaty was actually signed. In the middle of April Count Czernin resigned as a result of the Sixtus Letter, and it was Baron Burian, his successor as Austro-Hungarian Foreign Minister, who, with the other representatives of the allied Four Powers, signed the Treaty of Bucharest on May 7.

The provisions of the treaty were practically identical with those of the preliminary agreements.

That part of the Dobrudja which Bulgaria had lost in 1913 was returned to her; the rest was left as a *condominium* to the victorious Powers, who secured to Rumania an outlet to the Black Sea by way of Constanza.

Practically all the Hungarian demands had been renounced by Czernin. Hungary's sole territorial gain was a narrow strip of country along the frontier, mostly uninha-

bited and wooded mountain regions, with not one single town.

War indemnities were not exacted.

The rest of the clauses were of an economic and military nature and have no interest for us here, seeing that the treaty never came into force.

The losses entailed on Rumania by the Treaty were made good by the fact that the Central Powers agreed to, and indeed assisted in, the reannexation of Bessarabia, lost to Rumania in the course of the nineteenth century.

The Bucharest Treaty was, and is still, described by the Rumanians and their friends as a humiliating, harsh and draconic instrument, a "peace of coercion". The victors, on the other hand, among them Baron Burian, regarded it as moderate and just. Count Czernin writes:

"In Versailles as in St. Germain the representatives of the Central Powers would have been very well satisfied had they been treated in the same manner as the Marghiloman Ministry.

"The Rumanians lost the Dobrudja, but they obtained a safe outlet to the sea; they lost a strip of almost uninhabited hill country and obtained through us Bessarabia. They gained much more than they lost."

When, in the course of the peace negotiations, the Rumanians complained of the harshness of the conditions imposed on them, their opponents were wont to answer: "We should like to see what would be your conditions if you were dictating the peace in Berlin or Budapest!"

That opportunity was vouchsafed them when the Paris treaties came to be concluded. Rumania was not one of the victors; she had not won a single decisive battle during the whole of the war; but she had the good fortune to be on the side of the victors, and she used this favourable situation to plunder all her neighbours. She annexed the Bukovina from Austria, Bessarabia from Russia, and the whole of the Dobrudja from Bulgaria.

As for Hungary: the Treaty of Bucharest would have joined 3,772 square kilometers of Rumanian soil with 22,915 inhabitants to Hungary; the Treaty of Trianon gave to Rumania 103,003 square kilometers of Hungarian land with more than 4 million inhabitants, including 1,661,467 Magyars.