

CZECH AND YUGOSLAV CLAIMS TO AUSTRIAN TERRITORY

The independence of Austria, repeatedly guaranteed by Great Britain, France and Italy, is menaced by dangers, not only from a Germany anxious to carry through an "Anschluss", but also from Czecho-Slovakia and Yugoslavia. We believe it will be opportune to deal briefly — on the basis of a work ("die tschechische Irredenta in Deutschösterreich": Graz, 1928) by Günther Berka — with the ambitions of the Czechs and the Yugoslavs in respect of Austria.

As far back as 1900 Rašin, later Czecho-Slovak Minister of Finance, told his friends that the Czech State to be eventually created must be given access to the sea through Lower Austria.

In Vienna, at the end of 1918, the "Vienna Czech Heart" ("České srdce vídeňské") issued a booklet entitled "Česká Videaň" containing, among other things, the text of an address delivered in Prague and other Czech towns in August, 1918, by *Jetel František*, leader of the Vienna Czechs. The concluding passage of this address ran as follows:

"The Czech State must take possession of the section of Lower Austria lying to the north of the Danube and of Vienna, thus becoming the immediate neighbour of the Southern Slav State. The Czechs of Vienna constitute an economic and cultural bridge between the Slav North and the Slav South joining together the Slavs from the Baltic Sea to the Adriatic".

The same demand was formulated in the same booklet by *Hrdina*, head of the Vienna branch of the Zivnostenská Banka.

On November 20th., 1918, at a meeting of the Minorities Commission of the "Národní Vybor" (National Council), E. Chalupny submitted a motion to the effect that *Vienna and a part of Lower Austria should be incorporated in the Czech State, this involving the frontiers of that State running from the southern corner of Bohemia towards Krems and then along the Danube as far as Tulln and thence through the Wiener Wald as far as Baden and Lake Fertő, that in its turn offering a possibility for union with the Southern Slav State.*

The same conception inspired the notorious work ("Nás stát a svetovy mir" = Our State and World Peace) of *Hanuš Kuffner*, which was handed to the Entente Governments as far back as 1917 and was in 1919 submitted to the Paris Peace Conference by the Czech Peace Delegation. This memorandum suggested the demarcation of the Czech frontiers in a manner providing for the *southern boundary of Czecho-Slovakia reaching to the Danube, the northern frontier of the Southern Slav State to extend to the*

northern boundary of Styria. All that would be left of Austria would be a narrow strip of territory — the "Central Country" ("Stredomezi"), — which would be under joint Czech-Yugoslav administration, to be populated by the Slav inhabitants of Vienna and the Czechs and Slovenes migrating back to the country.

At a meeting of Czechs of Vienna, Lower and Upper Austria, held in the People's Hall of the Vienna Town Hall on January 22nd., 1922, *Zahradnik*, former Czecho-Slovak Minister, made the following statement:

"In view of the high valuation of the Czech currency, the time has come for omissions to be made good and for a beginning to be made in Austria with Czech settlements on a large scale. We must build a Slav corridor from Prague to Trieste".

In 1925, on the occasion of the sixtieth anniversary of the foundation of the Vienna "Beseda" (Association), the "Vidensky Dennik", the organ of the Vienna Czech National Democrats, expressed the hope that the day was not far off when the Slav brethren had joined hands on the banks of the Danube. And in its January 23, 1926, issue the same journal — when welcoming the new Czech Minister in Vienna — stated that the Czechs of Austria constituted a part of the corridor connecting Czecho-Slovakia and Yugoslavia.

"We desire to be" — these were the actual words of the writer — "the outpost on the Danube of our Republic".

The Slovenes also adopted a similar attitude in the question of a corridor. In articles dealing with the solution of the Austrian question which appeared in Nos. 1 and 2 of the 1925/26 volume of the "Cas", the periodical of the Ljubljana Leo Society, *Janko Brejto*, the first Yugoslav Governor of Slovenia, demanded the partition of the whole of Austria, Italy to receive West Carinthia as far as Spittal, together with the Tauern Railway, the rest of Carinthia being allotted to Yugoslavia, together with the Lungau district of Salzburg and the whole of Styria, Germany being given the other districts of Salzburg, as also Upper Austria and the Enns Valley in Styria, and *Czecho-Slovakia receiving Vienna and Lower Austria.* Should it be impossible to realise this solution, it would be necessary to create a buffer state (*état tampon*) out of Vienna, Lower Austria, Styria and East Carinthia, — the territories still remaining to Austria after the surrender of the parts to be allotted to Italy and Yugoslavia —, which

would have Vienna as its centre and would once for all renounce all political ambitions and base its future primarily on economic endeavours. The Governor thought it only natural that the Slav minorities of Austria living along the Czech frontier should be incorporated in Czecho-Slovakia.

According to a report in the January 26, 1927, issue of the "Vidensky Tydennik", the "Ruch", a periodical appearing in Brünn, published an article containing the following statements:

"The day may come when the annexation of Austria to the German Empire will be imminent and when Czecho-Slovakia and Yugoslavia will have a powerful trump card to play — to demand that in the event of an Anschluss Austria should be first divided up, the Slav districts being allotted to the Slav neighbours". In a work published at Cili in 1927 and entitled "Czecho-Slovakia's Historical Claim to a Restoration of the Alpine Provinces wrested from King Ottocar II.

by Rudolph Habsburg, King of Germany, by force and unlawfully", Lilek, Slovene director (headmaster) of a secondary school, expressed the opinion that *the claim of the Czechs to Austria, Styria and Carinthia was an imprescriptible right* similar in character to that by virtue of which the Serbians, Greeks and Bulgarians and Italians too had shaken off the Turkish and Austrian yoke respectively in the Balkan Peninsula and in Toscana, Lombardy and Venice respectively.

From what has been said it may be seen that the idea of a Czech-Yugoslav corridor was mooted at the end of the Great War by the leaders of the Vienna Czech minority, was taken over by the responsible statesmen of the Czecho-Slovak Republic and then made a pivot of Slav policy by Czech and Slovene politicians. The conception of Slav imperialism is ever-present in the minds of the Czechs and the Southern Slavs, who will never forget it.

LITTLE ENTENTE ALLIES "AT HOME"

Messrs. Beneš and Titulescu consistently endeavour to discredit and to thwart the Hungarian revisionist movement by means of the catchword that revision in any case means war. Yet the public opinion of the world is already fully convinced that the Hungarian revisionist programme does not involve any desire of conquest such as that which characterised the policy of the Little Entente during the Great War and has characterised that policy also since the end of the Great War; as also that the Hungarian revisionist movement aims solely and exclusively at a reparation of the injustices committed under the Treaty of Trianon — a reparation to be effected in keeping with the international principles of nationality and self-determination. The demand for a revision is not a question of prestige; for it is the natural consequence of the instinctive conviction (and indeed knowledge) that a dismembered country cannot continue for ever — with open frontiers on all sides and in a state of utter defencelessness which is a direct challenge to its would-be assailants — to hold its own in the iron ring surrounding it formed by neighbours covetous of further expansion. Consequently, the revision thus demanded is simply a matter of life and death for Hungary and at the same time a *sine qua non* of the restoration of the equilibrium of Europe which has been so completely upset.

On the other hand, those who would divert the attention of foreign countries from the excessive character of their armaments, which point to intentions of a by no means peaceful nature, as also from the internal crises prevailing in their countries, by continually bringing charges against Hungary, — while at the same time attempting to frustrate the revision movement by specious catchwords about

the "spiritualisation" of frontiers —, are engaged in making preparations of which they no longer make a secret for the purpose of achieving further conquests.

In our issue for March, 1934, we published a short report on a military manual written by a Serbian staff officer (Lieut-Colonel Kostitch) which contained a veritable "register" of Yugoslavia's territorial claims as against *all* the neighbouring States. The most striking point in this scheme of expansion is undoubtedly the fact that it includes claims also against Rumania, Yugoslavia's ally, from whom the Serbians would take the Rumanian part of the Banate — as far as Arad — on the first opportunity that offers.

Intimation of a fresh — and equally characteristic — manifestation of the imperialistic endeavours of the pan-Serbians is afforded by an article from Prague contained in the January 18th. issue of the Rumanian paper "Vestul", which deals exhaustively with the Rumanian-Yugoslav alliance. It speaks of the Serbians as being unreliable and as enemies of Rumania; for they would actually assail the territorial integrity of their neighbouring ally. In proof of this statement the paper publishes a *Yugoslav map* showing the Yugoslav frontiers advanced far into the territories of Italy, Austria, Greece and Bulgaria; *from Rumania this map annexes the whole Banate as far as Arad, from Hungary trans-Danubia as far as Sopron, the north-eastern section of the Drave District and the region between the Danube and the Tisza in a straight line as far as Arad.* The map bears the following inscription: — "Render unto God the things that are God's and unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's; and render unto us the things that are ours". Below the map is a notice calling upon everyone to join