

DANUBIAN REVIEW

(DANUBIAN NEWS)

VOL. IV., No 3.
B U D A P E S T
AUGUST 1936

PUBLISHED BY THE HUNGARIAN FRONTIER
READJUSTMENT LEAGUE

SINGLE COPY 50 FILL.
SUBSCRIPTION:
ONE YEAR 6 PENGÓ



C O N T E N T S

Hungary's Position in Foreign Politics and the Five Power Conference	<i>Count Stephen Bethlen</i>
Nationality Conditions in Rumania	<i>Dr. Andrew R. Szeben</i>
Hungarian Folk-Songs	<i>Rudolph Boros</i>
Political Mosaic	
How Minorities Live	
The Depopulation of Széklerland	<i>Dr. Ladislas Fritz</i>
Theatre, Literature, Art	
Political Economy	
Sports	

HUNGARY'S POSITION IN FOREIGN POLITICS AND THE FIVE POWER CONFERENCE

by

Count Stephen Bethlen

Former Prime Minister

Everyone must have noticed the change in the European balance of power caused by Italy's victory over Abyssinia and Germany's denial of the military clauses of the Versailles Treaty. The growth of Italy's and Germany's military might and of their weight in international politics may bring about a complete transformation in the European international situation Germany, recognizing the great significance of the moment, has removed the chief obstacle blocking the way to friendly co-operation with Austria by setting aside the differences between the two countries. This has led to a very momentous change in the European political situation, at which we in Hungary have every reason to rejoice, since we well know that no proper and wise, or fairer and more practically expedient settlement of the Danube Valley problems is feasible without an Italo-German co-operation approved of by Great Britain.

Ever since the end of the war, that is to say since I have been taking an active interest in international politics, three things have been palpably clear to me, namely, that the unsolved problems of Central Europe cannot be settled without Germany's co-operation; that they may not be settled without Italy's; and that Russia must not be allowed to have any influence in the Danube Valley, unless Europe's leading statesmen want seed sown that will produce a fresh crop of fatal conflicts in that territory. If what they want to see is the re-emergence of a stable situation in the Danube Basin, the *sine qua non* of their desire is that, instead of buttressing the present worm-eaten and tottering *status quo* with the sham pillars and feeble stanchions of worthless treaties, they must effect a new political and economic readjustment on the basis of a well-considered and constructive plan. The programme of work must be elaborated conjointly by Italy and Germany. It must contain arrangements compatible with the rightful interests of those two Great Powers, and provide the possi-

bility of a reconciliation, based on equity, between the various minor states of the Danube Valley.

This being so, Hungarian foreign policy will be confronted in the near future with tasks of the first magnitude. For to make the building up of a constructive programme possible at all, preparations are necessary, and upon Hungary, together with Austria whose well-interpreted interests are identical with ours in this matter, will devolve the task of collecting the bricks — data — and speeding up the work with unflagging zeal.

Hitherto we could not have undertaken to perform this task, just because of the Italo-German differences arising out of the Austro-German conflict. But now that we can, we must clearly realize that the disappearance of obstacles does not mean that other things will follow of themselves. Clearing away the crumbling ruins of an old house will not build a new one on the site. It is true that Italo-German co-operation in the Danube Valley has become virtually possible, now that the rubble cumbering the site to be re-built has been cleared off, but co-operation for the purpose of re-building has not yet materialized, and no new house will be erected until the two master-builders sit down in conference with the owners of the site and elaborate a suitable plan of the new building. The plan must also conform, not only to building regulations in general, but also to higher necessities, especially if a new pegging-out of the site, i. e. the expropriation of adjacent territory, becomes necessary — as in this case it undoubtedly will — and the need arises to come to terms with the owners of neighbouring property.

In order that Europe should be able to judge in the matter, those whose joint interest it is that the house should be built must come to a mutual understanding. This is why I emphasize that now, when there is a possibility of elaborating, together

with Austria, a constructive programme to solve all the questions of the Danube Basin, Hungarian foreign policy is confronted with a task more dignified and more serious, but also more difficult and more responsible than any since before the war. In the first place Italy, Germany and Poland must be induced to support the scheme; for if through some agreement the question of a Rhine Locarno is settled, those three countries will have authority enough to carry the matter before Europe — that is to say, have Europe familiarize itself gradually with their plan, and hasten its materialization.

Many will probably say that this is where the conception of a *bloc* policy emerges again. They will assert that this plan would produce a new Central European *bloc* bent on readjusting matters in the Danube Valley to suit its own aims, and that if those aims are not to be realized otherwise, it would not hesitate to have resort to violence. It is easy to refute this false reasoning. In the first place, those who voice this suspicion or accusation are just the very ones who for eighteen years have themselves been pursuing a *bloc* policy in the most literal sense of the word. They have rounded up practically the whole of Europe into one gigantic *bloc*, which comprises — besides France — Russia, the Little Entente, and the Balkan Alliance to which the name of *bloc* was given by its spiritual sponsors themselves and which, in fact, was created to keep watch over every movement made by Germany, Hungary and Bulgaria, to minimize their influence, to keep them in the status of second-rate nations with curtailed rights, and to be able to threaten them with sanctions and retaliation should they attempt to recover their equality or demand the revision of some unjust provision contained in the peace treaties.

Yes! There does already exist in Europe a great, a powerful and united *bloc*, formed to petrify in a legal system, and for all times, the injustices and inequalities created by the peace treaties. Everybody, then, is entitled to object to the formation of new groups of states in international relations — and it is indeed true that the division of the nations of Europe into two great camps would be a serious menace to peace — except those who for eighteen years have done nothing else but labour to form, strengthen and knit together with closer ties groups of this kind.

Or do the diplomats of those countries imagine that what is permissible for them is taboo to others, and that what they are doing does not endanger peace, but becomes a crime against a peaceful cooperation of the nations if done by others? Do they not see that if they maintain a *bloc* of alliances created by themselves and go on settling the questions that keep cropping up, — not according to the demands of justice, but so as best to serve the interests and ambitions, however unreasonable, of some member of their *bloc*, then, sooner or later, they will compel the rest of the nations, unless they are content to remain in a defenceless state, to enter into counter *blocs*.

France and Russia complain of the German danger; the Little Entente foresees danger from Hungary; and the Balkan *Bloc* was formed allegedly to curb Bulgaria's greed. All this, however, is merely an excuse to justify themselves. Has Hungary not a greater right to speak of Franco-Russo-Czech interference? Or was not the pressure exerted on Bulgaria by the four nations of the Balkan *Bloc* well-nigh intolerable? These are no inventions of imagination, but bitter facts, proved by the experience and sufferings of eighteen long years. Or has it been forgotten that Germany was forced to tolerate for years the occupation of the Ruhr; that the Little Entente threatened to invade Hungary three times in eighteen years; and that the Balkan *Bloc*, even if it did not force Bulgaria formally to surrender her claim to an outlet on the Aegean, in practice deprived her of a right solemnly guaranteed in the peace treaties?

The losers of the world war may well ask from which side peace and understanding among the nations are threatened? Are not those whose life for eighteen years has not been safe for a moment, the suffering parties? And are peace and security in Europe possible only if a group of victors are allowed to impose their will on the whole continent, as it has been doing for the last eighteen years?

Misled French public opinion still believes the fable concocted in a spirit of war propaganda that Germany, if she were able would go to war immediately as in 1914. According to the French, she was the chief malefactor; and just for this reason the only way of making peace safe is to keep Germany curbed by arbitrary force. But anyone who has studied, even superficially, the events preceding 1914 must be well aware that only one Power really wanted war, one Power set the ball rolling, and that was the Russia of the Czars. Gathering around her Serbia, Rumania and certain fractions of Slavonic races in the Austria-Hungarian Monarchy, which years of propaganda had inoculated with pan-Slav feelings, Russia started a war the ultimate object of which was the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy that stood in the way of pan-Slav imperialistic ambitions. The rest of the states were simply drawn into the world cataclysm by ties of alliance that bound them either to Russia, as in the case of Great Britain and France, or to the Monarchy with whom Germany was in a bond of alliance. A repetition of that catastrophe will not be prevented by continuing to keep in quarantine the alleged culprits, who in reality were as innocent of war guilt as the Western Powers themselves, but only by avoiding everything likely to divide Europe again into two camps. A single accidentally struck spark would be sufficient to ignite the flames of war, as in 1914.

The only means of preventing a division of the nations of Europe into two antagonistic camps would be the gradual liquidation of the great menacing *bloc* which by virtue of its overwhelming supremacy has dictated to the rest of Europe and laid down the law for eighteen years. The reaction

to its arbitrary activity has been a fatal bitterness and counter-movements on the part of its opponents, which sooner or later may lead to the organization of counter camps. In future that powerful group of allies must stop thinking their superiority in arms will maintain peace and effect Europe's salvation as they have hitherto done: for before long the balance may be found to have turned against them. Rather an agreement and co-operations should be sought with those whom for years they have tried to fetter and treat as a negligible quantity.

When in the fore-going I emphasized how important to the drafting and carrying out of a new Danube programme it would be for certain Powers to get into touch and come to an agreement over the question, I was not thinking of the formation of an allied group of Powers — and I must firmly protest against any attempt to give that interpretation to my words. What I was thinking of was that the elaboration of a plan calculated to effect a real solution of the Danube Valley problems was not to be thought of without the support of Italy, Germany, and naturally Great Britain, or without a redress of the criminal wrongs committed against the *sine qua non* of Hungary's and Austria's national existence. Failing these it would be useless to lay any plans for a solution of the Danube problem before Europe; for no practical good could ever come of them.

The London Conference decided to invite Germany and Italy to a Five Power Conference to be held most probably in Brussels, and has therewith formally swept away all obstacles to a new Locarno treaty. Italy and Germany have accepted the invitation. It seems unquestionable that, in conformity with the French point of view which is based on the oneness and indivisibility of peace, an attempt will be made at the Conference to introduce among the conditions of peace in the Rhineland a new Eastern Locarno, the settlement of the unsolved and difficult problems of the Danube Basin, and a reform of the League of Nations calculated to put the present system of European international law in possession of more efficacious agreements and sanctions. Should it prove possible to force this plan through, it may look like an achievement from the point of view of peace, but it will certainly fail to solve the Danube Valley problems. On the contrary it will definitely aggravate them; for the question of the Danubian States can never be solved either politically, racially, or economically on the basis of the present *status quo*.

I feel convinced that Italy and Germany are fully aware of this. But it will be the task of Hungarian foreign policy to establish — in place of this negative unanimity — a positive consensus of opinion between the two Great Powers and with Austria and Poland regarding the constructive development of the future of the Danube Basin. On nothing else but new arrangements can further, any really serious guarantees of peace and security rest. To force any „agreement”, except on this basis, would simply mean putting fresh

obstacles in the path of a more equitable readjustment later on, and unnecessarily increase the number, already too great, of empty diplomatic formulas. Among the further guarantees contemplated by the Western Powers are regional pacts of mutual assistance. I have explained more than once that they would have no value from our point of view, and would only serve to raise the obstacles above mentioned. Here I should like to point out that in the continued existence of such pacts between the states of the Little Entente and other countries there lurks another danger to Hungary. One of these guarantee pacts has smuggled the wooden horse of Troy, the Soviet, into the Danube Basin, and now Russia can interfere in all the problems of that region. By virtue of that treaty Russia has been given the chance to have a say in the affairs of Central Europe, which under certain circumstances may prove fatal to the minor states of the Danube Valley. We Hungarians, at any rate, see so great a menace to our existence as an independent state in Russia's influence that its elimination may prove a vital question for us. Therefore we can never become party to treaties that implicitly recognize, or involve the recognition of that certain pact. In our opinion Russia must never become a partner in any Danubian pact, for the partner would very soon be master in the Danubian territories.

It would therefore be dangerous, and might lead to fatal mistakes, were the Brussels Conference to settle off-hand certain Danube problems, or even elaborate proposals for a solution of them. The Danube question is a *sui generis* European problem, the solution of which must not and cannot with impunity be subordinated to any other, alien, points of view. It must be effected primarily by the Central European Powers themselves. They must take the initiative, and to be able to do so, must first of all have a constructive plan of their own ready, one calculated to settle all of the questions involved. In the work of elaborating such a plan Hungarian foreign policy will have a prominent rôle to play.

The Rome Pact guarantees that nothing will happen *de nobis sine nobis*. We have the same confidence in the loyalty of Great Britain, Germany and other friendly countries. We therefore trust that the Brussels Conference will not confront us with a prejudgement of our case. It is to be hoped that prior to the Conference a suitable plan for the solution of the Danube problem will be devised, and that it will make at least sufficient impression on the Powers to prevent the adoption of any resolutions that would stand in the way of a proper solution later on.

Undoubtedly the nature of the League of Nations' Reform will weigh heavily in the balance. Any reform of the League that tends to buttress the present *status quo* with guarantees more effectual than the present ones, — without insuring to the full the application of Article 19 and the protection of the minorities, — would be intolerable to Hungary. From this point of view great signi-

ficance must be attached to the idea — a veritable egg of Columbus — propounded by Sir Austen Chamberlain at the last debate on foreign affairs in the British Parliament. Sir Austen Chamberlain suggested that only such states as had previously submitted themselves to the revision paragraphs of Article 19 should be accorded the protection of the League and of other countries in the event of their being attacked. This really tremendous

idea and others of a like nature voiced at the recent debate on foreign affairs in the House of Commons are hopeful signs of changing times. They are hopeful indications that Britain has begun to realize the fact that to effect a new arrangement of Europe's affairs, a new spirit and new means are needed, because the methods in use for the last twenty years can lead to nothing but a new catastrophe.

NATIONALITY CONDITIONS IN RUMANIA

by

Dr. Andrew R. Szeben

An article of mine with the above title which appeared in the *Danubian Review* of February this year was criticized at length in issue No. 4 of the „*Revue de Transylvanie*” by Dr. S. Manuila, Director of the Rumanian Census Institute, who was invited to do so by the editor of that Rumanian periodical. I should have been very pleased had Dr. Manuila, — who is undoubtedly one of the most eminent Rumanian statisticians, and who is in a position to conduct investigations and find out all about ethnographic conditions, helped me with his comments to unravel the intricacies of the nationality question in Rumania and its several provinces; or where, for lack of adequate sources, I was not able, except with great difficulty and in round-about ways, to ascertain the nationality statistics of a province at a certain date, he had dispelled uncertainty with statistical data and his own knowledge of the subject.

I am sorry to say that Dr. Manuila did not fill up any gaps in my statistics. All he did was to comment in a very annoyed tone on a few casual remarks of mine. I regret this all the more because I had no intention of giving personal offence, either to Dr. Manuila or anybody else, and I am convinced that the tenor of my article was nowhere so personal or aggressive as his reply to it.

Of the entire six and a half quarto pages to which my article ran Dr. Manuila mentions only one passage — that in which I deplored the fact that the nationality figures of the 1930 Rumanian census (the first regular census in Rumania, which for the first time since 1910 or 1912 should give a clear picture of the population statistics of the different provinces) have not been published yet, six years after it was taken. I also said that the Rumanian Statistical Office was well enough staffed and technically well enough equipped to make the delay incomprehensible.

Strangely enough in his criticism Dr. Manuila takes objection primarily to the statement that the 1930 census was preceded by a long period of preparation. Is there anything offensive in that remark? I merely said that a census was taken in

Transylvania in 1920, but that its figures were inaccurate and that another embracing the whole country was taken in 1927, which, however was so full of errors that it could not be made public, adding that, probably in order to avoid a similar failure again, thorough preparations were made for the 1930 census. Here I was alluding to the courses of instruction for the enumerators, the series of propaganda lectures and the wide-spread poster campaign, the aim of which was to draw the attention of the population to the importance of the census. All very laudable efforts, and it puzzles me to discover why Dr. Manuila should allege that it was „tendentious” to mention them.

The Director of the Rumanian Census Institute is also offended because I called the official report on the census returns a „tiny Indicator”, when it was a work of 850 pages. In its title the book describes itself as an „indicator” and by tiny I simply meant that, 850 pages and all, it was small enough in bulk to have room in the pocket of a man's jacket.

Dr. Manuila declares that what I said about the Census Institute having a personnel of 260 employees since 1930 is not true, that the Institute never worked with a larger staff than 120 or 130 persons. I am exceedingly sorry, but I have no means of judging from this distance which Rumanian office tells the truth, and when. The last paragraph, page 12, of the official gazette for 1931 published by the Rumanian Census Institute, of which Dr. Manuila must have known, seeing that he wrote an introduction to it,¹ contains the following sentence „*Le personnel central de la Direction du Recensement, à l'heure actuelle, est composé de 260 personnes*”.

Dr. Manuila asserts that the calculating machines received from the Rockefeller Foundation are used for compiling demographic statistics and rarely for working out census figures. Approved!

The announcement made by the Director of

¹ *La population actuelle de la Roumanie. Publié par la Direction du Recensement Général de la population. Bucaresti, 1931. Le Moniteur Officiel et les Imprimeries de l'Etat.*