

FROM MUNICH TO VIENNA

The Munich protocol states that the Hungarian and Polish claims have to be met within three months; or if this does not happen, they will be the subject of further discussion. With this the Munich Agreement desired to insure that the areas inhabited by Magyars should be annexed by Hungary, while the territories with a Polish population should be joined to Poland. With respect to Hungary and to Poland this is the meaning and the significance of the Munich Four Power Agreement. In accordance with this Hungary immediately turned to Prague and addressed a note to the Czecho-Slovak Government re the opening of negotiations. The date proposed by the Hungarian Government in its note of October 3, for the opening of negotiations, was October 6. This note, also demanded certain pledges as guarantee of the serious character of the negotiations; viz. the surrender of two communities which came after the Great War under Czech rule, the release of political prisoners, the disarming of Hungarian soldiers, the organisation in the areas inhabited by Hungarians of joint organs for keeping order. The Prague Government acquiesced in principle in the terms of the Hungarian note, but in practice it followed a policy of procrastination. Thus the negotiations could only be opened on October 9.

The Czecho-Slovak point of view was stated to be the following: Czecho-Slovakia does not wish to have alien nationalities within its boundaries after the reconstruction, i. e. it will surrender the areas inhabited by aliens. This view had been repeatedly expressed in responsible quarters and as basis offered a possibility of agreement. In Hungary's case the disputed areas should have been surrendered, for obviously the same principle upon which the surrender of the Sudeten German territories had been based might have served as a starting-point for the surrender of the areas with a Magyar majority. The situation of twenty years ago — previous to the unfair change effected by the peace treaty of Trianon — i. e. the results of the last census in the Hungarian era could have served as a standard. The application of this principle to the Hungarian claims is the more justified as the areas in question are inhabited by Magyars only and as they were alienated twenty years ago illegally and forcibly from Hungary, the country to which they belonged politically for over 1000 years, whereby

the Wilsonian principles were brought into derision. The fundamental principle of readjustment could therefore only have been: a return to the conditions existing previous to the injustices sanctified by the peace treaty of Trianon.

However, as soon as the *pourparles* were opened at Komárom, certain symptoms were manifest which clipped the wings of the Hungarian hopes, even the most legitimate of them. The aim of the Czecho-Slovak delegation, viz. to ignore the principle of territorial revision, became evident as soon as the first Hungarian demand, the surrender of two towns, was mentioned. It seemed almost impossible to obtain a counter-proposal from Czecho-Slovakia. It came to light that the Czecho-Slovak Government intended to grant something like an autonomy to the Magyars instead of consenting to their reunion with the mother country. The Hungarian delegation naturally rejected this plan most categorically. A new plan was then devised by the delegation representing the Czecho-Slovak Government. According to this the delegation declared itself ready to surrender part of the island formed by the Danube — called Csallóköz — but not an inch of the territory to the north and to the east of that region — except Komárom, here also reserving the right to use it as a free port. Thus while the Czecho-Slovak Government had been trying to make other countries believe in their desire to have a national state and their willingness to give up each of the alien and unfairly incorporated nationalities prior to reconstruction, in practice it nevertheless wished to keep masses of Magyars under its sway. Obviously the Hungarian delegation could not accept this plan.

A second preposal had been promised then by the Czecho-Slovak delegation for October 13. The latter did not however contain any essential improvement on the former proposals. While the Hungarian point of view adhered firmly from the very outset to the basis laid down in the Four Power Agreement, viz. the right of self-determination, and to a consistent application of this principle, — the Czecho-Slovak delegation, inspired by Prague, submitted a plan devised with an utter disregard for the ethnographic principle and based on strategic considerations and one-sided interests of communication. On this basis the Czecho-Slovak Government not only claimed all the railway lines, but also wished to keep all the Hungarian towns as well.

The transparency of the Czecho-Slovak delegation's tactics, as well as their open sabotage of negotiations, forced the leader of the Hungarian delegation, on October 13, to address the following question to them!

"Is this your last word — and is this your last proposal?" The leader of the Hungarian delegation was left without any answer to his question. The Czecho-Slovak delegation neither

gave an answer in the affirmative nor an answer in the negative. The Hungarian question was left unanswered.

Hungary was thus obliged to wind up the *pourparlers* which seemed absolutely hopeless and to establish the fact that the negotiations at Komárom had been unsuccessful. M. Koloman de Kánya, the Hungarian Minister of Foreign Affairs had every right and reason to state in his declaration — read at Komárom — that the gap between the two standpoints on the fundamental principles of readjustment was too wide. *Pourparlers* would not be able to span it with a bridge.

This is where the Czecho-Slovak attitude of postponement and tactics, and lacking from the very outset the least willingness to come to an agreement, has led. A series of circumstances indicates that Czecho-Slovakia had not been in favour of an agreement even when she sent her delegates to negotiate. In the first place she did not demobilize. On the contrary, she tried to make use of her mobilized and armed condition to influence the tenor of the *pourparlers*. On October 13 General Vjest, broadcasting from Pozsony, emphasized the necessity of armament and preparedness. He urged amongst other things, that sacrifices were demanded from the people in their own future interest. As soon as the General finished his talk at 5.10 p. m. exactly — i. e. an hour before the delegations met to continue the *pourparlers* and before negotiation had been broken off — another address was broadcast from the Pozsony station. This address emphasizing the force of the Czech arms, contained definite threats against Hungary. — The proper Hungarian answer to this has since been broadcast from Budapest. We must however lay particular stress on the fact that the party whom we met at Komárom with the sincere intention of coming to an agreement tried to threaten us with its army while negotiations were still in process thereby betraying that it had no serious intention of making peace with us.

The only answer we could give to this attitude was that addressed by M. Koloman de Kánya, to the Czecho-Slovak delegation.

After the failure of Komárom, there have been several Czech proposals, but neither of them could be considered as a basis for discussions. Only the fifth of the different Czech notes gave a new basis for negotiations.

Czech Note No. V.

On 26th October, M. Chvalkovsky, Czech Minister of Foreign Affairs, handed to M. John Wettstein, Hungary's Minister in Prague, the Czecho-Slovak Government's reply to the Hungarian Note of 24th October containing Hungary's territorial demands. This Note, the fifth sent by the Czecho-Slovak Government, ran as follows:

The Czecho-Slovak Government has made a careful and profound study of the Hungarian Government's proposals as contained in the communication dated No. 39, 24th October of the current year, which Your Excellency was kind enough to convey to me.

The Czecho-Slovak Government again begs to stress the point that the present negotiations can only refer to the question of the Hungarian minority. Namely, since items 1 and 2 of the Protocol to the Munich Agreement of 29th September, 1938, make no mention of any but the Hungarian and Polish minorities, all other ethnic questions must remain outside the framework of the present negotiations. As regards the question of the Hungarian minority, the Czecho-Slovak Government continues to entertain a cordial desire to arrive at a sincere, rapid and complete solution. To further this end the Czecho-Slovak Government, on 22nd October, submitted proposals referring to the whole closed Hungarian national area. These proposals were submitted as a general basis of fresh negotiations, with the possibility of subsequent modifications.

In view of the fact that these proposals were not considered satisfactory by the Hungarian Government, the Czecho-Slovak Government, agrees to refer the question of the Hungarian minority to arbitration by Germany and Italy, as signatories of the Munich Agreement.

The possible inclusion of other arbitrators should be subject to the decision of those two Powers. Should they agree to Hungary's suggestion regarding Poland, the Czecho-Slovak Government would suggest that Rumania should also take part in the work of arbitration.

The arbitral award should determine the time limit and methods of the evacuation by the Czech troops and authorities of the territories to be ceded and of their occupation by the Hungarian troops and authorities. The Czecho-Slovak Government suggests that a mixed commission of Hungarian and Czecho-Slovak military experts meet forthwith, in order to make preparation for, and facilitate, the execution of all necessary arrangements.

The Hungarian Government's reply.

Within twenty-four hours the Hungarian Government replied to Prague's fifth Note. The text of the Hungarian Note handed to M. Chvalkovsky, Czech Minister of Foreign Affairs by M. John Wettstein, Hungary's Minister in Prague, at 6 p. m. on 27th October, was as follows:

The Royal Hungarian Government regrets that the Government of the Czecho-Slovak Republic completely ignores the Hungarian Government's suggestion *re* plebiscites. This attitude of the Czecho-Slovak Government came as a great surprise to the Hungarian Government, the more so as the latter's suggestion was

in complete accord with the spirit of the Munich Agreement by which the Czecho-Slovak Government was guided hitherto during its negotiations. In the above-mentioned Note of the Czecho-Slovak Government it was stated that "the present negotiations can only refer to the question of the Hungarian minority", and this because "items 1 and 2 of the Protocol to the Munich Agreement of 29th September, 1938, make no mention of any but the Hungarian and Polish minorities". True though it is that the text of those agreements mentions only Germans, Poles and Hungarians, it is nevertheless incontestable that the right of the peoples to self-determination was laid down as the basis of the reconstruction of the Czecho-Slovak Republik. From this it follows that the right to dispose of themselves by way of a plebiscite cannot be denied to any minority that wishes to avail itself thereof. Considering the contradictory attitude of the Czecho-Slovak Government regrettable, the Hungarian Government is constrained to adhere to its original standpoint.

In the above-mentioned Note the Czecho-Slovak Government declares itself willing to accept the arbitration of Germany and Italy. This — in the opinion of the Hungarian Government — implies the obligation to submit *a priori* to the decision of those two Powers.

The arbitrators' sphere of authority naturally extends only to the areas under dispute and not to those concerning which an agreement has already been arrived at between the two Governments and the occupation of which by Hungarian troops was suggested in the Hungarian Government's Note of 24th October.

The composition of the tribunal of arbitration and the details of its activity should, in the opinion of the Hungarian Government, be left to the decision of the Great Powers concerned.

As regard the proposal that "The arbitral award should determine the time limit and the methods of the evacuation by the Czech troops and authorities of the territories to be ceded and of their occupation by the Hungarian troops and authorities", it is the opinion of the Hungarian Government that this proposal can only refer to the areas under dispute.

Therefore, the Hungarian Government is ready to accept the suggestion that "a mixed commission of Hungarian and Czecho-Slovak military experts meet forthwith, in order to make preparation for, and facilitate, the execution of all necessary arrangements". For this purpose the Hungarian military attaché in Prague will communicate directly with the proper Czecho-Slovak military authorities.

The Royal Hungarian Government learns with satisfaction that the Czecho-Slovak Government is inspired by a cordial desire to arrive at a sincere, rapid and complete solution.

The Hungarian Government reminds the Government of the Czecho-Slovak Republic that from the very beginning of the

negotiations Hungary has always considered it to be of vital importance to settle the territorial questions affecting the two States with the greatest expedition possible, and that the Hungarian Government cannot accept responsibility for any consequences that may arise from a protraction of negotiations.

Czech Note No. VI.

At 6 p. m. on Friday, 28th October, 1938, M. Chvalkovsky, Czech Foreign Minister, handed to M. John Wettstein, Hungarian Minister in Prague, the reply of the Czecho-Slovak Government to the territorial demands contained in the Hungarian Note of 27th October.

The gist of Czecho-Slovakia's reply was a suggestion that within twenty-four hours of its receipt the two Governments should request the German and Italian Governments to accept the rôle of arbiters. The Czecho-Slovak Government did not share the view that an agreement had been arrived at concerning certain areas, but was willing to submit that question also to arbitration. Regarding the question of their occupation, the Czecho-Slovak Government's Note expresses the conviction that the decision of the arbiters would insure the most rapid settlement possible of that question also.

The Note stated that the Czecho-Slovak military authorities had already entered into communication with the Hungarian military attaché in Prague.

The Hungarian Government's reply.

At noon on Saturday, October 29, M. J. Wettstein, Hungarian Minister in Prague handed the Hungarian reply to the Czech Note of 28th October to M. Chvalkovsky, Czecho-Slovak Minister of Foreign Affairs. In that reply it was stated that the Hungarian Government had requested the two Powers concerned to undertake the task of arbitration. Pending the reply of the Powers, the Hungarian Government reserved to itself the right to act as it thought best.

The Czecho-Slovak Minister of Foreign Affairs intimated to the Hungarian Minister that similar steps had been taken by the Czecho-Slovak Government.

Germany and Italy accept the rôle of arbiters.

On Saturday 29th October, in the evening, Count Ciano, Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs, received first the Hungarian Minister and then the Czech *Chargé d'Affaires*, to both of whom he intimated that Germany and Italy were willing to accept the rôle of arbiters.

By way of the D. N. D. the German Government issued the following communiqué on 31st October.

In consideration of the fact that it has proved impossible to solve the problem of the Hungarian minority in Czecho-Slovakia and the question of a just ethnographic frontier between Hungary and Czecho-Slovakia by means of the direct negotiations conducted during the past few weeks, the Hungarian and Czecho-Slovak Governments have appealed to the German and Italian Governments to settle those questions by arbitration.

During his visit to Rome, Herr von Ribbentrop, Germany's Foreign Minister, discussed these questions with Count Ciano, the Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs, and indicated to the Italian Government that Germany was prepared to agree to their being settled by arbitration. Since the Czecho-Slovak and the Hungarian Governments have signified their willingness to accept the arbitral decision without dispute and to execute the same without delay, the German and Italian Governments have decided to accept the rôle of arbitrators.

For this purpose Herr von Ribbentrop, the Foreign Minister of the German Reich, and Count Ciano, Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs, will meet in Vienna on Wednesday, 2nd November. The Hungarian and Czecho-Slovak Ministers of Foreign Affairs will also receive an invitation to be present in Vienna on that day.

Herr von Ribbentrop's Opening Speech.

After the arrival of the Hungarian and Czecho-Slovak delegations Herr von Ribbentrop opened the meeting of arbitrators. His opening speech ran as follows:

"Your Excellencies, Gentlemen,

I have the honour of welcoming you to Vienna on behalf of the Government of the German Reich. I welcome in the first place my friend Count Ciano, the Foreign Minister of Fascist Italy, and I also welcome the Foreign Ministers of Hungary and Czecho-Slovakia. The Kingdom of Hungary and the Czecho-Slovak Republic have appealed to Germany and Italy to pass arbitral judgment on the question of the delimitation of the frontier between the two countries. The Governments of the German Reich and the Kingdom of Italy have acceded to this request and the Italian Foreign Minister and myself are here to pronounce our decision. I see a peculiarly symbolic significance in the fact that Italy and Germany have met just in the house of Prince Eugene of Savoy for this important purpose; for 200 years ago it was that prince of Italian origin who, as a German statesman and military commander, brought peace and justice to the peoples of South-Eastern Europe.

Today our task is to draw, on an ethnographical basis, a permanent frontier between Hungary and Czecho-Slovakia and therewith find the solution of all the questions connected with that frontier. The arbitral decision we shall pronounce will be final

and both Hungary and Czecho-Slovakia have undertaken to accept it as such. In essentials we have become acquainted with the standpoints of the two Governments in the course of the recent negotiations. Nevertheless I consider that it would be expedient if the representatives of the two Governments were to recapitulate and explain their several points of view, in order that every argument may be well weighed before the decision of the arbitrators is pronounced.

Before I request them to do so I shall ask His Excellency the Italian Foreign Minister to address the meeting."

Ciano: "A new era based on international justice will now begin."

Count Ciano addressed the assembly as follows:

"Your Excellencies, Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Fascist Government I have the honour to greet you all most cordially. To my friend, Herr von Ribbentrop, German Foreign Minister, I express my warmest thanks for the cordial welcome accorded to me in Vienna in the house of Prince Eugene, who — as the German Foreign Minister said — brought peace and justice to the peoples of South-Eastern Europe 200 years ago.

When we acceded to the request of the Hungarian and Czecho-Slovak Governments, the Rome—Berlin axis decided to make a further important contribution towards the efforts hitherto displayed in the interests of European peace and consolidation. I am sure that our efforts will be crowned with success; that this meeting in Vienna will inaugurate a new order in Central Europe and that a new era based on international justice — which we have always desired and for which we have striven — will now begin."

*M. de Kánya and Count Teleki
State Hungary's Point of View.*

Following these speeches the forenoon session of the arbitral tribunal began, which lasted without a break from a quarter past twelve till a few minutes past two.

First M. Coloman de Kánya and then Count Teleki addressed the tribunal, after which the Czech delegates were heard.

The members of the two delegations set forth their standpoints at length. No comments were made by the arbitrators, who merely listened to the exposés with keen attention.

In no single case were any of the delegates or experts asked to be present during negotiations.

Shortly after two o'clock the arbitrators thanked the delegations for their information and pronounced the session closed.

M. de Kánya accompanied by Count Teleki went to the room set apart for the Hungarian delegation, where M. de Kánya gave

some information to the Press about the course of the meeting.

A short time afterwards M. Chvalkovsky, Czecho-Slovak Minister of Foreign Affairs, left the room in which the session was held and went, accompanied by the rest of the Czech delegation, into that reserved for them.

The Hungarian Demands Submitted to the Arbitration Tribunal.

The Hungarian demands submitted by M. Kánya were as follows:

1. Hungary demands all the territories lying between the frontier already ceded by Czecho-Slovakia and the present frontier of Hungary.

2. Hungary also demands the following areas: *a)* the Nyitra plebiscitary area; *b)* the Jolsva plebiscitary area; *c)* the Szomolnok-Mecenzéf plebiscitary area; *d)* the town of Kassa and its immediate surroundings; *e)* the district to the east of Kassa; *f)* Ungvár; *g)* Munkács and *h)* the Feketeardó plebiscitary districts.

On the basis of the Munich Agreement the Hungarian Government demands separate negotiation and separate arrangements in the case of Pozsony.

All these demands are absolutely consistent with the terms of the Munich Agreement.

The Arbitrators Announce Their Award.

At 2.5 p. m. Herr von Ribbentrop gave a luncheon, and at 4.30 p. m. the final discussion between the German and Italian Foreign Ministers was opened. This *pourparler* lasted till 5.30 p. m., at which hour a definite decision was reached. At 6.30 the award was announced to the Hungarian and Czecho-Slovak delegations.

Herr von Ribbentrop's and Count Ciano's parting words.

When the decision had been announced and the Protocol signed, Herr von Ribbentrop, in his concluding speech, pointed out that it was after an exhaustive study of all the fundamental points bearing on the issue that he and the Italian Foreign Minister had drawn the frontier which in their opinion was an equitable solution of the problem. He hoped that conditions in these areas would now develop in a spirit of unfeigned appeasement.

Count Ciano expressed his satisfaction that the Rome-Berlin axis had again given proof of its usefulness as a means of consolidating conditions and furthering peace. The two arbitrators were convinced that their decision was objective

and just. It was for Hungary and Czecho-Slovakia to make a practical application of the conclusions inherent in this spirit of consolidation and co-operation.

Herr von Ribbentrop then declared the sitting closed.

*Joint statement by Herr von Ribbentrop
and Count Ciano.*

The joint statement to the Press made by Herr von Ribbentrop and Count Ciano runs as follows:

"The Rome—Berlin axis has today demonstrated its great significance as an effective arbitrator, especially in cases of complicated international disputes. The axis has once more given proof that it is a factor making for peace and order in European politics.

The injustices of the Peace Treaties of 1919 made this part of South-Eastern Europe a hotbed of permanent unrest. That state of matters has now been done away with, thanks to the unbiassed arbitral decision pronounced by the Foreign Ministers of Germany and Italy after an exhaustice discussion of the matter submitted by both parties. The decision taken was arrived at in a spirit of reciprocal friendship between Germany and Italy and with a sense of our responsibility for the peace of Europe.

We hope that relations between Hungary and Czecho-Slovakia will now develop in a spirit of peaceful and neighbourly co-operation. This will be all the more possible since the new relations between the two countries will now be based on the fundamental principle of absolute equity.