

B O O K S

Lord Rothermere's Book About the European Crisis and the Struggle for Justice for Hungary.

Lord Rothermere, Hungary's powerful friend, has written a striking book entitled "Warnings and Predictions" about the European crisis. In this work he shows that the symptoms of that crisis were discernible and curable long ago and that it was owing to the shortsightedness and ignorance of the Western Powers that they became so acute.

Three main questions are discussed with his usual calm objectiveness and realism by Lord Rothermere: what is the reason why Great Britain was left so far behind in the field of rearmament during the past two decades; why was it not possible to do away with the real cause of the European crisis, namely the injustices of the Peace Treaties, in time; and lastly what was responsible for the shifting of the balance of power in Europe and in how far did it affect Great Britain's relations with Germany? Lord Rothermere launches a bitter attack against those who, with the slogans of pacifism and disarmament, prevented a normal increase of armaments in Great Britain, therewith placing the British Empire in a disadvantageous position in international politics. In his newspaper Lord Rothermere has never ceased to urge that Britain's deficiency in armaments should be supplied quickly and her Air Force adequately developed, especially in view of the fact that Germany was rearming to an extent that was growing increasingly formidable.

To avoid a European war Lord Rothermere, at the same time, energetically demanded a redress of the injustices of the Peace Treaties. In the first place he pointed out the dangers lurking in the cruel measures of the Trianon Treaty and urged their modification by way of agreement. Hungarian public opinion well knows every phase of Lord Rothermere's struggle to further Hungary's interests, in the course of which he predicted that a botched-up Czecho-Slovakia would prove the greatest menace to the peace of Europe. From a Hungarian point of view the most interesting chapters of this book are those in which the noble Lord tells us of his efforts to further the cause of Hungarian revision. The book contains a summary of most of his articles on the subject

that have appeared either in the Daily Mail or in other world newspapers since 1927.

The problems of Central Europe had two aspects for him — we read in his book. — On the one hand he was shocked by the injustice to which the proud and noble Hungarian nation had been subjected. He was convinced that England was being chained to an unworthy ally instead of to an old friend, and that an attempt was being made to petrify a status quo in which a nation to which Europe was deeply indebted was handed over to the tender mercies of uncivilized, barbarian peoples. He was also filled with anxiety because England was aiding and abetting Germany's enemies over an issue that did not concern her, apparently only from ill-will. Hungary's position in the camp of the Central Powers had been a very peculiar one. In 1914, Count Stephen Tisza, the great Hungarian statesman, opposed the idea of a war with Serbia, knowing that it would lead to a world war. Throughout the war Hungary gave evidence of unflinching bravery on the battlefield and irreproachable chivalry behind the front. No English men or women were sent to detention camps. The war prisoners were treated in an exemplary way. And the reward for all this was that Hungary was deprived of a great part of her historical territories and that hundreds of thousands of Hungarians were placed under the yoke of nations on a much lower level of civilization than themselves. During his visit to Hungary, Lord Rothermere had had the opportunity of examining the situation for himself, and so deep was the impression he received that on his return to London he launched a campaign to obtain redress for the wrongs done to Hungary. As early as 1930 he had predicted that Czecho-Slovakia would vanish from the face of the earth. That prediction had now come true.

Lord Rothermere says that, had his predictions been regarded, the crisis of 1938 might have been avoided. Relations between the different Powers would have developed in a more friendly manner, and the spirit of Locarno would have taken the place of the tension which constrained Mr. Chamberlain to hasten by aeroplane to Herr Hitler.

Lord Rothermere's book also contains quotations from his articles on the Czech question, written in 1930. Six years after they had been published, says the book, in the May of 1936 an intimate acquaintance of his, who had been in Berlin, told him that Rome and Berlin were making new and startling plans. This information he passed on in a letter to the then Prime Minister and to the Chancellor of the Exchequer. In that letter he wrote that, if these plans did not refer to Austria, it was possible they referred to France or England. On the other hand, from certain signs to which he drew their attention, he inferred that Czecho-Slovakia would be cut up from one day to the other. A year later the Anschluss took place, and eighteen months after that

the Sudeten districts were detached from Czecho-Slovakia and Hungary received back part of valuable Upper Hungary. Czech tyranny was indeed strangled.

Lord Rothermere reproaches the British Governments for not preparing the way for a revision of the Peace Treaties. He says that between 1930 and 1936 the British Government would have been able to force a revision of the unjust treaties of Versailles, Trianon and St. Germain through the medium of the League of Nations. If this step was not suggested by an abstract love of justice, England should have taken it by right of self-defence. Nothing, however, had been done.

Lord Rothermere continues with unflagging energy to demand a revision of the Peace Treaties. In spite of the rush of events the most necessary deficiencies in Britain's armaments had not been supplied, and no attempt had been made to right injustices in Central Europe in a peaceful way. All the dangers to which he had pointed for years had come to a head in the April of 1938. It was then he reached his 70th birthday and visited several countries in Europe, in order to observe events and obtain first-hand information. He felt that the situation was such that he could not withdraw from the political direction of the Daily Mail, as he had planned to, and could not remain silent when signs of the greatest danger that had ever threatened the British nation were looming on the horizon. In a series of seven articles he summed up all that had come true of his predictions and once more pointed out the serious perils about to descend upon Europe. In vain, for England continued to procrastinate.

Then, in the September of 1938, took place what he had foreseen ten years earlier: Europe was driven to the brink of war by the international injustice that had allowed the Czechs to trample underfoot the Hungarian nation, that thousand-year-old nation which for centuries had, with its own body, defended Christian civilization. He had clearly foreseen how the crisis might have been avoided. Now, at last, Germany's and Italy's decision in Vienna had restored to Hungary some of her northern territories, with a million inhabitants. This event signified a profound change in European politics, but — so says Lord Rothermere — Europe has not gathered all the fruits of that change yet.

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