

COUNT CSAKY, FOREIGN MINISTER, SPEAKS IN UPPER HOUSE ON HUNGARIAN—SLOVAK RELATIONS

On April 30th, in the Upper House of the Hungarian Parliament, *Dr. Géza Szüllő* referred to the relations between Hungary and Slovakia; whereupon *Count Stephen Csáky*, Hungarian Foreign Minister, immediately replied. In his speech *Dr. Szüllő* emphasised that *Hungary had endeavoured correctly and even nobly to maintain friendly neighbourly relations with the independent State of Slovakia*. It would appear, however, — he continued — that the young State of Slovakia had not yet had time to acquire the culture indispensable to correct government, that country's behaviour towards Hungary exposing it to the charge of an attempt to injure and a deliberate endeavour to cause ruin. *In order to prevent tolerance being taken for weakness and silence for acquiescence, he proposed to adduce certain concrete cases illustrative of the Slovak attitude with the request that the Foreign Minister should give a determined reply: —*

"On April 25h, at *Nyitra*" — he said — "the *Hlinka Party* — which possesses an official character — held a meeting. After the meeting the crowd, headed by the teachers and students who were there by order, marched to the townhall, where *Dr. Rudolph Turcsek*, commander of the *Hlinka Guard*, in a speech delivered from the terrace which was greeted with deafening applause, declared that *every one who in Nyitra and Slovakia spoke Hungarian should have his tongue torn out and have his mouth stopped for ever*. At the same time, in *Pozsony*, the Slovak university students and apprentices marched in procession to the Hungarian Legation under the auspices of police standing at ease. In the whole of Slovakia broadsides were distributed declaring that *the region of Hungary lying between Vác, Miskolc and Szolnok was the lawful property of the Slovak people, and that the time had come for the Slovaks to recover this territory by force of arms*.

"These machinations are still going on, and *the Slovaks, trusting in the power of their Protector, have begun a dangerous game*, the methods followed by one section of the persons responsible being *by the aid of false reports to endeavour to disturb the harmony existing between Hungary and the German Empire* and thereby to further the interests of the Slovaks. Another section is busy *trying to come to terms with the group*

violently opposed to the German Protector. The Slovak Chargé d'Affaires in Madrid has entered into negotiations *with the Czecho-Slovak Minister* also resident in Madrid. At the same time the Slovaks keep on insisting everywhere that the Slovak nationals of Magyar race employed in German industrial undertakings in Slovakia must be dismissed, since that is the wish of the German undertakings themselves.

"Indeed, Slovak official circles go so far in their confidence in their German Protectors as to *interpret the movements of certain German troops as being carried out for the purpose of taking away from Hungary all the territory awarded to that country by the Vienna Arbitrators.* Hungarians are able to wait patiently and know that people who lose their tempers are always in the wrong; *but the time comes when their is need of determination and courage, for a man who shows long-suffering and patience may eventually become a laughing-stock.* These facts and manifestations, which are all certified by documentary evidence, are no longer merely the private concern of the Magyar minority living in Slovakia or of the Magyars of Hungary; *they have already assumed the dimensions and the character of an international question."*

Answer of Foreign Minister Count Csáky.

Count Stephen Csáky, Foreign Minister, then rose to address the House, speaking in the following terms: —

"Members of the Upper House,

"Hungary was the first country to recognise, in 1938, the newly-established Slovak Republic. During the months immediately following the act of recognition *we endeavoured to pursue a policy of conciliation and to revive the friendly relations with our Slovak neighbours which had characterised the centuries of symbiosis of the two peoples.* I must admit that the Hungarians experienced many bitter moments and perhaps an even greater disappointment when they saw that the hand of friendship stretched out towards the Slovaks was not received with the cordiality expected and that indeed certain sections of the Slovak people — not a very large proportion of the inhabitants, it is true — *endeavoured to baulk the efforts of the Hungarians to bring about a rapprochement, at first by mistrust and subsequently by open and malicious calumny.* Last year the initiation of economic negotiations, *the successful conclusion of which is probably calculated to safeguard the Slovak State against serious shocks,* might have offered fresh evidence — if only certain circles had allowed the attitude of the Hungarians to become really known to *every section of the Slovak people* — that the Hungarian Government *was striving to create tolerable neighbourly relations with Slovakia.* On several occasions the

Hungarian Government has in Parliament declared its readiness in the cause of peace and quiet to overlook many incidents and to exercise the utmost patience; for what we have in mind is not the mistakes and errors of certain persons in power today, but the future of two friendly nations (*Hear! hear!*).

"I have knowledge of more than one of the cases referred to by M. Géza Szüllő; and believe me when I say that *the Government has not contented itself with simply taking cognizance of facts or acts.* In the very dangerous international situation prevailing today, however, which is inflicting suffering on the whole of Europe and perhaps on Asia too, *enhanced caution and self-control is needed;* and for that reason I would beg you kindly to *permit me to refrain from a detailed and full discussion* of the present stage of the relations between Hungary and Slovakia. Being an ancient European nation, we know what our duty is in this part of our Continent; but we are equally conscious that *there is a point at which the cup becomes filled to the brim; and them we shall determinedly repudiate every form of intrigue and meddling at which we for the moment merely shrug our shoulders.*

"Our patience would become exhausted did we not see that *the right of the Magyars living in Slovakia to live like human beings and to possess property* and the property and rights of Hungarian nationals in Slovakia were being respected and left intact. *We shall cease to credit promises made in third States behind closed doors, as well as fine words and agreeable articles in newspapers the moment any serious outrage is committed against the Magyar minority in Slovakia or the sons of our country or the prestige of the Hungarian State.* These semi-official or wholly official Slovak persons should refrain from attempting continuously to play Germany — Slovakia's Protector — off against Hungary; *for we have perfect confidence in the firmness of the friendship between Hungary and Germany* and in the factors upon which that friendship has been built up. I trust that the several leaders of the Slovaks *will not miscalculate the measure or rather the limits of their possibilities* and will seriously take into account the fact that *in the defence of our national honour, which in our opinion comprises also the safeguarding of the lives and rights of our racial brethren, we shall not hesitate to act* if our neighbours lose also the last vestige of commonsense.

Defence of the National Honour.

"The Hungarian Government and the whole Hungarian nation have at all times united in the endeavour to hand over to posterity in the same intact form in which they were bequeathed by former generations at least that part of the scanty

heritage left to us which we regard as the greatest assets — a *European way of thinking, ability to wait, faith and an answering confidence in the future and above all our national honour*, the latter an asset which today represents an exceptionally high value. We shall bear this guiding principle in mind in our endeavour *to act in the manner best calculated to further the interests of the country*. I emphasise that it would be dangerous to presume that we are weak or that we feel weak; for every virile nation may arrive at a point at which in the interests of moral forces *it has to undertake* all risks and to ignore considerations of opportunism or utilitarian theories.

"Only those peoples fail to rise again *which are either unable or do not possess the courage to live*. It would appear more judicious for those concerned would realise the meaning of this self-consciousness — that *the Hungarian Government will act in the manner and at the time which it may regard as most opportune — not when they would like to provoke that Government to do so.*"

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