

POLITICAL MOSAIC

BENEŠ'S LATEST ENDEAVOURS

Recently, on 10th November, in the news in Czech the London wireless broadcast announced some astonishing information. Namely that the emigrant Czechs and Poles were planning a Central European confederation into which they were generous enough to be willing to accept Hungary too. On the other hand the condition on which Hungary would be allowed to join was that she must return the areas received as a "gift" from Germany in the two Vienna Awards.

As regards this plan there are two things to which we have something to say. The one is the confederation itself, the other the question of a "gift".

As to the first, it is impossible to imagine a formation of the kind suggested. Once already Beneš was successful in throwing dust in the eyes of the Western Powers with a similar scheme, which, of course, he never realized, although for two decades he had ample opportunity to do so on a smaller scale in Czecho-Slovakia.

Let us first examine the material obstacles. No sound confederation is conceivable unless the federated nations are able not only to preserve, but also to develop their own economic and social lives. But in this respect what did we see in Czecho-Slovakia? *The Czechs ruined all the minority industries in the Republic, Their policy was particularly fatal to industry in the parts wrested from Hungary.* Whole districts were ruined by their industrial policy. Towns became depopulated, the means of industrial production were scrapped, workmen and the industrial intelligentsia were thrown on the streets overnight, and their only hope of escaping from the dismal ranks of the unemployed was to leave their homes in swarms and emigrate to other countries. When the Czechs had thus ruined big industries and factory production in the nationality areas, they turned their attention to small industries. To what an extent they persecuted and ruined small industries by excluding them from production is amply proved by the conditions that obtained in the shoe-making industry, where *the Batya concern alone ruined 60.000 shoemakers and forced them to abandon their trade.* Then the masses of industrial unemployed and the craftsmen who had lost their means of subsistence turned to agriculture for a living and this created an economic crisis among the land labourers. In addition, the anti-minority trend of the Czech Land Reform was responsible

for depriving the agricultural poor belonging to the nationalities of the possibility of making a living on the land. Destitution became a permanent institution in Czecho-Slovakia, especially in the nationality regions. Nationality workmen began to look for work in the factories in Bohemia, where they were given the hardest work to do. *The nationality regions thus sank to the level of colonies of which Bohemia was the master.*

No state with internal economic troubles of that nature could be expected to survive long. It is a mistake to attribute the liquidation of Czecho-Slovakia to the forces of international politics alone. Let us see what the symptoms of internal disintegration were. It will be enough to draw attention to the fact that *by the time Mr. Runciman arrived in Prague 1500 factories were rusting in the Sudeta German areas alone and large masses of the unemployed were starving. In other nationality regions things were no better.* Bitterly the minorities remembered how Edward Beneš, the most characteristic political adventurer of modern times, had given a binding promise to the Great Powers at the Peace Conference that he would make an Eastern Switzerland of Czecho-Slovakia. And now this was what his Eastern Switzerland looked like.

We would ask what trust can be placed in Beneš's latest plan of a confederation when with two decades at his disposal he failed so signally, and with such tragic consequences to the nationalities, to carry it through in Czecho-Slovakia? Is there a single responsible statesman in the world who with a knowledge of Czecho-Slovakia's internal development could for one moment put any faith in his promise of a new confederation?

The post-war economic evolution of Central Europe also presents material obstacles to a confederation. In all the States concerned considerable industrial progress has been made. The growth of industry gave a fillip to the growth of the towns. What would happen if the industrial policy of the Czechs was applied to Central Europe?

The imperialistic and anti-Central European aspects of the new manoeuvre are clearly revealed by the condition subject to which Hungary is to be allowed to join the confederation. "Hungary must return the areas received as a 'gift' from Germany in the two Vienna Awards." This statement is mendacious to an extent of which only Beneš with his falsehoods and conjuring tricks is capable. The leader of a State of yesterday, who with all his compulsory measures was not able to ensure the existence of his arbitrary political creation for longer than twenty years, makes these two decades the basis of a historical claim against a country that for ten centuries existed and prospered in the Basin of the Carpathians. But let us leave the question of historical right, for it would be ridiculous to defend the historical right of a thousand years against that of twenty. Let us examine

only objective facts. *The Hungarians proved capable of organizing a stable political State in the Basin of the Carpathians.* The basis of its stability was not compulsion relying on violence. There were economic guarantees of that stability. Hungary was able to organize the agriculture of her plains and the industries and production of raw materials of her mountains into one harmonious whole. The different parts of the country complemented one another. Within the confines of the Carpahtians Hungary was a real little confederation both in an objective and a subjective sense. The objective aspects were supported by subjective ones, by the methods of government and rule. St. Stephen's principles ensured the same prospects of self-assertion and the same place in the country to all its peoples. Where the self-assertion and development of the different peoples was concerned we see no signs of the nationalistic selection which in the 20 years of Czecho-Slovakia's existence ensured the domination of the Czech elements. In the sphere of government, in intellectual, scientific, social and religious life every nationality in Hungary had equal chances. Had Hungary adopted the same imperialistic and nationalistic principles as Czecho-Slovakia for only half a century or even less, then the Magyars would have filled the whole extent of the country themselves, there would now be one or two races less in the region of the Carpathians, and Beneš would not have been able to throw Central Europe into the throes of war by means of his bogus Czecho-Slovakism. *Hungary peacefully educated her nationalities, cherished them so to say, and then from the mists of obscurity comes an adventurer without any political sense who disposes of the peoples of Central Europe as if they were so many lifeless objects.*

Before the first world war Czech emigrants made the Western Powers believe that the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy was a hotbed of trouble that would lead to war. Their success was due to the careless indifference of the Western Powers, who had no idea of conditions in Central Europe. Their ignorance was so great that at the Conference Beneš and his associates compiled a set of statistics *ex abrupto* about the races living here. It happened that six contradictory statistics were submitted about the same question to different people according to which suited their purposes best. Thanks to Beneš Central Europe was so irrationally organized that it was bound to lead to the present conflict. It seems the lesson was not enough and that there are still people who lend an ear to the man alone responsible for the present situation in Central Europe. *It is certain that an attempt to realize Beneš's latest scheme of a confederation would sow rapidly growing seeds of a fresh conflict in the heart of Europe.*

It must also be stated that Hungary neither received nor expected any sort of "gift". After the close of the world war,

by means of a flagrant violation of the Armistice Treaty of 1918, territories were wrested from Hungary that for a thousand years had been an organic part of the Hungarian State. Part of these territories was given back to Hungary and part she took back herself, but under no circumstances can she be said to have received a "gift". It was in the autumn of 1938 that the first redress of some of the injustices of Trianon took place, and that by way of arbitration between Hungary and Czecho-Slovakia, which country also recognized the binding nature of the award. Even from a Czech point of view, therefore, there was no question of a "gift". When the Republic of Czecho-Slovakia collapsed, the Hungarian army took possession anew of Ruthenia, which for a thousand years had been an organic part of Hungary. It was with the greatest relief that the Ruthenian people welcomed the change, the more so because for 20 years Ruthenia had been so terribly poor that it was known as the blackest starvation zone in Central Europe. In the August of 1940 the Award pronounced by the arbitration committee at the Belvedere in Vienna forced Rumania to restore part of Transylvania to Hungary. Hungary never asked anyone to make her a "gift", she merely demanded a redress of the injustices perpetrated by Trianon.

The London radio declared that Hungary would not be able to keep her present territories. Here we must establish the fact that *Hungary possesses no territories that had not been part of the Hungarian State for a thousand years; she owns nothing that by right belongs to somebody else.* Misleading those who were the masters of Europe's destiny at the time, a handful of people broke out of the little Bohemian Basin and forced their way for 800 kilometres into the heart of Central Europe. With the forces of the Great Powers behind them they were able to maintain their rule, but only for 20 years. And now this little State of yesterday comes forward with claims as if it were the only sure foundation of Central European reconstruction. But these arguments are not likely to stop Beneš from throwing dust in the eyes of the world.

HUNGARIAN HEROES WELCOMED FROM RUSSIA

The Hungarian soldiers returning home from the Russian front to be relieved by others, were welcomed by the nation with the greatest affection.

The welcome of the members of the Hungarian Air Force took place on 8th November at the Mátyásföld aerodrome, and on 9th November General Bartha, Hungarian Minister of War, in the presence of a distinguished gathering, met the returning heroes belonging to the Subcarpathian Mountain Brigade at Akna-szlatina, a place near Hungary's northern frontier.

"Owing to the sudden illness of our Supreme Commander, His Highness the Regent, I have been delegated" — said General Bartha — "to convey his warmest greetings to the brave regiments of the Mountain Brigade returning home from the Russian front. Every single man of the Hungarian regiments that fought in Russia not only performed his duty as laid down in the oath sworn to our Supreme Commander, but, greatly in excess of that, all of them fighting bravely, showed the world that the martial spirit of the Magyars is still alive in them.

"The gratitude and appreciation of the whole Hungarian nation are due in the first place to those who heroically sacrificed their young lives for their country, setting a shining example of patriotic duty to the generations to come. An equal measure of gratitude is due to the wounded, who have patiently suffered pain for their country. *The Hungarian nation wishes to make suitable provision for the war cripples and the families of those who were killed in action.* I have the honour on behalf of our Supreme Commander to hand the decorations to those who in battle have proved most worthy to receive them."

A very touching scene followed. One by one — according to the degree of decoration conferred — the men to whom the Regent had sent medals for their bravery in the war against Bolshevism were called up by name. The Minister of War shook hands with each one of them and handed them their medals. The soldiers gave the military salute and then returned to their places in the ranks with the medals in their hands. During this ceremony one name was called to which there was no response. After a moment's silence an officer stepped forward and reported that *the owner of the medal was dead — killed in action.*

When the ceremony was over the band struck up and the march past began. It was headed by the men of the 1st Regiment. Soldiers with youthful faces — even most of the officers seemed to be quite young — marched past the Minister of War with heads held high and firm steps. *None of them showed any sign of weariness or fatigue.* The hard road rang to their steps. It seemed incredible that they had just crossed the Carpathians, up to the knees in snow in the Tartar Pass. Who would have imagined that they had just returned home after six months' service at the front? There were no signs of the struggles of war, the excitements of battle and the effects of nerve-racking experiences in their outward appearance.

*Hungarian Regent at Nyiregyháza Addresses
Cavalry Brigade on Return from Front.*

On November 17st, at Nyiregyháza, the Regent of Hungary received the cavalry brigade returning from the front. The Regent addressed the following words to the National Defence troops and to the people of the country:

"Early in the summer I was compelled to command our troops to advance to the territory lying beyond the ridge of the Carpathians and to avenge the dastardly attack made on Kassa and the whole of Hungary by the Bolsheviks. The first detachments of our troops returning from the front to be relieved I was unfortunately unable — owing to an illness — to receive personally.

"All the greater is my delight that now I am able to see you face to face and to welcome you with cordial affection on your return home after arduous and glorious fighting. In the hard ordeal of battle you held your ground in a manner fully worthy of the ancient Hungarian glory. With deep reverence for their memory I now think — and the whole nation joins me in thinking — of those of our brave sons who, faithful to the very last to their oaths, have given their lives in this struggle. May their memory be clothed in glory!

"It is with feelings of proud affection that I stand here before you, who have so nobly done your duty on the field of battle and — thanks to the God of the Magyars! — have now returned in safety to your homes, — before you who, in these days of motorised armies, dashed on horseback over that road more than a thousand kilometres long by which our ancestors in days of yore came to the foot of the Carpathians in search of a homeland. You have shed fresh brilliance on the ancient glory of the Hungarian cavalry and have won fresh laurels also for the horse, the faithful and noble companion of the Magyars without which our ancestors would never have been able to fight their battles of conquest, and which on the present occasion too was always to be found where it was most needed. Bad weather, boggy soil, infamously bad roads — these could not obstruct its progress. And it has been proved that cavalry when judiciously employed is today still an indispensable unit of an army. You have kept order in the territories occupied by you by force of arms and have dealt humanely — like true Magyars — with the conquered enemy.

"I therefore welcome you with delight and cordial affection on your return to your homeland; and I know that I can at all times reckon on your well-tryed energies, either in peaceful work or under your glory-crowned colours if there should again be need of your help as soldiers."

LARGE-SCALE OPERATIONS IN TRANSYLVANIA TO CONNECT TWO IMPORTANT RAILWAY LINES

The Second Vienna Award cut off the exceptionally important Székler "circle railway" from the railway trunk line between Budapest, Kolozsvár and Beszterce. After the re-incorporation of Northern Transylvania the National Army, with a rapidity redounding to its credit, built the narrow-gauge railway

line ten kilometres in length connecting Szászlekenca and Kolozsnagyida and thereby to a very considerable extent facilitated the traffic in goods of Marosvásárhely and environs, which had been cut off from Kolozsvár. A more arduous task was that of *establishing a connection with the more distant part of Széklerland*. And that is the object of the ordinary-gauge railway line 48 kilometres long which is now under construction.

The new railway line will give employment for two years to 8000 workers. On this line two tunnels are also being bored — the length of the one being 496 and that of the other 936 metres. *The latter will be the largest tunnel in the country,* — roughly 300 metres longer than the long tunnel just outside Kolozsvár on the Budapest—Kolozsvár main line. In addition 12 large and 53 smaller bridges and 113 culverts are being constructed on the new line. The building operations involve the removal of some 2,000,000 cubic metres of earth; and the dimensions of those operations are revealed by the fact that provisions had to be made also for the erection of the station buildings, warehouses, engine-sheds, dwelling-houses, signal-boxes, barracks for the accommodation of engineers and labourers (veritable small villages) required on the line and for three temporary gendarme barracks.

The operations are progressing over the whole length of the line at high speed. The surveying operations were begun already last November (1940); and it proved possible already last April to start the work of staking out the line. The greatest of all the operations — the boring of the large tunnel — was begun this autumn. The building of the railway is very considerably hampered by two circumstances. On the fringe of the "Mezőség" (savannah) region along which the line runs, the land is extremely clayey and muddy; and that makes the soil slippery, *there having in consequence been a soil-slide over a length of 50 metres:* this renders more difficult the solution of the technical problems. The other principal difficulty is the question of the supply of provisions. A veritable separate organisation had to be established for the purpose of supplying with provisions the army of 8000 labourers, engineers, officials and gendarmes. Another difficulty due to the war is the supply of building materials; and this difficulty is aggravated by the problem of transport. Several hundreds of motor-lorries are employed to cope with this task. It should be noted, further, that for a stretch of 50 kilometres along the new line what is practically a new road had to be built, the older road having been only a bad cartway.

The railway line under construction shows a slight curve turning southwards between Szeretfalva and Monorfalva; from the latter point it runs in a straight line as far as Déda. The line until it reaches Monorfalva has an up-gradient averaging 12 metres per kilometre and reaches its highest point in the large tunnel on the eastern boundary of the village of Monorfalva.

The permanent way rises 225 metres until it reaches the middle of the tunnel, then between that point and Déda falls roughly 100 metres.

The earthwork is already half completed; and the first section of the line — over a length of 18 kilometres, from Szeretfalva to Nagysajó — will be ready by Christmas. A beginning has been made at both ends with the building of the two tunnels. A whole little village has come into being round the opening to the tunnel — the barrack-dwellings of the labourers and engineers; and a separate factory has been built for the manufacture of concrete. In the case of the large tunnel the operations are already in an advanced stage. The drill borers have already pierced through all but 264 metres out of a total length of 936 metres; and *January is expected to witness the great event — the meeting of the two sets of borers advancing from either end.* The operations for the building of the smaller tunnel are not yet in so advanced a stage; for the work here was begun later. Minister *Joseph Varga*, accompanied by Secretary-of-State *Paul Algyay* and Secretary-of-State *Stephen Horthy*, has visited and inspected the whole length of the railway line under construction.

SYMPATHY FOR HUNGARY IN ADDRESS TO THE THRONE OF BULGARIAN PARLIAMENTARY COMMISSION

On November 7th the *Hungarian Telegraph Bureau* reported from *Sofia*: — "The Address to the Throne drafted in answer to the Speech from the Throne by the Bulgarian Parliamentary Commission in one place refers to Hungary too as follows: —

"We are delighted that the Three-Power Pact unites us also to Hungary, an old friend of Bulgaria. *Our relations with Hungary are marked by absolute confidence and sincerity, — as was fully demonstrated on the occasion of the Prime Minister's visit to Budapest.*" "

MEASURES TO INCREASE AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION

In the following budgetary year the Hungarian Government proposes to introduce extensive measures calculated to increase the volume and improve the quality of our agricultural production. Continued efforts are being made *to improve the productive capacity of the soil*; assistance is being given to encourage small farmers to make greater use of artificial manures, and large sums have been appropriated for the improvement of poor and barren land. The country's own needs and the economic and military importance of maintaining the present level of our exports of animals make larger demands on cattle-breeding; and one of the most urgent tasks confronting the Government is to

increase the capacity of that branch of agriculture. In order to raise the level of cattle-breeding *the Government is devoting 5 million pengő to providing sires of good stock for the village herds, thus improving the quality of the animals owned by the peasants*, and also to bringing about a gradual elimination of poor-class live stock by making it possible for small farmers to obtain first-rate brood animals, which are to be distributed to them by the State. The Government also proposes to effect a systematic organization of cattle-breeding farmers and to encourage small farmers to take up rational and profitable cattle-breeding. In the course of the following year about 50.000 brood animals are to be distributed on easy terms by the Ministry of Agriculture.

The Local Government Cattle-breeding Fund ensures that from next year on the municipalities shall also take a systematic part in encouraging cattle-breeding. The "cattle-breeding communities", an institution subsidized and controlled by the Government, have proved to be an innovation of particular inherence. By means of them an eye is kept on the huge number of animals owned by the peasants, and small farmers are institutionally initiated into modern methods of cattle-rearing. Within the framework of this work of organization provision has been made by the Government for an extension of the system of local advisory boards to further a regular training of the farmers in the art of cattle-breeding, in the rational production and use of fodder, in the proper methods of keeping and fattening animals and in the best way of marketing them. Special attention will be devoted to horse-breeding. The large quantities of *game and fish* in the restored areas justify the Government in devoting larger sums to these two sources of national income.

In connection with the modern development of agricultural education, dairy schools have been established at *Munkács* and *Marosvásárhely* to ensure increased milk-production in Subcarpathia and Transylvania and to see that it is properly manufactured into dairy products. These schools will have a beneficial effect on the production of butter and cheese in the outlying districts. The training of women in domestic science and farming is also to be encouraged. *For this purpose a new school of household economy is to be established in the near future*, and to reach the masses *the number of itinerary courses of domestic science is to be increased*. In every county it is proposed to establish one such popular itinerary course. A new type of school is also contemplated by the Ministry of Agriculture, — viz. an itinerary winter school of agriculture. These itinerary schools will change their headquarters every two years.

For the purpose of marketing and storing agricultural produce the network of granaries is to be extended. At Békés a large granary and 8 or 10 smaller ones each capable of storing

from 80 to 100 wagon loads of grain, are to be erected. Cold-storage buildings and packing-houses are to be established to deal with fruit.

The establishment and maintenance of stock herds have proved a valuable means of improving cattle-breeding. The *sine qua non* of more profitable poultry-farming and larger exports of poultry is that peasant poultry farmers should keep, on the one hand, *fowls of a larger breed* and, on the other, *fowls that lay more and especially larger eggs*. To encourage poultry-farming among the peasants courses of instruction are to be organized at every important marketing centre. *Models and pictures of proper henhouses are to be distributed to the small farmers*. In spring, in order to provide the domestic markets with early chickens, poultry farmers are to be taught how to hatch early by artificial means. New incubator depots are to be established, the funds for which are provided for in the Budget.

The poorer sections of the population are beginning to realize the value of rabbits as food; and in foreign trade there is a growing demand for their skins. The requirements of the fur and hat trades and of the knitting and weaving industries, as well as the increasing demands of the foreign markets, can only be partially met by our domestic breeders. *An extensive development of this branch of agriculture might lead to considerable exports in this commodity*. For this reason the Ministry of Agriculture has decided to establish rabbit farms and provide prospective breeders with animals and model hutches at reduced prices