

HUNGARIAN PREMIER, NICHOLAS DE KÁLLAY, ON HUNGARY'S FOREIGN POLICY AND RIGHTS OF SMALL NATIONS

At the meeting of the Upper House held on December 18th. *Nicholas de Kállay*, Hungarian Prime Minister, made a speech, from which we quote the following passages:—

"I have already defined *the basic principles of Hungarian policy* in its most important foreign and domestic political aspects. My reason for referring to my previous speech is not that it denoted any change or any deviation as compared with my previous statements in respect of my direction of political affairs, but merely that that speech was comprehensive and categorical in character. The trend of our policy has naturally been *unchanged since I made that speech*, as it was before. Both the speeches made by me prior to the debate in Parliament and that subsequently made by me in Parliament reflect one and the same trend. They are naturally organically connected with the exposé of the Foreign Minister; indeed, it could not be otherwise. I would therefore once more establish *the unchanged character of Hungarian policy*, stressing the importance attached in the direction of our policy to the ultimate issue, to the furtherance of aims serving the country's cause and to the adaptation of that *policy*, stressing the importance attached in the direction of postulate of correctness.

"A careful study of my words will show that from the very outset — though perhaps, I repeat, most pregnantly since the spring and in the most recent declaration made by the Foreign Minister — I have devoted more and more attention to *the question of the fate of the small peoples*, — a question in which we are primarily concerned from the point of view, not of our own country alone, but of Europe as a whole. It is perhaps in some measure to our credit that this question is already assuming a considerable importance and that it *is being thrust more and more into the foreground among the important international problems of Europe*. I feel

gratified; for Europe belongs to the Europeans. Europe owes her character primarily to the small peoples, which in the common evolution of centuries have been subject to the same development as the Great Powers in culture, civilization and social matters alike and have produced out of their own resources all that counts in the light of the standard of values of the present world and has ensured the prosperity and upswing of other nations; *I may therefore safely affirm that there can be no Europe without the small nations. as without Europe there can be no world — or at least no world worthy of man.* The reason why I have so much to say — why we are continually speaking — of the small peoples, is that I am convinced that *they must have a part in the framing of the new world-peace; for otherwise that peace will be no peace at all.* Naturally, the smaller and bigger nations of the world must be permeated with a consciousness of this fact; and the small peoples must above all look to it that they are worthy to occupy the high place to which their past has raised them.

“To that end it is indispensable that *the small peoples should remain true to their past and to themselves and that they should preserve and develop the special values which Providence has allotted them. The value of the small peoples consists, not in a continual change of political attitude or in time-serving opportunism, but on the contrary in an independence of spiritual and political bearing, in the stability and unswerving defence of their institutions or possibly in the divergence of those institutions from those of others.* The greatest service the small peoples can render is to remain true to themselves and to preserve intact even in the days of the most trying ordeals their own achievements and the fundamental values of humanity at large. *The extinction or disruption of nations with a historical past would not merely result in creating havoc within the frontiers of the individual nations, — it would decompose the synthesis of the world; to remove one of its colours from a rainbow must without fail result, not merely in the world being deprived of that one colour, but in the sun too shining differently with its life-giving power lacking one of its rays.*

“The battle-fronts are approaching Hungary and *the*

great offensive of the war of nerves has already reached our country. Promises and threats are being made and uttered. — though particularly threats menacing us with a terrible fate in the event of our abiding by the policy we have hitherto pursued. And these menaces are being uttered to the accompaniment of a charge accusing us of allowing ourselves to be dragged into the war in the hope of acquiring easily-won spoils, — of desiring to obtain possession of the property of others by force or stratagem. Hungary is not engaged in a war of conquest; she has no desire to obtain either easily-won or hard-won spoils: all she desires is to secure her own rights. It goes without saying that she regards as her own what has always been hers, — what was taken from her by the Treaty of Trianon (she has never made a secret of that); but in the war now being waged she has never for a moment been actuated by a thirst for conquest or for expansion beyond her capacity. *We merely desired — and still desire merely — to live; we were unable to hold aloof the universal risks incidental to the war and could not isolate our country from the conflagration of war spreading in all directions. We did not light the fire; nor can we be blamed because the flames of the fire has scorched us too.* And in any case Providence did not create the region between the Danube and the Tisza of the Basin of the Carpathians to figure as a Fairy Land; and the lot of the Magyars has never been that of those who live in insolent impunity or by cunning extortion.

"We undertook because we were compelled to undertake what our situation imposed upon us; but the responsibility for the situation in which Trianon placed us does not rest with us.

"And today, when the bitter struggle is still at its height, we must emphasise also that the Treaties of Trianon, Versailles, St. Germain and Neuilly claimed as their victims, not only Hungary, Germany, Austria and Bulgaria, but the whole of Europe and perhaps even the whole world. The havoc wrought by a war may possibly be restricted or at least repaired in a real peace following the war; but a *bad peace — which is merely the continuation of war in another shape and with other means — poisons the whole world* The human constitution is capable of overcoming a single

acute infection; but chronic pyaemia must without fail prove fatal".

"These reflections" — continued the Prime Minister — "apply with particular force to the small nations. We all know that the risks devolving upon small nations are quite different from those undertaken by the Great Powers. *The small nations are practically incessantly faced with the problem of "to be or not to be"; this being particularly true of Hungary, whose very geographical situation exposes her to the dangers of a clash of great peoples and interests.*

"The policy of small peoples owes its justification to the instinct of self-preservation. The policy pursued by small nations cannot be a power policy, but one of self-preservation; for what they desire is not to dominate, but to survive and develop. Any deviation from this path is an offence against the small nations and thereby against the basic values of Europe, — any endeavour on the part of a nation to assert its own imperialistic aspirations or to employ methods which have already proved a failure involving fatal consequences. There cannot be any element of stability or permanence in a State which relies for its survival, not on itself, but on outside support, which attempts to substitute international combinations for a synthesis of territory and people, a State which looks upon services rendered or to be rendered to the outside Power as its prime duty. The small peoples must endeavour primarily to bring about an understanding with one another and must depend for support upon one another, if they desire to survive. An understanding with one another and more particularly with the neighbouring countries is one of the chief safeguards of self-preservation. This understanding does not of course mean subservience, but must be based upon reciprocal respect for legitimate interests. The creation of good-neighbourly relations is a sine qua non of continued co-operation, being at the same time a manifestation of goodwill and of a sense of responsibility.

"The small nations cannot of course pursue a policy of provocation and must take into account, not only their own particular legitimate interests, but the legitimate interests of all nations; for the mere fact that they are small nations cannot be allowed to sanction a want of responsibility or to

involve immunity. But *things can never be allowed to go the length of allowing any Great Power to force a small nation into its sphere of interests.* I dealt with this question already in the speech made by me on May 29th.; but certain recent events impel me to solemnly repeat the statement made on that occasion. *To us these spheres of interest appear to mean, not the realization of security, but only the seeds of fresh conflicts; for, representing as they do the exclusive interests of individual States, these spheres of interest must sooner or later come into collision with other formations of a similar character. The only real guarantee of security is that provided by a just peace allotting every State, great and small alike, the framework which is its due and is therefore calculated to serve as the basis of a fruitful and constructive co-operation of all interested Parties.*

"There is one more point to which I should like to refer quite briefly in this connection, — viz. to *the revolutionary propaganda which is one of the chief means employed in the war of nerves.* We are well aware that every war brings about changes in the social, economic and political organization, — that at the end of a war it is impossible to continue in the old groove. But we are equally well aware that what a war can do is at most to speed up the rate of development and to accentuate the necessity of that development, — but that it cannot simply eliminate that development altogether. *A war may lead to peace; but anarchy must inevitably result in disaster and chaos:* all anarchy is able to do is to aggravate the seriousness of the consequences of the war; but it cannot heal and does far more harm than good to the cause of the changes deemed inevitable.

"Some of the speakers have dealt with recent events, — with the speeches made by the leaders of the Anglo-Saxon Powers, with the Atlantic Charter and with the agreement between Benes and the Soviet. One of the speakers taking part in the debate spoke of the only saving character of the democracies. Unfortunately, however, profound as is our respect for the democracy of the Western European or Northern European States or indeed of the United States of North America and our appreciation of the epoch-making

significance of that democracy, *today, in the cold light of reality, I cannot see how the mere fact of democracy suffices in itself to infallibly solve questions of international politics. Why, Finland is really and truly the incarnation of democracy, — a democracy in which there is no trace of the disturbing element of a so-called plutocracy.* Such is the character assumed in their formation by the Baltic States too; yet there is no denying that their lot is by no means an enviable one: and, in order to justify their being treated as *quantités négligeables* from the point of view of power politics and from other considerations of selfish policy, people are beginning to call their democratic character in question, though Finland is a real democracy, if ever there was one, for in that country the pivotal element in the democracy is that wonderful thing known as honesty. The theses of the Atlantic Charter too are beginning to fade into the background, their place being taken more and more decidedly and — to judge by the Russo-Czech treaty — officially too by the conception of spheres of interest.

"One speaker has referred also to the *question of what is familiarly called unconditional surrender.* I believe we all fully agree with what this speaker said, and we may remind the world that the small nations were all without exception formed as a result of struggles carried on for centuries for the vindication of their liberty and independence, adding that these small nations are all prepared to resume the struggle, so that it would be folly to force them to do so.

"In my speech made in the House of Deputies I established that neither promises nor threats can possibly prevail upon us to abandon the objects of the policy so far pursued by us. *We have never taken part in any political race and shall not do so in the future either; for the prime duty of the small nations is, not to take part in any such political race, but, as I have said already, to remain true to themselves.* That is why I affirm and think it proper that we should follow our own path.

"Our value depends upon our significance, and our significance depends upon our self-respect and our honour. A traitor may be rewarded; but no gentleman will shake

hands with him. And the Hungarian people is anxious to be able with head erect to shake hands with all the other peoples of the new Europe and the new world; it believes that its own values will ensure its existence and its perpetuity and for that reason follows its own path, thereby defending the cultural and human interests entrusted to its keeping; it believes that the recognition of these values will prove decisive for the fate of a nation, for, if these factors are not the deciding factors, this new world must involve our nation in a fresh struggle, to prepare for which is just as sacred a duty as it is to do everything in our power — as we are doing today — to prepare for the coming of a better world, — for the coming of understanding. This is the conception which for the past two years has inspired my direction of our foreign and domestic policy."

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