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The Soviet Hungarian Republic and the Paris Peace Conference

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Source: *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, Vol. 53, No. 10 (1963), pp. 1-91

Published by: American Philosophical Society

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1005880>

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NEW SERIES—VOLUME 53, PART 10  
1963

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THE SOVIET HUNGARIAN REPUBLIC AND  
THE PARIS PEACE CONFERENCE

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THE AMERICAN PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY  
INDEPENDENCE SQUARE  
PHILADELPHIA 6

DECEMBER, 1963

To the Memory of my Parents,  
Samuel and Klara Löw

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Library of Congress Catalog  
Card No. 63-23319

## FOREWORD

This study in its essence deals with a few crucial months of the period following the First World War, especially the events in Hungary and surrounding countries in the first half of the year 1919 and their impact upon the Paris Peace Conference. It is concerned both with the foreign policy of the first Soviet Hungarian Republic and that of the Great Powers toward the new Hungarian regime and her neighbors, particularly Rumania and Czechoslovakia. The first two chapters and part of the third set the stage for the main narrative by focusing attention on the disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, the rise from its ruins of the new states, Hungary, Rumania, and Czechoslovakia, and the work of the Peace Conference on Hungary's boundaries prior to the establishment of the Soviet Hungarian regime. Contrasted with the importance of the Hungaro-Rumanian and Hungaro-Czechoslovakian boundary questions, Soviet Hungary's relations with Yugoslavia in 1919 were of little significance. Since they did not determine the policy of the Great Powers toward Hungary, they have not been dealt with in any detail.

Most of the works consulted have been listed in the footnotes, and no special bibliography has therefore been included.

The author acknowledges gratefully the translation of Hungarian materials which were not available in other languages by Mr. Stephen J. Nemeth and Dr. Julius Szanto. He also wishes to express his appreciation to the American Philosophical Society for a grant which in the summer of 1958 enabled him to engage in research on a topic related to the one dealt with in this work in the Österreichisches Staatsarchiv in Vienna, Austria, which furnished additional sources for this study. Thanks are due to the entire staff of Youngstown University Library, especially to Mr. Stephen Torok and Mrs. Hildegard Schnuttgen for assistance in securing needed materials. Finally, the author wishes to give sincere thanks to his wife, Dr. Rose S. Low, for her penetrating criticism of the manuscript and for many valuable suggestions.

A. D. L.

Youngstown, Ohio  
February 15, 1963



# THE SOVIET HUNGARIAN REPUBLIC AND THE PARIS PEACE CONFERENCE

ALFRED D. LOW

The victory of communism will not stop at the borders of Hungary, it will be worldwide. . . . Our aim, an aim in which we are in no small measure assisted by our geographical position, is to promote the internationalization of the world. We are doubly predestined to constitute ourselves a bridge for ideas coming from the East.

Béla Kun

If this [Hungarian] Bolshevism remains within its frontiers, it does not concern us.

Woodrow Wilson

The Supreme Council [of the Peace Conference] could only expostulate. It therefore expostulated.

Winston Churchill

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## I. THE DISINTEGRATION OF THE AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN MONARCHY

### THE DISINTEGRATION OF THE DUAL MONARCHY AND THE MAGYARS

In October, 1918, the fate of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy was no longer in doubt; it was rapidly disintegrating. Internal disruptive forces, unleashed by the oppressed nationalities, furnished the main impetus, but the Allied war goals and the fortunes of war accelerated the break-up.

The Army which during the crisis-years 1848-1849 had proved one of the main pillars of support of the monarchy reflected in the crucial months of 1918 the centrifugal forces of nationalism which in the meantime had come to the fore, and which were bent on exploiting the military debacle of the Central Powers. In the end war-weariness and hopelessness had seized even the German-Austrian and Magyar elements of the army, the soldiers of the dominant races of the Empire.

During the month of October events of far-reaching significance followed each other in bewildering succession, each undermining further the crumbling structure. Early in the month the Dual Monarchy had extended peace feelers toward the West in a last attempt to save itself. By mid-October the Hungarian Premier, Count Stephen Tisza, had conceded in the Hungarian Parliament that the war was lost—an admission which spread like wildfire throughout the Empire and along the front. On October 16, Emperor Karl issued a manifesto in which he called upon the Reichsrat deputies of all na-

tionalities to rebuild Austria on a federal basis. Yet the appeal came too late. The spirit of concession and conciliation which the manifesto revealed was widely interpreted as a confession of weakness, as a last-minute attempt to please both President Wilson and the Entente as well as to win over and reconcile Austria's oppressed nationalities.

Originally, Allied war goals did not call for the destruction of the Dual Monarchy. Point Ten of President Wilson's Fourteen Points merely asked for an internal reconstruction of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and for the recognition of national autonomy and equality. In the course, however, of the spring and summer of 1918 the Western Powers went beyond these limited goals. In late October the American Secretary of State, Lansing, in reply to a note from the Austrian government, stated that armistice negotiations on the basis of the Fourteen Points were no longer feasible, and that now the independence of Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia would have to be acknowledged. The government of the Dual Monarchy had no choice but to accept what appeared to many a "death-sentence."<sup>1</sup> Actually, by this time, the Italian offensive was already in full swing, the Austro-Hungarian army was breaking up, and the Empire was being destroyed by many blows from within and without.

The Emperor's October Manifesto applied specifically to the Austrian half of the Empire and did not extend to Hungary. It had stressed that "the integrity of the lands of the Holy Crown of Hungary is not to be affected" through the planned reconstruction "in any manner whatsoever."<sup>2</sup> Emperor Karl felt bound by his oath of coronation which obligated him to the defense of the Hungarian constitution and thus to the preservation of Magyar domination over the non-Magyar peoples in Hungary, a solemn pledge of which the Magyar ruling circles never wearied to remind him.

That the Emperor's manifesto was confined to Austria was only the fitting conclusion of the different development of the two halves of the Empire, in particular of

<sup>1</sup> Masaryk, Th. G., *The making of a state. Memoirs and observations (1914-1918)*, 394, New York, 1927.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted by Kleinwächter, Friedrich F. G., *Der Untergang der österreichisch-ungarischen Monarchie*, 330, Leipzig, 1920. Other basic works on the breakup of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy or partly pertaining to it are the following: Von Glaise-Horstenau, Eduard, *The collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire* (Transl. by Morrow, Jan F. D.), London, 1930; Opočenský, Jan, *The collapse of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy and the rise of the Czechoslovakian state*, Prague, 1928; Ingram, E. M. B., *Military disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy*, in Temperley, H. W. V., ed. *A history of the peace conference in Paris 4*: 29-57, London, 1921; Namier, L. B., *The downfall of the Habsburg monarchy*, *ibid.*, 58-119; for a detailed account of developments centering around the armistice, see *Österreich-Ungarns letzter Krieg*, ed. Österr. Bundesministerium f. Landesverteidigung, 7: 565-803, Vienna, 1938. General Kerchnawe, *Der Zusammenbruch der österreichisch-ungarischen Wehrmacht*, Munich, 1921. Nowak, K. F., *The Collapse of Central Europe*, London, 1924. Auerbach, B., *L'Autriche et la Hongrie pendant la guerre*, Paris, 1925.

the different trends of nationality policy since the very birth of the Dual Monarchy, the Compromise of 1867. While in the Austrian half a definite, though at times painfully slow, progression toward realization of the Empire as a state of various nationalities on a confederative basis had been made, the Hungarian half had remained dominated by the adamant Magyar ruling class, which, filled with pride of chauvinism and class, had only contempt for the various non-Magyar peoples and saw its mission in assimilating them and in creating a single nation-state.<sup>3</sup> After the Hungarian election of 1910 the seats of non-Magyar deputies in the Hungarian chamber were reduced to a mere eight, five Rumanian and three Slovak. Elated by his "success" on the basis of a highly discriminatory electoral system, Stephen Tisza, leader of the party of National Work (Munka), addressing the chamber, had blurted out:

Our non-Magyar fellow-citizens must first of all reconcile themselves to the fact that they belong to a national state which is not a conglomerate of different races, but which one nation has conquered and founded, upon which one nation has stamped the ineradicable impress of its individuality.<sup>4</sup>

The October Manifesto was released at a time when the political storm had already reached its full fury. Under these circumstances it had a devastating effect upon both halves of the Dual Monarchy: in the Austrian half because of the promises made—which were considered insufficient and merely whetted the appetite for more—and in Hungary because of its glaring omissions which roused the embittered and oppressed nationalities against the defeated, yet in their view, still arrogant Magyar master nation.

The Magyar attitude toward the Empire and the Emperor had hardened during the war and the Magyar will to domination over the various nationalities in their own half had by no means weakened, but was as firm as ever. The ruling circles of Hungary, wrote F. F. G. Kleinwächter in *Der Untergang der österreichisch-ungarischen Monarchie* lived in an "almost dreamlike illusion"<sup>5</sup> in regard to their future, and the monarchist Austrian historian Edmund von Glaise-Horstenau, though paying his respects to the "proud courage" and the "noble ambitions" of the Hungarian nation, considered the fate of the Magyars in 1918 and thereafter "unjustifiably harsh," but "not altogether undeserved."<sup>6</sup> The Magyar nation, about ten million people in an empire of fifty-two million, and even in their own domain forming only 48.1 per cent of the population had played not only the dominant role in their own half of the monarchy, but a decisive one in the entire Empire. The Magyar upper class was unwilling to relinquish, even to

relax, its control over what it regarded less civilized and backward nationalities. Its Premier Count Stephen Tisza was sharply opposed to any reconstruction of the monarchy which would affect Magyar privileges and Magyar domination.

Yet the trend of events was unmistakable and could be easily anticipated. During the month of October, 1918, National Councils sprang up through the entire length and breadth of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The Czech Narodno Výbor proclaimed a revolution in Prague on October 28. The Narodno Vijeće established itself in the Croatian capital Zagreb (Agram), claiming to be representative also of Slovenia, Bosnia, and Dalmatia. On the twelfth of October the executive committee of the Rumanian National Party had met at Oradea Mare and had solemnly proclaimed the right of self-determination for the Rumanians of Hungary. Six days later Dr. Vaida Voevod informed the Hungarian Chamber that the decisions of the Hungarian government were no longer binding upon the Rumanian inhabitants, a position repeated by Father Juriga for the Slovaks.

While not only the Austrian but also the Hungarian half of the Empire threatened to break up into its component parts, the Magyars made their revolution on October 30, 1918. It was directed against the traditional ties with Austria and the Hapsburgs and against their own aristocracy, aimed at peace with the Entente, and was based on the hope of saving Hungary and preserving her integrity. The new government was headed by Michael Károlyi, leader of the opposition in the Hungarian Parliament and a convinced democrat. In desperate eleventh-hour attempts he endeavored to win over the formerly oppressed nationalities to the new Hungarian Republic by holding out to them the promise of true national equality in a "Danubian Confederation."<sup>7</sup> The English historian R. Seton-Watson, who did not conceal his pro-Slavic and pro-Rumanian sympathies, wrote with appreciation about the proposals made by Dr. Oscar Jászi, Minister of Nationalities in the new Hungarian cabinet, during the negotiations with Rumanian leaders which were opened at Arad on November 13, as follows:

[He] offered them Transylvanian independence and complete racial equality as the basis of a new Danubian Confederation of the free peoples. The Commune, and no longer the county, was to be the unit of political organization, and this unquestionably offered true democratic guarantees.<sup>8</sup>

At about the same time far-reaching promises were also held out to the Slovaks.

Károlyi's and Jászi's attempts to save Hungary's territorial integrity by making the non-Magyar nationalities forget an oppressive past and reconcile them with

<sup>3</sup> Jászi, Oscar, *The dissolution of the Habsburg monarchy*, 26, Univ. of Chicago Press, Phoenix Ed., 1961.

<sup>4</sup> Quoted by May, Arthur J., *The Hapsburg monarchy 1867-1914*, 440, Cambridge, 1960.

<sup>5</sup> Kleinwächter, *op. cit.*, 71.

<sup>6</sup> Glaise-Horstenau, *op. cit.*, viii-ix.

<sup>7</sup> Böhm, W., *Im Kreuzfeuer zweier Revolutionen*, 109, Munich, 1924.

<sup>8</sup> Seton-Watson, R. W., *A history of the Roumanians*, 532, Cambridge, 1934.

the new Hungarian democracy came too late. An offer which only a few years earlier would have produced genuine appreciation on the part of the nationalities and would have enlisted their enthusiastic cooperation no longer received serious attention late in 1918. In reply to Jászi, Jüliu Maniu, backed by the Rumanian National Council which already controlled most of Transylvania, insisted on complete separation.<sup>9</sup> Only a little later, in December, 1918, the Slovaks, having already cast their lot with the Czechs, terminated their negotiations with the Magyars in Budapest.

#### YUGOSLAVS, CZECHOSLOVAKS, AND ALLIED WAR GOALS

The Allies had not at first aimed at a break-up of the Dual Monarchy, but merely at the diplomatic separation of the Austro-Hungarian Empire from Germany and at the conclusion of a separate peace with the Danubian Monarchy. There were forces at work in Austria, opposed to the Pan-German policy of the overweening ally and concerned about the preservation of the Empire and the Hapsburg dynasty, which looked eagerly toward the West and were ready to conclude a separate peace. When the United States declared war against Germany in April, 1917, she refrained, therefore, from a declaration of war against the Dual Monarchy. As President Wilson put it in his address to Congress on April 2: "That government has not actually engaged in warfare against citizens of the United States." For the rest of the year diplomatic relations between the United States and the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy continued being "half-way between friendliness and unfriendliness." The Ballhausplatz was still assured through the American Ambassador Penfield that, provided only the government at Vienna was willing to negotiate a separate armistice, "there was no intention by the Allies to dismember their Empire,"<sup>10</sup> with the exception of freeing Polish-inhabited regions.

As late as December 4, 1917, when President Wilson asked for a declaration of war against the Dual Monarchy, he stated that it was neither the intention of the United States "to weaken nor to overthrow the Austro-Hungarian Empire. . . . Our sole wish is that the affairs of its peoples in great and small matters alike should rest in their own hands."<sup>11</sup> Likewise, in the discussions held in Geneva between December 15 and 20, 1917, between Field Marshall Smuts, Philip Kerr, secretary of Lloyd George, and Count Mensdorff, former Austrian

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> Lansing, R., *War memoirs*, 247, Indianapolis, 1935 (espec. chap. xviii: Relations with Austria-Hungary, 245-271). About Allied war goals in general, see Dickinson, G. L., ed., *Documents and statements relating to peace proposals and war aims*, London, 1919, and Taylor, A. J. P. and B. Pares, eds., *Essays presented to Sir Lewis Namier* (Taylor: The war aims of the Allies in the First World War) London, 1956.

<sup>11</sup> Wilson's speech of Dec. 4, 1917, *The New York Times*, Dec. 5, 1917; see also Public and official war aims of the belligerents, Temperley, ed., *op. cit.*, 1: 166-204.

Ambassador in England, Smuts asserted that nobody in England desired the destruction of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. To the contrary, some English politicians then seriously contemplated an extension and strengthening of the Dual Monarchy,<sup>12</sup> in order to restore the balance of power, which was destroyed by Russia's collapse and by Germany's drive to fill the military and political vacuum in Central and Eastern Europe.

Lloyd George, on January 5, 1918, in a wide-ranging and authoritative speech about the war-aims of the Entente denied that Great Britain was fighting to destroy the Austro-Hungarian Empire and pledged its basic integrity. On the other hand, he asserted that the consent of the governed must be the basis of any territorial settlement. Genuine self-government on true democratic principles must be "granted to those Austro-Hungarian nationalities who have long desired it." He was specific about the emergence of an independent Poland and left no doubt that Austria's Italian population would join Italy. Yet he was more vague about the Rumanians of the Dual Monarchy when he said: "We also mean to press that justice be done to men of Rumanian blood and speech in their legitimate aspirations." Promised also was "the restoration of Serbia, Montenegro, and the occupied parts of . . . Rumania."<sup>13</sup> Yet it was obvious that not only Czechoslovaks, but also the Rumanians and Southern Slavs of Austria were to remain within the Dual Monarchy. This speech therefore was most disappointing to Rumania and Serbia as well as to their kinsfolk in Austria-Hungary and to the Czechs and Slovaks of the Empire. Yet it was designed to entice the government of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and also that of Turkey to conclude a separate peace with the Western Powers.

After the entrance of the United States into the war in April, 1917, President Wilson had directed Colonel Edward M. House to set up a commission to study the territorial problems which were likely to play a key role at the future peace conference and to make recommendations concerning the solution of these questions. Soon after the United States' declaration of war against the Hapsburg Monarchy in December, 1917, a report of the American Inquiry, as the commission came to be called, was made to President Wilson early in January, 1918. Entitled "War Aims and Peace Terms," it was used by the President in formulating six of his Fourteen Points. "Our policy," the report had said in somewhat Macchiavellian fashion, "*must . . . consist first in stirring up of nationalist discontent, and then in refusing to accept the extreme logic of this discontent which would be the dismemberment of Austria-Hungary.*"<sup>14</sup>

It was in accordance with this recommendation that

<sup>12</sup> Glaise-Horstenau, *op. cit.*, 85 f.

<sup>13</sup> *The New York Times*, Jan. 6, 1918.

<sup>14</sup> Italics by the author. The report is printed in full in Baker, R. St., *Woodrow Wilson and the world settlement*, Doc. 2, 3: 28, New York, 1922. It was written by Dr. G. E. Mezes, David Hunter Miller, and Walter Lippman.

President Wilson in his notable speech on January 8, 1918, did not yet consider the destruction of the Dual Monarchy as a war goal. To the contrary, in the tenth of his Fourteen Points, he stressed that the "peoples of Austria and Hungary should be accorded the *freest opportunity of autonomous development*." Beginning with the late spring of 1918, American and Allied war goals, however, focused increasingly on the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. After having stirred up the nationalist discontent of the peoples of the Dual Empire, it turned out to be impossible to call a halt to their increasingly forceful and determined demands for the destruction of the multinational Empire and the establishment of their own independent national states.

Two days after President Wilson's speech on the Fourteen Points, on January 10, 1918, Secretary Lansing in a memorandum on "The Nationalities of Austria-Hungary" raised the question as to the independence of the peoples of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, such as the Czechs, Ruthenians, and South Slavs, questioning whether it was wise to preserve the Dual Monarchy. "I think," he wrote, "that the President will have to abandon this idea and favor the erection of new states out of the imperial territory." In addition to a Polish, Czech, South Slavic and possibly a Ruthenian state, "there should also be considered the annexation of the Rumanians of Transylvania to Rumania. . . . These independent states would present an insuperable barrier to German ambition."<sup>15</sup> At the time of the declaration of war against Germany the United States had declared the Dual Monarchy simply the vassal of the German government; in consistency with this view, the United States Secretary of State held now that the destruction of that monarchy would be a blow to Germany's imperialist drive to the east.

In a later memorandum, written on May 20, 1918, Secretary Lansing pursued this theme, stressing that the liberation of the various nationalities from the Austro-Hungarian domination would free them also from the "serfdom" to Germans and Germany. Since any hope for a "separate peace was vain, it seems to me," he wrote, "that Austria-Hungary must be practically blotted out as an Empire. It should be partitioned among the nationalities of which it is composed." The adopted policy "which will contribute nothing to the success of the war and which is unjust to the nationalities subject to the dual crown" ought to be abandoned, and this should be done now, unconditionally and without ambiguity. A few days later President Wilson wrote to Lansing giving the policy outlined by him his full approval. He made the further suggestion that the Magyars form an independent state of their own which would no longer be united with Austria.<sup>16</sup>

In late May and in June followed a number of public declarations by the Entente Powers and the United

States in behalf of ultimate liberty and complete freedom for the Slavs of the Dual Monarchy. On the second of July, Secretary Lansing insisted that all members of the Slavic race must be completely liberated from the Austro-Hungarian yoke. On September 2 the United States recognized the Czechoslovak National Council in Paris as a *de facto* government, entitled to conduct the military and political affairs of the Czech nation. In the fall of 1918 there seemed thus to be little doubt that the United States, though she had not yet made any definite commitment, would favor the union of Bohemia and Moravia with Slovakia and also that Rumania, in addition to other territories, would receive Transylvania. Lansing stated as much in a memorandum intended as a "guide in the drafting of the instructions for the American Commissioners."<sup>17</sup> In a letter to Thomas G. Masaryk, dated September 11, 1918, Lloyd George similarly pledged that the Allies would never forget the inestimable service rendered by the Czechoslovak people during the war.

In October, 1918, when the clouds gathered menacingly over the Dual Monarchy, the Austro-Hungarian government harked back to President Wilson's Fourteen Points which had merely called for the reorganization of the Empire, not for its destruction. Yet in his reply to the note of the Austrian government of October 7, expressing its desire to enter upon negotiations for peace with the Western Powers, the Secretary of State pointed out that in the meantime the United States had altered her policy. The United States government had recently acknowledged the existence of a state of belligerency between the Czechoslovaks and the German and Austro-Hungarian empires and "has also recognized in the fullest manner the justice of the nationalistic aspirations of the Yugoslavs for freedom." Autonomy of these peoples could no longer be accepted as a basis of peace. "These peoples, not he [the President] shall be the judges of what action on the part of the Austro-Hungarian Government will satisfy their aspirations."<sup>18</sup> This message turned out to be the death knell of the centuries-old multinational Habsburg Monarchy. In its reply of October 27, the Austro-Hungarian government, completely resigned, accepted the views of President Wilson "regarding the rights of the peoples of Austria-Hungary, particularly those of the Czechoslovaks and Yugoslavs."<sup>19</sup> The President had still made no special reference to the Rumanians. However, the Rumanians were not entirely forgotten.

#### THE WESTERN POWERS, THE UNITED STATES, AND GREATER RUMANIA

Rumania had adhered to the Triple Alliance between Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Italy soon after its

<sup>17</sup> Lansing, R., *The peace negotiations*. A personal narrative, 192, 194, Boston, 1921.

<sup>18</sup> President Wilson's note of October 18, 1918, in Temperley, ed., *op. cit.*, 1: 452-453, also 449, London, 1920.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 456-457.

<sup>15</sup> Lansing, *op. cit.*, 261-262.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 268-271.

formation.<sup>20</sup> Yet it was not friendship or community of interests, but fear and distrust of Russia and the loss of Bessarabia, which pushed Rumania into the arms of the Central Powers. The agreement of October, 1883, known only to King Carol and a few prominent Rumanian political leaders, was regularly renewed, for the last time in 1913. Yet it was never formally submitted to the Rumanian Parliament for fear that popular indignation would prevent its ratification.

It was evident almost from the very beginning that this alliance, in spite of the pro-German leanings of Rumania's Hohenzollern dynasty, would be undermined by the policy of repression of the Rumanians in the adjacent Dual Monarchy and of their Magyarization and by Rumanian irredentism. The Regat's natural political path pointed toward the West. The number of Rumanians in Russian Bessarabia and its natural wealth were rather small compared to the about four million Rumanians living in the neighboring territories of the Habsburg Monarchy, Transylvania, the Bukovina, and the Banat, and their natural and economic resources. Rumania had more to gain by aligning herself with the West against Austria-Hungary and her allies and by working toward the liberation of her brothers in Hun-

gary. And she was increasingly wooed by the Western Powers on the eve of the war.

On the occasion of a visit of Tsar Nicholas II and the Empress to Constanța in 1914, the Russian Foreign Minister Sazonov, who had accompanied the royal couple, had met Prime Minister Bratianu. After a joint trip through Transylvania, Sazonov promised the province to the latter provided Rumania would align herself with the Entente, a pledge soon confirmed by the Western Powers. The hope of gaining Transylvania was more enticing to Rumania than the German offer, made in those days, to wrest Bessarabia from Russia.

When the war broke out, Rumania, following the example of Italy, her Latin cousin, first chose neutralism. Under Russian and Allied pressure and driven by her ambition to become Greater Rumania and to liberate her kinsfolk in the neighboring Dual Monarchy, Rumania entered the war in August, 1916, after signing a secret treaty with the Allies which promised her Transylvania, the Bukovina up to the Pruth River and the entire Banat. Yet contrary to Allied pledges of assistance, and left to her own devices, Rumania soon suffered heavy reverses, and, in order to extricate herself from a hopeless situation, was constrained to sign an armistice in November, 1917, and the Peace of Bucharest in May, 1918. She was well aware of the prohibition of a separate peace treaty by her treaty of alliance with the West of August, 1916.

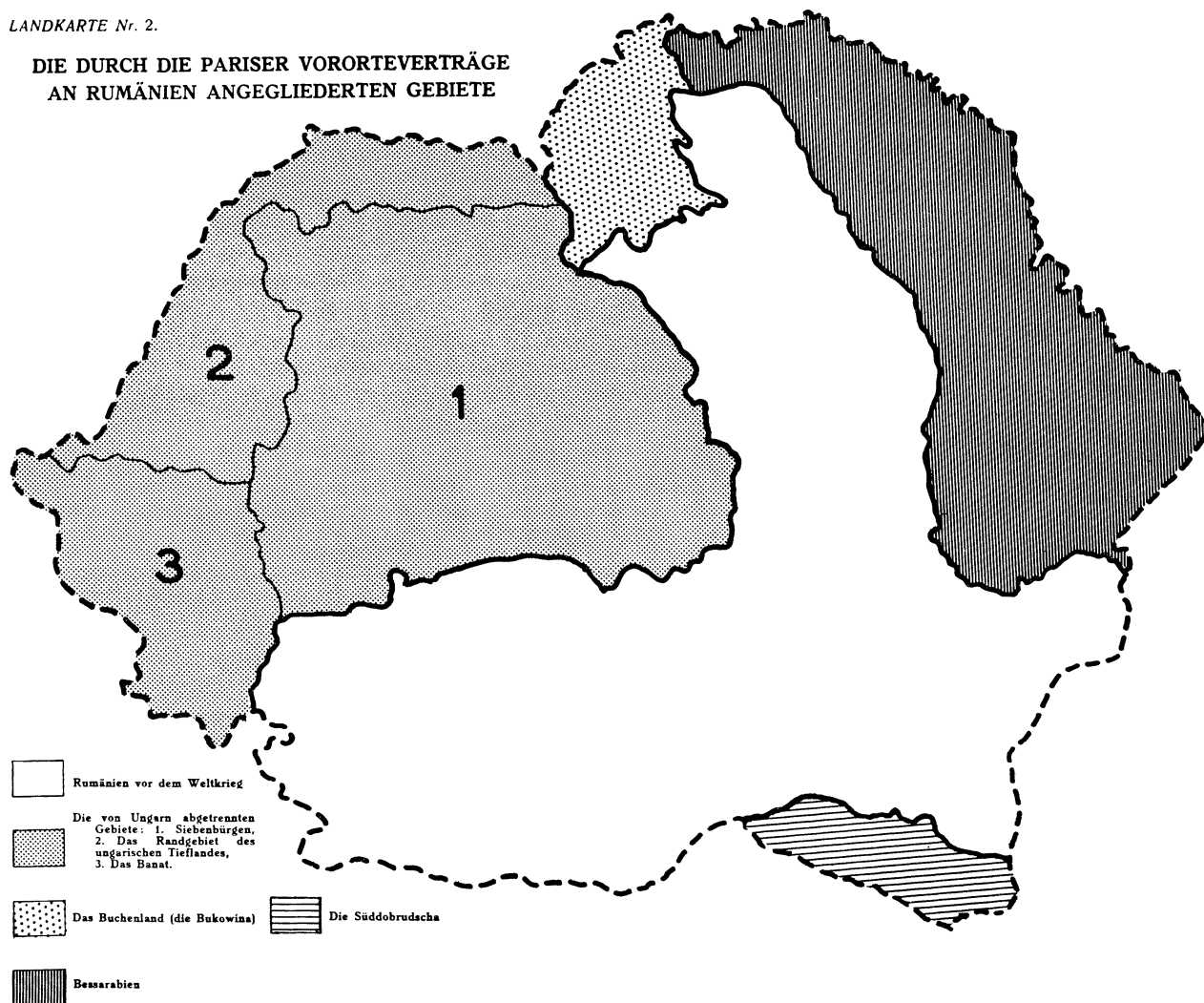
The question then arose whether the Western Powers, though they had offered no practical alternative to their ally in the spring of 1918, would consider the earlier pledges to Rumania still valid. Judging by the speeches of President Wilson, Lloyd George, and Clémenceau in January, 1918—before the conclusion of the Peace of Bucharest—there was some doubt whether France and Great Britain still felt bound by their wartime treaty with Rumania of August, 1916; also, the West seemed not yet determined to work toward the break-up of the Austrian Empire. To make certain that the pledges made to her would be kept, Rumania, after being urged by the West to resume hostilities, entered the war on November 9. Just before the war came to an end, Rumania had again become a belligerent.

United States policy toward Rumania had paralleled that of the Western Powers when in November, 1917, the kingdom had first signed the armistice at Focșani with the Central Powers and in the spring of 1918 had accepted the Peace of Bucharest. The United States was perhaps more sympathetic to and understanding of the motives of Rumania's government—which, it was held, had been forced by a grave situation to negotiate with the Central Powers<sup>21</sup>—and, differently from France and Great Britain, realized, in Secretary Lansing's words, "the disastrous consequences which

<sup>20</sup> About Rumania before, during the war and in the immediate post-war period, see Iorga, N., *A history of Roumania*, London, 1925, and *Histoire des roumains de Transylvanie et de Hongrie*, 2 vols., 2nd ed., Bucarest, 1916, Jonescu, T., *La question roumaine*, 2 vols., Paris, 1919, Laffan, R. G. D., *Liberation of new nationalities*, in Temperley, *op. cit.*, 4: on Rumania 213-236, Cornish, L. C., *Transylvania*, Philadelphia, 1947, Macartney, C. A., *Hungary and her successors. The treaty of Trianon and its consequences 1919-1937*, London, 1937 (about disputed border regions), Rieber, A., *Russian policy and Rumania—August, 1914 to August, 1916: A study in war diplomacy*, unpublished essay, Russian Institute, Columbia University, 1954, Moroianu, G., *Les luttes des Roumains Transylvains pour la liberté et l'opinion Européenne*, Libr. Univ., Gamber, 1933, Basilescu, N., *La Roumanie dans la guerre et dans la paix*, 1: chaps. xv and xvi, Paris, 1919, Djuvara, M., *La guerre roumaine 1916-1918*, Paris, 1918, De Hevesy, A., *Nationalities in Hungary*, London, 1919, France. *Ministère de la guerre. Les armées françaises dans la grande guerre*. Vol. VIII: *La campagne roumaine, 1916-1918*. Paris, 1933-34. Minesco, C., *L'action diplomatique de la Roumanie pendant la guerre*, Paris, 1922, Larcher, M., *La grande guerre dans les Balkans*, Paris, 1929, Roucek, J. S., *Contemporary Rumania and her problems: A study in modern Nationalism*, Stanford, 1932. Comte de Saint-Aulaire, *Confession d'un vieux diplomate*, Paris, 1953 (see *En Roumanie (1916-1920)*, 305 f., particularly 470-487), Jonescu, Take, *Souvenirs*, Paris, 1919, de Schelking, Eugene, *Recollections of a Russian diplomat*, New York, 1918 (see espec. Appendix II: The result of Rumania's participation in the Great War, 315-327). *The Inquiry, The National Archives*, Washington, D. C., has numerous studies on Rumania, Czechoslovakia, Serbia (Yugoslavia), and Hungary toward the end of the war some of which are specified in the following footnotes. Mitrany, D., Rumania, her history and politics, in N. Forbes, A. J. Toynbee, D. Mitrany, D. G. Hogarth, *The Balkans*, Oxford, 1915, espec. chap. 8: Rumania and the present war, 307-320. See also Roberts, Henry L., *Rumania. Political problems of an agrarian state*, New Haven, 1951 (espec. 22-27, and Bibliograph. note, 389-394).

<sup>21</sup> *Papers relating to the foreign relations of the United States 1918*, Suppl. 1, The world war, 1: 767, Washington, D. C., 1933; Acting Secy. of State Polk, March 15, 1918.

LANDKARTE Nr. 2.

DIE DURCH DIE PARISER VORORTEVERTRÄGE  
AN RUMÄNIEN ANGEGLIEDERTEN GEBIETE

MAP 1. The regions joined to Rumania by the suburban Parisian Treaties. From Andreas Fall, *Ungarns Recht auf Siebenbürgen* (Budapest, 1940).

would have resulted from further military resistance by the Rumanian armies.”<sup>22</sup>

The United States had been no party to the treaty of Bucharest of October 17, 1916, between the Allies and Rumania, when the latter had been promised Rumanian-inhabited regions of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy; she even claimed lack of knowledge of its provisions, though its contents had already been published in the Soviet Russian press. Though, as was seen before, the dismemberment of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy was first neither an American nor an Allied war goal, the West's policy in the question of the integrity or dissolution of the Hapsburg Monarchy underwent a radical and for the Dual Monarchy unfavorable change in the late spring and summer of 1918. Still, assurances to Rumania lagged behind promises to Poles, Czechs,

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 783; Secy. of State R. Lansing, Oct. 25, 1918.

and Serbs.<sup>22a</sup> For long, American policy did not go beyond offering to Rumania the pledge that the United States would try to safeguard her freedom, integrity, and independence, and work toward her restoration in the final negotiations for peace.<sup>23</sup> Vopicka, United States Minister in Rumania, in a message sent from Jassy, her temporary capital, on January 12, 1918, had made it clear that Rumania wanted more than that, that it wished especially assurances relating to Transylvania.<sup>24</sup> In early February, 1918, the Allied Ministers

<sup>22a</sup> *Nat. Arch., Inquiry Doc.*, 554; Captain Stoica, Memorandum, 405, Oct. 30, 1918, pleaded for a definite statement by the United States regarding American war aims toward Rumania: "Help given by the United States to Rumania and Rumanians in the present struggle was very little. The moral encouragement also."

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 752.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*; see also Stoica, Memorandum, *Nat. Archives, Inquiry Doc. No. 554*, 5.



in Rumania in a joint telegram to the French Minister of Foreign Affairs had urgently advised a reaffirmation of the terms of the convention concluded in Bucharest in August, 1916, as a means of staving off a separate peace between Rumania and the Central Powers. They also considered it "highly desirable that this declaration be made also in the name of the American Government, although it is not a signatory of the Bucharest Convention."<sup>25</sup>

Not before October and November, 1918, did the United States associate herself closely with the Western Powers in urging Rumania to reenter the war and, like them, held out territorial gains to Rumania, though perhaps never in quite as definite a manner. The news from both Jassy and Budapest contributed to clinching the decision in Washington, D. C., in favor of making a commitment.

On October 21, 1918, the American Minister Vopicka sent to Secretary of State Lansing a telegram from Jassy urging a definite and positive policy statement by the United States:

I beg to say that I am daily besieged by Rumanians who wish to have information from me regarding Transylvania. They seem to consider that their future is in the hands of America only. Of course all the old ministers of the Liberal Party, who favored the war on the side of the Entente, consider the question of Transylvania life or death for themselves and for Rumania. The National Council of Rumanians in Transylvania proclaimed their independence in the Hungarian Parliament. There were many meetings of Rumanians held in different parts of Transylvania, endorsing this programme and proclaiming themselves in favor of union with Rumania. The Rumanians here ask the President of the United States, before the peace is made with Austria, to be in favor of the independence of Transylvania.<sup>26</sup>

Five days later, Vopicka, writing again to Lansing, referred to a speech of President Wilson in which he was quoted as having said "that the Italians and the Rumanians of Austria-Hungary probably would prefer to join their original countries." The speech had

caused great enthusiasm here and now the President is idolized by the Rumanians . . . now they are satisfied because they know that the Rumanians of Transylvania will select either their independence or will join Rumania. I believe that for their sacrifice in the war they deserve consideration.<sup>27</sup>

Actually, the Rumanian government was to receive a direct assurance from President Wilson in the critical days of early November, 1918. When the news of Vaida-Voevod's declaration in the Hungarian Parliament on October 18 had reached Washington, D. C., Stoica, the Rumanian representative in the capital had been summoned to the State Department and had been

informed by William C. Bullitt that the "United States was prepared to endorse the principle of Rumanian national unity," though no specific Rumanian claims.<sup>28</sup> This position had been approved by the President and his cabinet, and the news released to the press; the message was cabled to Jassy. The government of the United States declared therein that it was

not unmindful of the aspirations of the Rumanian people without as well as within the boundaries of the Kingdom. . . . With the spirit of national unity and the aspirations of the Rumanians everywhere [!] the government of the United States deeply sympathizes and will not neglect at the proper time to exert its influence that the just political and territorial rights of the Rumanian people may be obtained and made secure from all foreign aggression.<sup>29</sup>

The message was joyfully received in Jassy. The United States, it appeared to the Rumanian government, was underwriting the wartime pledge of the Allies of August, 1916.

On November 9, 1918, the very day Rumania resumed the war against the Central Powers, the United States Minister in Rumania, Vopicka, wrote to the Secretary of State from Jassy:

This morning a message was sent to me with the King's wishes to accept me in audience this afternoon four o'clock. When I arrived there, the king expressed his thanks for the communication which came here by wireless, in which you [Mr.] Secretary, are quoted as recognizing the situation of Roumania and favoring the union of all the Roumanians who live in territory adjoining the kingdom of Roumania.<sup>30</sup>

This telegram had been sent on November 5, 1918. Considering the general military situation—the conclusion of the Armistice with Austria-Hungary on November 3, yet continuation of the war with Germany, and the Allied interest in preventing a union between the armies of Hindenburg and Mackensen—the date of the foregoing telegram leaves no doubt that it was designed to sway Rumania to reenter the war by holding out to her territorial awards. Minister Vopicka continued,

The king asked me to express his thanks to the President and to you, Mr. Secretary, for this good news to the Roumanians. After he said that, I answered that in recognition of that Roumania should enter the war at once today [!] and request the German army in Roumania to capitulate, and by such action, aid and advocate to make the Germans accept all the conditions dictated by General Foch.

According to Vopicka, his suggestion to the King and later to his adviser Prince Stirbey to reenter the war, had not originated in Washington but with him, and only at noon of the very same day he had talked to the King. In the evening of November 9 Vopicka and his

<sup>28</sup> Quoted in Mamatey, V. S., *The United States and east central Europe, 1914-1918*, 376-377, Princeton, 1957.

<sup>29</sup> *For. Rel. U. S. 1918*, Suppl. 1, 1: 785; Lansing to Vopicka, Nov. 5, 1918.

<sup>30</sup> *For. Rel. U. S. 1919. The Paris Peace Conference* (Quoted in the following *For. Rel. U. S.*, P. P. C.), 12 vols., Washington, D. C., 1946-1947; 2: 385.

<sup>25</sup> *For. Rel. U. S. 1918*, Suppl. 1, 1: 756; see also Vopicka, Chs. J., *Secrets of the Balkans*, 172-173, Chicago, 1921.

<sup>26</sup> *For. Rel. U. S. 1918*, Suppl. 1, 1: 783; Oct. 21, 1918.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 784.



ministerial colleagues were called to Bratianu who showed them a note in which the Germans were asked to surrender within twenty-four hours!

Exigencies of the war played an important part in Allied territorial pledges to the Poles, Czechs, Rumanians, and Serbs. Yet beyond it, the desire to liberate long-oppressed peoples, to strike a blow against autocracy and create a new Europe based on democracy and national self-determination helped to shape Allied war goals. In combination with the national strivings of Poles, Czechs, Slovaks, and the irredentist movements of Croats, Slovenes, Rumanians, and Italians, and the ambitions of the Regat, Serbia, and Italy, they sealed the fate of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The critical moment came when its armies began to disintegrate. This disintegration itself was hastened by developments in the Balkan theater of war.

#### HUNGARY AND TWO ARMISTICE AGREEMENTS

On September 29, 1918, Bulgaria had accepted the armistice conditions dictated by General Franchet D'Esperey and on October 30 Turkey had followed suit. The military situation of the Dual Monarchy thus became extremely critical. It had offered little hope when, on October 24, General Diaz had launched the Italian offensive on the Piave front. The following day the Austrian command sent General Weber to the Italian front lines to initiate armistice talks. In the meantime, Yugoslavs rose everywhere against Austrian garrisons and authorities and, in early November, Serbian and French troops crossed the Danube and the Save rivers. Rumania made preparations to reenter the war. These attacks on all fronts were accompanied by the rapid internal dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy whose army literally melted away. And by the time the armistice was concluded at Padua on November 3, the Habsburg Empire had already broken up into separate parts which had proclaimed their fully sovereign status.

The armistice at Padua which terminated hostilities between the Allies and the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy was the last document which bore the latter's name.<sup>31</sup> Its terms had been decided upon at a meeting of the Supreme War Council in Versailles on October 31.<sup>32</sup> The armistice was signed by the representatives of the Italian Supreme Command and the Supreme Command of the Dual Monarchy. With the exception of Fiume, the agreement did not affect Hungary and did not refer

to the Serbian and Rumanian fronts, but confined itself to the Austro-Italian front. The armistice took Italian claims and demands fully into consideration; Italy could occupy points even beyond the line assured to her in the secret wartime treaty of London. That no lines of demarcation, however, were provided for Hungary, was a serious defect of this agreement. The new Hungarian government, which had come into existence on October 30 and was headed by Michael Károlyi, was on principle opposed to the arrangement that the Austro-Hungarian General Staff sign in its behalf. Yet, as Károlyi put it later, for technical reasons, owing to the chaotic conditions of those days, the Hungarian delegation did not arrive in Padua in time, and Army Headquarters accepted the armistice in their name.<sup>33</sup>

On November 4, one day after the Padua armistice had been concluded, Marshal Foch took over the supreme command on all fronts, including the southern and eastern fronts. The important part played so far by Italy in the negotiations affecting these areas thus reached its end. Thereafter, France was to play first fiddle.

Foch was primarily concerned with continuing the war against Germany until the latter's surrender and was determined to prevent a link-up of the retreating armies of Hindenburg and Mackensen. Allied occupation of the southern and eastern border regions of Hungary would bar the road to Mackensen and prevent his joining forces with Hindenburg. The Padua armistice gave the Allies the right of free movement through the territory of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, but in view of the revolution in Hungary and her actual separation from Austria, Foch considered it necessary to have this right reaffirmed by the new Hungarian government. As far as the Hungarian cabinet was concerned, it was eager for Allied assurances as to the integrity of Hungary and as to their friendliness toward the new regime. Even after the Padua armistice Hungary still faced the threat of continued Serbian and French advances.<sup>34</sup> General Franchet D'Esperey, with forty-seven divisions under his command, seemed intent on forcing his way towards Budapest, with Berlin as ultimate objective. Thus both the Allies and the new independent Hungary were ready for a new military convention to modify the Padua armistice.

To stem the danger from the south, and also in the hope of obtaining better terms, a Hungarian delegation, headed by Prime Minister Károlyi himself, went to Belgrade to meet General Franchet D'Esperey, Commander of the Allied Forces in the southeastern theater of war. Count Károlyi wrote later about his views prior to the meeting in Belgrade:

<sup>31</sup> For the text of the Padua armistice, see Temperley, ed. *op. cit.*, or *For. Rel. U. S., P. P. C.*, 2: 175 f.; see also The armistices and their meaning, Temperley, *op. cit.*, 4: 120-129, Mermeix, Terrail Gabriel, *Les négociations secrètes et les quatre armistices*, Paris, 1919, and Maurice, F., *The Armistices of 1918*. London, 1943.

<sup>32</sup> *The memoirs of Marshal Foch* (Transl. by Col. Mott, T. B.), 463, New York, 1931.

<sup>33</sup> *Memoirs of Michael Károlyi. Faith without illusion* (transl. by Catherine Károlyi, introd. by A. J. P. Taylor), 130, London, 1956.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

We had no illusions; we were to be sacrificed for the error of our predecessors. . . . Some weeks previously it would have been a different matter, but now it was too late. Hungary was indulging in wish-dream that, although Germany's ally, she bore no responsibility. . . . I therefore feared that disillusion would follow; yet I believed that if there was one chance in a hundred of being treated less severely . . . it could be only through us. So I felt it a duty to jeopardize my popularity by taking the lead in those desperate days.<sup>35</sup>

Yet, however low then and in the next months Károlyi's real expectations were, his public utterances, for obvious political reasons, gave the impression of a moderate optimism.

To Hungary's political parties and the entire Magyar nation Károlyi's meeting with General Franchet D'Esperey proved to be a bitter disappointment—a harbinger of things to come. Franchet D'Esperey treated the Hungarian delegation rudely and with arrogance. He made it clear that Hungary's break with Austria and Germany had come too late and that the new Hungary was still the enemy.

The new military convention was agreed in Belgrade on November 8 and signed on November 13 by the delegates of the Károlyi government and representatives of General D'Esperey. The Convention required the demobilization of all Hungarian forces except six infantry divisions and two cavalry divisions and prescribed a line of demarcation which ran across the whole of the south and east of Hungary from Beszerce (Bistrița, Bistritz) in Eastern Transylvania, southward to the Maros (Mureș), west along that river through Szabadka, Baja, and Pécs to the Mur.<sup>36</sup> The Allies reserved the right to extend, if necessary, the area of occupation.<sup>37</sup> Though Allied troops were to occupy the region south and east of this line, Hungarian administration was to continue to operate in this area. After November 13 the region was occupied by Serb and Rumanian troops, with the former advancing northward and the latter in a westerly direction. Hungary which had expected the occupation of this area by troops of the Great Powers was greatly alarmed over this development,<sup>38</sup> in view of the territorial claims of

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 131.

<sup>36</sup> For the text of the Military Convention of Belgrade, see Temperley, ed., *op. cit.* 1: 491–493, or *For. Rel. U. S., P. P. C.* 2: 183 f., or Italy, *R. Ministero degli Affari Esteri, Trattati e convenzioni fra il regno d'Italia e gli altri stati* 23: 412.

<sup>37</sup> Temperley, *op. cit.*, 1: 492, point 3; Hungarian writers have tended to overlook or minimize this point. Actually, the occupation of virtually any Austro-Hungarian territory was already permitted by point iv of the Padua armistice, *ibid.*, 483–484. See also Clémenceau's interpretation of point iv in the session of the Allied Council on October 31, Mermeix, *op. cit.* Nevertheless, Foch was interested in a new military convention to reassert the right of free movement through Hungary.

<sup>38</sup> The Padua armistice had only provided that “all territories . . . evacuated will be occupied by Allied and American troops” (Temperley, *op. cit.* 1: 483); this phrase Hungarians interpreted as meaning the troops of the Great Powers, and it probably was generally understood this way in November, 1918.

Serbia and Rumania to this area and the immediate replacement of the Hungarian administration.

The Belgrade armistice line separating Rumanian and Hungarian troops was dictated by purely military considerations. Not only to the Magyars did it appear an unusually harsh and unreasonable line. According to Professor R. Seton-Watson, “the line of evacuation which he [Franchet D'Esperey] prescribed for Transylvania ran counter to every known principle of race, geography, or strategy, and to this day it is a mystery how it came to be adopted.”<sup>39</sup> Listening only to Serb advisers, General Franchet D'Esperey had authorized the occupation, among other regions, of the entire Banat by Serbian troops. While hampering Serbian advances toward Croatia and the Adria and the creation of a Yugoslav state, he seemed to give encouragement to Serbia's expansion north of the Danube, in spite of the danger of causing thus a clash between Serbia and Rumania over the Banat.<sup>39a</sup>

While the armistice agreement of November 3 had satisfied only Italian demands, the Convention signed at Belgrade ten days later was drawn up by the Franco-Serbian Command and met Serbian requirements. The area of occupation assigned to the Serbs actually exceeded Serbian territorial claims. The aspirations of the Czechs and Rumanians, however, were given no or insufficient weight in the armistice agreements concluded at Padua and Belgrade. From the Hungarian point of view, the Belgrade convention which laid down a definite line of demarcation in the south and east (though one which under certain circumstances could be extended), was somewhat preferable to the Padua Armistice which had left this question wide open.

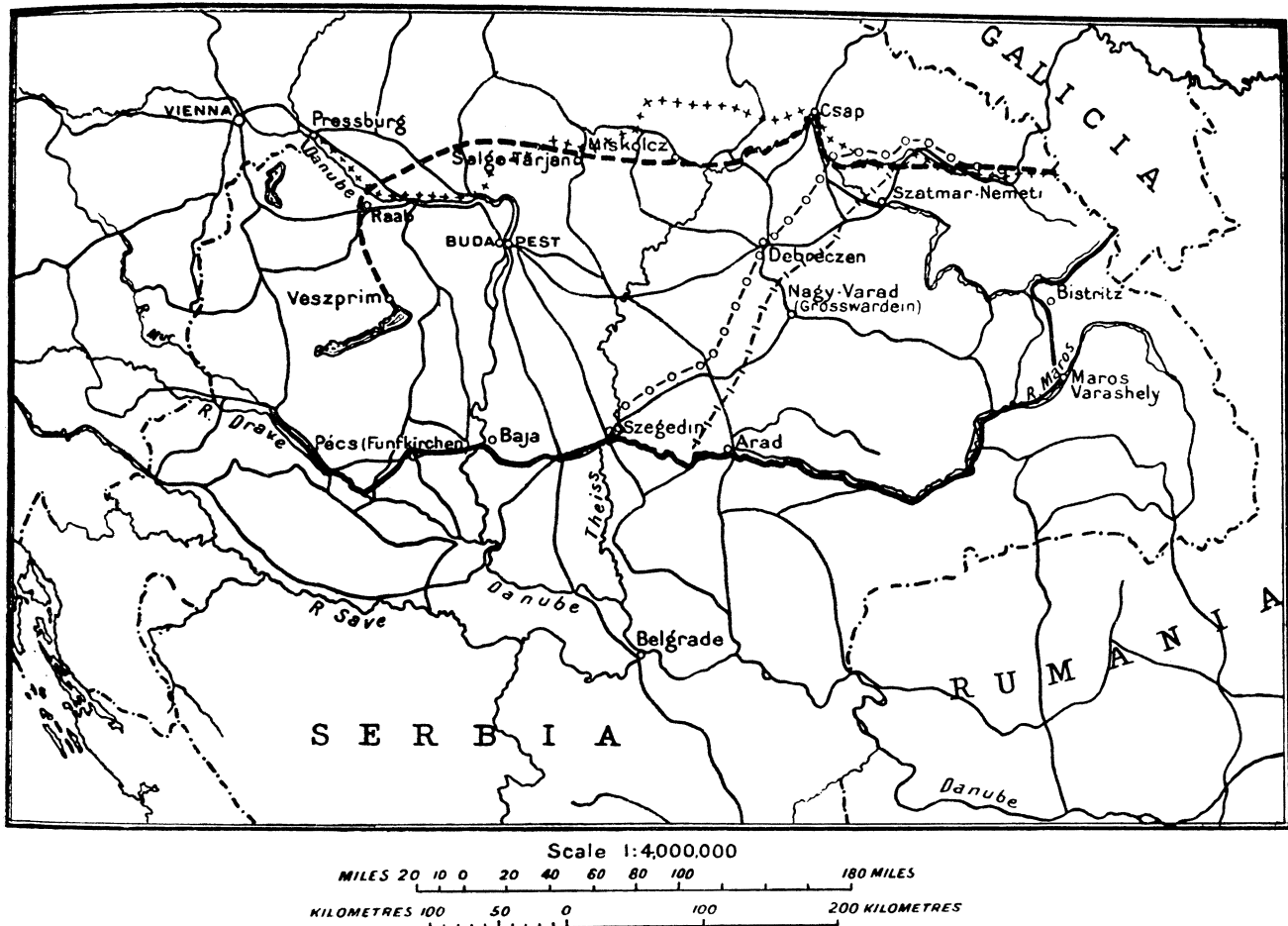
As far as Hungaro-Rumanian relations were concerned, the Belgrade line of demarcation which cut through Transylvania was, because of its patent political implications, actually not satisfactory to either side; in regard to Hungaro-Czech relations, the failure to provide for any line of demarcation whatsoever, with Slovakia's fate hanging in the balance, equally alarmed both parties. The Belgrade Convention thus did little to normalize the new Hungary's relations with her neighbors. And R. Seton-Watson in his work *A History of the Roumanians* was correct in pointing to the “incredible bungling of successive armistices” which had ruined the new Hungary's relations with the surrounding nations.<sup>40</sup> Yet it is only fair to point out that real, grievous, and avoidable as the Allied mistakes

<sup>39</sup> Seton-Watson, R. A., *A history of the Roumanians*, 532. About the meeting in Belgrade, see *Memoirs of M. Károlyi*, 130 f.

<sup>39a</sup> In the secret wartime treaty of Bucharest of August 17, 1916, the Allies, unwisely, had promised to Rumania not only the eastern portions of the Banat which were inhabited largely by people of Rumanian nationality, but the entire province, also the region settled by the Serbs. Ultimately, the Banat was divided between Rumania and Yugoslavia.

<sup>40</sup> Seton-Watson, *op. cit.*, 553.

# HUNGARY



## REFERENCE

- ① *Hungarian Armistice line. 13<sup>th</sup> November 1918*
- ② *Extension of Rumanian line. February 1919.*
- ③ *Rumanian Treaty line of 17<sup>th</sup> August 1916*
- ④ *Permanent boundary of Czecho-Slovakia as announced by the Supreme Council, 13<sup>th</sup> June 1919*
- ⑤ *Approximate line of greatest Rumanian advance.*

NOTE. On the 19<sup>th</sup> March 1919, Col Vix in the name of the Allies summoned the Hungarian Government to withdraw its forces to line ③. The area between ② and ③ was to be treated as a neutral zone. On the 13<sup>th</sup> June 1919 the Conference ordered the Soviet Government at Budapest to withdraw its forces behind the lines of permanent frontiers accorded to Czecho-Slovakia ④ and to Rumania approximately that of ②. The line indicated by ③ represents the frontier claimed, but not obtained, by Rumania at the Conference.

MAP 2. From H. W. V. Temperley, *A History of the Peace Conference* (London, 1929) 4: p. 122.

were, in the end it was the territorial losses of Hungary, that is, the gains made by her neighbors, which split the Magyars from the surrounding peoples.

When the Allies in the Padua armistice made no reference whatsoever, and a few days later at Belgrade only a partial and insufficient reference, to lines of demarcation for Hungary, they committed a serious and psychologically far-reaching error, keeping friend and foe insecure. Had they decreed a definite line of demarcation in November—either the finally accepted boundary, or one closely approaching it, or any other line—and had

they insisted that it be respected instead of being repeatedly shifted, the situation in Hungary and the surrounding states would most likely not have reached the fever heat which gripped them for months in 1918 and 1919.

Basic territorial differences would still have divided these states and pitted them against each other. It remains, therefore, doubtful whether an Allied policy free from psychological blunders would have made peace and quiet descend over this ethnically and politically complex and troubled area.

## II. THE RISE OF NEW STATES—ROMANIA, CZECHOSLOVAKIA, AND HUNGARY—AND THE QUESTION OF THEIR BOUNDARIES, OCTOBER, 1918–MARCH, 1919

### HUNGARY, TRANSYLVANIA, AND GREATER ROMANIA

It was the ambition of the Rumanian nation to liberate her kinsfolk beyond her borders and to transform the small kingdom of Rumania into Greater Rumania. To the six million people of the Regat were to be added about four million Rumanians the great majority of which lived in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy,<sup>40a</sup> in Transylvania, the Bukovina and the Banat, and about 1,300,000 in Russian Bessarabia. In its drive the Rumanian nation was inspired by the myth of its ancient Daco-Rumanian origin, of its alleged descent from the Roman colonists of the ancient province of Dacia. It was also moved by the distress of its brethren in the Dual Monarchy in which the Magyar ruling class repressed the Rumanian language and culture, pursued a ruthless policy of Magyarization and exercised strict control over the Rumanian Greek Orthodox and Uniate churches. The voice of Transylvanian Rumanians, raised loud against the denationalization policy of the Magyars, found an immediate and strong echo in the Regat.

The Rumanian people occupied roughly a broad circular region including Rumania, the adjoining province of Transylvania proper, the northern, eastern, and southern districts of Hungary west and north of the Transylvania frontier, and parts of Bukovina and of Bessarabia.<sup>41</sup> In the very center of this circle, in eastern Transylvania were located over one-half million Magyar-speaking Szeklers. In the rest of Transylvania in scattered islands lived about 300,000 more Magyars. While the Rumanians of Hungary were rather rural and lived largely in mountainous districts, the Magyars, excepting the territories of the Szeklers, were residents of the larger towns.

Transylvania had been since 1876 one of the seven administrative divisions of Hungary. The Rumanians were a majority in eleven of the fifteen counties which comprised the province. According to Hungarian statistics of 1910, 55 per cent of the population were Rumanians. There were also about 25 per cent Magyars, and of the remaining population the German ("Saxon") element was the largest. The larger Transylvania comprised the uplands and, in addition, included also a border fringe of the great plain of

Hungary. The border line of Rumanian speech was rather irregular. At no point did it come close to any of the four great Magyar market towns of the plains which were closest to the uplands, namely Debreczen, Grosswardein (Oradea, Nagyvárad), Arad, and Temesvár; the latter varied in population, ranging from 54,000 to 64,000, 63,000, and 71,000 inhabitants respectively. Nevertheless, the three last-named towns were included in the postwar Rumanian kingdom.

Transylvania proper (Királihegy) comprised, according to Hungarian statistics, only about one and one-half million Rumanians. The larger Transylvania included, in addition to the administrative unit Transylvania proper, the "partes adnexae," the border regions, which from a geographic and historic point of view were linked with the former and had a population of about 3,650,000 inhabitants of which about 2,200,000 were Rumanian.

The compact mass of Rumanians extended beyond Transylvania proper in the north into the comitats of Szatmar and Máramaros (Maramureș), in the west into those of Bihar, Arad, Csanád, and Szilagy, and in the southwest into the Banat. The Rumanians, therefore, did not limit themselves to claiming Transylvania proper. They asked, in addition, for all Rumanian-inhabited regions: for the Banat, the Bukovina, for Máramaros in the north, and The Crișana in the west (adjacent to Transylvania proper and comprising the western slopes of the Bihar mountains and a strip of lowland), and also for Bessarabia.

The Rumanians of Transylvania had been more successful in combatting Magyarization than all other minorities in Hungary. Living compactly in Transylvania, they maintained close cultural contacts with the Regat. In their great majority they belonged to the Greek Orthodox and Uniate Churches. The Magyars were overwhelmingly members of the Roman Catholic Church, only 12 per cent of them were Calvinists and about an equal percentage Lutherans. This religious difference added strength to the resistance of the Rumanian Transylvanians against Magyarization.

Magyar rule lay heavily on the Rumanians as well as on all the other nationalities of the Hungarian half of the Dual Monarchy. R. Seton-Watson in his *Racial Problems in Hungary* (1908) pointed out that on the basis of population in Transylvania 48 per cent of the schools should be non-Magyar; yet in Transylvania only 19 per cent of the elementary schools, 7 per cent of the Gymnasias and 7.8 per cent of the Realschulen were so.<sup>42</sup> The percentage of votes cast in Transylvania was about half that of the average of the vote cast throughout the country, and while 28 per cent of the population, made up of Magyars, elected thirty-five deputies, the other 72 per cent of the population,

<sup>40a</sup> According to the Hungarian census of 1910, the number of Rumanians in Hungary was about 3 million. According to Rumanian and other sources, it was variedly estimated as between 3½ and 4 million, and even higher.

<sup>41</sup> For the following see Report on just and practical boundaries within Austria-Hungary, *National Archives, Inquiry Doc.* 514 (espec. on Rumanians, 29–40, and Magyars, 68–74); see also de Martonne, M. E., *La Transylvanie, Inquiry Doc.* 1006.

<sup>42</sup> Seton-Watson, R., *Racial problems in Hungary*, London, 1908, quoted by M. S. Handman, *Magyar and Rumanian in Hungary, Nat. Archives, Inquiry Doc.* 204, 30.

were entitled by law to elect only thirty-nine deputies.<sup>43</sup> In the election of 1910 the Hungarian government was able to reduce the number of Rumanian deputies to eight; yet, according to its own admission, it mobilized at that election 173,000 soldiers!<sup>44</sup> Wickham Steed, correspondent of *The Times*, in his widely read book about *The Habsburg Monarchy* criticized the "short-sighted chauvinism of the Magyars" and blamed them for having "undermined the loyalty of the Rumanians not only to the Magyar state but to the Habsburg dynasty."<sup>45</sup>

It was especially the question of Transylvania which on the eve of the war pushed Rumania into the camp of the Entente. André Tardieu once called the province the "Alsace-Lorraine" of Eastern Europe. Actually, with a population which included, even according to the conservative Hungarian statistics of 1910, three million Rumanians as contrasted to the six million of the Regat, Transylvania's importance far exceeded that of Alsace-Lorraine for France.

According to the German ambassador in Bucharest, Graf von Waldberg, in September, 1913, virtually all circles in Rumania felt that the Transylvanian question was a thorn in the flesh of Rumania and that a more conciliatory attitude on the part of Austria-Hungary could bring about permanently friendly relations to the neighbor state.<sup>46</sup> In July, 1913, Bratianu, leader of Rumania's Liberal Party, had considered it a grievous mistake on Austria's part to tolerate the harsh treatment that the Rumanians in Hungary received. A few months later (September 16, 1913) he revealed to the German ambassador in Bucharest that good relations with Austria-Hungary "depended entirely on the treatment of the Rumanian questions in Hungary."<sup>47</sup> Though the German ambassador voiced confidence that "the political relations of Rumania with Austria-Hungary would suffer no change as long as King Carol conducted with firm hand the affairs of his realm,"<sup>48</sup> relations between states which rested on such a fragile personal basis augured ill for the future.

It was to improve Austrian-Rumanian relations that in October, 1913, Count Berchtold, Austria's Foreign Minister, had appointed Count Ottokar Czernin Austrian Ambassador in Bucharest. Count Czernin was one of the most intimate friends of the Austrian heir to the throne, Archduke Francis Ferdinand, who was known for favoring a trialistic solution of the nationality problems of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy; he

was also kindly disposed toward the Rumanians in Hungary and the Regat, and had sharply criticized Magyar nationality policy. He favored the transformation of the Dual Monarchy into a multinational state in which the Slavs and Rumanians of the Empire would attain equality, a concept adamantly opposed by the Magyar ruling class and Magyar chauvinists in general. Like his sponsor, the heir apparent Francis Ferdinand, Count Czernin in a biting pamphlet had sharply condemned Magyar statesmen for their ruthless nationality policy. One had expected, therefore, at the Vienna Ballhausplatz that his appointment would strike a responsive chord at Bucharest.<sup>49</sup>

Yet on both sides of the Carpathians anti-Habsburg sentiments were rising, fostered by numerous nationalistic and irredentist societies. One of the most prominent was the League of Culture which comprised also Transylvanians and was presided over by the noted Rumanian historian Nicholas Jorga. Most of the leading Rumanian politicians, except a few Conservatives, had become pro-Allied in sentiment; so were the intelligentsia, army officers, and public opinion in general. In December, 1913, King Carol in a talk with the German ambassador spoke of the

great agitation which at this moment is carried on in Rumania against Austria. . . . The anti-Austrian sentiments are widely current throughout the entire country. The worst is that they have penetrated also into the army and that among the young officers there is talk that it is now Transylvania which is on the agenda.

According to Czernin, the concessions which Tisza was prepared to make, King Carol considered only as "minor." The German ambassador reporting from Vienna did not expect "that he [Tisza] would ever abandon the policy of absolute dominion of the Magyars in favor of a nationality policy as desired by the Rumanians."<sup>50</sup>

Count Czernin had come to consider his mission in Bucharest a failure. The main thing, he prophesied, will not even be the loss of five Rumanian army corps in a possible war with Russia. But the absolutely necessary fortification of the Transylvanian boundary against Rumania, which will cost hundreds of millions, will be inevitable; for the Austrophobe mood . . . which is growing will make of the Rumanian ally an enemy.<sup>51</sup>

Von Waldthausen, the German ambassador at Bucharest, testified that Count Czernin considered Rumania lost to the Triple Alliance.<sup>52</sup>

#### RUMANIA DURING THE WAR, NEUTRAL AND BELLIGERENT

When the First World War broke out, the question of Rumania's foreign policy split her political parties

<sup>49</sup> See the report of the German ambassador in Vienna, Prince zu Stolberg, to the German chancellor von Bethman Hollweg, *ibid.*, 453.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*; about the correspondence between Tisza and Bratianu, see also 447, Sept. 16, 1913.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 502-503, March 11 and Apr. 2, 1914.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 513.

<sup>43</sup> Seton-Watson, R., *Corruption and reform in Hungary*, 6, London, 1911.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>45</sup> Steed, Wickham, *The Habsburg monarchy*, 288, London, 1913.

<sup>46</sup> *Grosse Politik der europäischen Kabinette*, 39: 447, Berlin, 1926; Sept. 16, 1913.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.* In the same context he said: "The cradle of many a Rumanian politician, civil servant or judge was in Hungary and there was hardly a house in Bucharest which did not have servants who had come from there."

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*; see also 507.

and Rumanian public opinion along three main lines. Some Conservatives, led by the former Prime Minister Carp, and King Carol of the House of Hohenzollern were in favor of honoring the treaty with the Triple Alliance, though the Conservatives as a whole were far from united on this issue.<sup>53</sup> While Take Jonescu, leader of the Conservative-Democratic Party, wanted Rumania to side with the Entente, Bratianu, spokesman for the Liberals, urged the country to ignore the treaty with Germany and to stay neutral for the time being, though Rumania's long-range territorial interests demanded, in his opinion, close diplomatic links and a firm understanding with the Allies. The cabinet, headed by Bratianu, commanded overwhelming support in the Chamber of Deputies and in the Senate and had also the confidence of the new King Ferdinand. After King Carol's death, two months after the outbreak of the First World War, Ferdinand succeeded him and was to prove more responsive to the anti-Habsburg sentiments of his nation than his predecessor.<sup>54</sup>

Under Bratianu's leadership, Rumania adopted first a neutralist course. However, the latter favored the Allies in several ways, since Rumania permitted the transit of war materials to Serbia. In conformity with more informal promises made earlier in the year, Russia, in a treaty concluded with Rumania on October 1, 1914, promised to support her claims in regard to the Rumanian-inhabited areas of the Dual Monarchy. When, however, in the spring of 1915, the Entente urged Rumania to declare war against the Central Powers, the Bratianu government, fearful of Rumania's vulnerable position, procrastinated. Yet the pressure began to mount when in June, 1916, the successful Russian offensive under General Brusilov carried the Russian army close to Transylvania. Rumania became convinced that only active belligerency on the side of the Allies would ensure her the promised territorial gains.

In July, 1916, Sazonov was replaced by the new Russian Prime Minister Boris Stürmer. He soon made the Western Allies insist that Rumania enter the war in August, 1916, unless her government wanted to forfeit the territorial pledges made to her. These promises were solemnly confirmed by a treaty with the Allied Powers concluded on August 17, 1916. Forced to reach a decision, the Rumanian Crown Council, meeting on August 27 in the outskirts of Bucharest, approved Bratianu's recommendation to declare war

against the Central Powers, though the Conservatives, still hoping to achieve their territorial objectives without direct military intervention, refused to give the Prime Minister their support.<sup>55</sup> In reply to questions about Allied territorial promises, Bratianu listed on this occasion Transylvania and the Crişana up to the Tisza—such extension had actually not been promised<sup>56</sup>—the Banat, the Slav part of Máramaros, and the Bukovina up to the Pruth River. On the evening of the very same day the Crown Council was held, the Rumanian envoy in Vienna handed to the Austro-Hungarian Foreign Minister Rumania's declaration of war.

Before commencing hostilities, Rumania was assured by the Allies that they would supply her with arms and ammunition and would give her protection against a possible flanking attack by Bulgaria. Russia promised to attack Austrian forces in the Bukovina to divert them from Rumania, and the French general Serrail was simultaneously to move his army from Saloniki northward. Thus supported, the Rumanians were to strike through Transylvania with Budapest as their goal. Yet neither the Russians nor the French proved willing or capable of meeting their military obligations. Of all the military pledges given, the Rumanians were the only ones who lived up to their commitments. In spite of serious military deficiencies, especially lack of heavy artillery, they began hostilities on August 27, 1916.<sup>57</sup> They called 13 per cent of the entire population to the colors, a higher percentage in the initial phase of the war than was attained by any Western country. The Rumanian army numbered at first more than 600,000 troops.

After a quick successful dash into Transylvania, the Rumanian campaign soon fizzled out and finally met with disaster. Two German armies led by Generals Falkenhayn and Mackensen moved into western Wallachia and toward Bucharest respectively. On December 6 Bucharest fell to the Germans. By this time the retreating remnants of the Rumanian army had reached the Sereth River where supported by strong Russian reinforcements, they were able to hold the Moldavian front. Guided by a French military mission, which was headed by General Henri Berthelot, the Rumanian army continued its heroic resistance for another year, in spite of the disastrous turn of events in Russia. On November 26, 1917, however, Rumania was forced to sign the armistice of Focşani, in order to save her remaining troops from complete destruction.<sup>58</sup>

<sup>53</sup> Vopicka, Charles J., *op. cit.*, 78-79; Handman, M. S., *op. cit.*, 103, holds that between 1914 and 1916 even the anti-Russian and pro-German elements in Rumania did not plead for war with the West, but supported either a "strict neutrality" or, at the most, favored attacking Russia in order to recover Bessarabia. —About the varying foreign policy position of leading Rumanian politicians, see also Forbes, Toynbee, Mitrany, *The Balkans*, 312-316.

<sup>54</sup> About the foreign policy views both of King Carol and King Ferdinand, see *Grosse Politik* 39: 465, 513.

<sup>55</sup> *Revue d'histoire de la guerre mondiale*, vi, 161 f., Apr. 1928.

<sup>56</sup> For the French version of the secret treaty, see Temperley, *op. cit.* 4: 516-517; the English version is given in Clark, Chs. Upson, *Greater Roumania*, 171-177, New York, 1922.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 179.

<sup>58</sup> Even after this armistice the Allied Supreme War Council decided to continue sending food and military supplies to Rumania, *For. Rel. U. S.*, 1918, *Russia* 2: 596-598.

Though the Western Powers, insisting on prohibitive clauses of the Treaty of Bucharest concerning the signing of a separate peace treaty had first opposed a truce between Rumania and the Central Powers and had urged instead evacuation of the Rumanian government and army to Southern Russia, they had finally given their consent to the armistice after Bratianu had pledged never to sign a separate peace.

Official statements made early in 1918 by leading Western statesmen,<sup>59</sup> seemingly promising the integrity of the Habsburg Empire, disturbed Rumania as running counter to the pledges made to her in the secret treaty of August, 1916, and lent force to those in Jassy, the temporary capital, who wished to have the armistice supplanted by a peace treaty with the Central Powers. The increasing pressure on Rumania by the German and Austro-Hungarian armies and governments left no doubt as to their unwillingness to tolerate her delaying tactics any longer. Simultaneously, the Austrian Emperor Karl promised that only minor frontier rectifications in favor of Hungary would be demanded from Rumania, and the Central Powers pledged furthermore to assist the Rumanian kingdom in wresting Bessarabia from Russia and in annexing it.

The Peace of Bucharest which was imposed by Germany and her allies on Rumania on May 7, 1918, "rectified" the border in favor of Austria-Hungary along the Carpathians, "bringing the frontier 5-10 miles further down toward the plain."<sup>60</sup> Actually the entire crest of the Carpathians, a strategically valuable boundary line, passed thus into Austrian-Hungarian hands. Both the Austrian government, headed by Count Czernin, and German military headquarters had urged the Hungarians to reduce their territorial demands *vis-à-vis* Rumania, but to no avail. Almost 7,000 square miles and about 130,000 people changed hands. Economically, the provisions of the Peace of Bucharest were crippling. Rumania, furthermore, had to join the Triple Alliance again. The representatives of Great Britain, France, and Italy in Bucharest, aroused at the draconic terms of the treaty, announced that they regarded its provisions, which adversely affected the rights and interests of their states and which were violations of the principles in the defense of which the Entente had taken up arms, as null and void. Balfour made a statement in the Parliament to the effect that at the eventual Peace Conference the British government would work toward a revision of the harsh terms imposed by the enemy upon Rumania.<sup>61</sup>

<sup>59</sup> *For. Rel. U. S. 1918*, Suppl. 1, 1: 757.

<sup>60</sup> About the text of the treaty of Bucharest, see *For. Rel. U. S., 1918*, Suppl. 1, 1: 771 f. About Rumania's withdrawal from the war, see the period between January, 1918, and May, 1918, *ibid.*, 751-785.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 778-779.

#### RUMANIA AND THE VALIDITY OF HER WARTIME TREATY

Bratianu has later claimed that his peace negotiations with the Germans had merely aimed at gaining time and that King Ferdinand actually had looked forward with eagerness to the resumption of war with the Central Powers. He furthermore pointed out that in the autumn of 1918 the Allies had appealed to Rumania to renew hostilities against the Central Powers.<sup>62</sup> In Bratianu's view, Rumanian claims to former Hungarian territories which were based on ethnic considerations and demands of justice and had been acknowledged in the wartime treaty of August, 1916, had therefore been reaffirmed and were still valid.

Though the Allied Powers denounced the Treaty of Bucharest and pledged to rectify its injustice, they did not reaffirm thereby their secret treaty with Rumania of August, 1916, and the territorial promises it contained. Yet the treaty was to continue to weigh heavily in the decisions of Rumania's political leaders. In early February, 1918, the Allied ministers in Bucharest in a telegram to the French Minister of Foreign Affairs warned that Rumania might shortly sign a separate peace, unless the Entente, taking the initiative, made a declaration confirming the terms of the convention concluded at Bucharest in August, 1916.<sup>63</sup>

On November 9, a few days after the Padua Armistice was concluded, Rumania reentered the war against the Central Powers,<sup>63a</sup> charging that Germany had violated the treaty of Bucharest by building up her military strength in Wallachia above the agreed limit. During the few remaining days of the war she did not engage in actual fighting, since the retreating enemy offered no opposition. Though a belligerent when, on November 13, a military convention was concluded at Belgrade between Franchet D'Esperey and the Hungarian government, Rumania was not invited to participate in the negotiations in the Serbian capital. She was most concerned that the convention might ignore or not sufficiently take into account the Allied promises made to her in the secret treaty of August, 1916.

Rumania's fears were justified. Franchet D'Esperey fixed the Maros River as Armistice line, thus dividing Transylvania into two parts. Rumania was permitted to occupy only the eastern half of the province. On November 13, the day the Belgrade Convention was

<sup>62</sup> Speech of Bratianu, July 1, 1919, *For. Rel. U. S., P. P. C.* 7: 10-11, Washington, D. C., 1946; see also Horvath, E., *Diplomatic history of the treaty of Trianon*, in Ct. Apponyi, Albert, ed., *Justice for Hungary*, 94, London, 1928.

<sup>63</sup> *For. Rel. U. S. 1918*, Suppl. 1, 1: 756.

<sup>63a</sup> In September, 1918, a Hungarian emissary had come to Jassy to enter into negotiations with the Prime Minister apparently about a revision of the recently concluded Peace of Bucharest. King Ferdinand, however, insisted that prior to the continuation of any talks the Austro-Hungarian army first evacuate Rumanian territory. (Vopicka, *Secrets of the Balkans*, 235, Chicago, 1921.)



signed, Rumania issued an ultimatum to Hungary demanding that Hungarian troops be forthwith withdrawn from all of Transylvania, also from the area west of the Maros River, and that the new government recognize Rumania's title to the province. It was evident from the very beginning that Rumania would not permit the armistice line of demarcation to become the permanent political frontier and would insist on obtaining the full territorial reward promised to her for entering the war.

The armistice convention which split the province into two was satisfactory neither to Rumania nor to Hungary each of which wanted the province in its entirety. Yet the armistice terms left it to the discretion of the victor to extend in case of need the area of occupation. Rumania had not participated in the armistice negotiations, neither in those at Padua, when she had not yet been a belligerent, nor at Belgrade, though she had reentered the war on November 9 and the Belgrade Convention was not signed before November 13. Though the latter did not specifically provide for the occupation of Hungarian territory by Rumanian troops, it did not exclude their employ as an occupying force. General Franchet D'Esperey and General Berthelot, the latter the head of the French military missions in Rumania during the war and after its end, used Rumanian troops for the occupation of the Bukovina and of the area of Transylvania east of the Maros River. Nevertheless, Rumania, eyeing the territory west of the Maros, claimed subsequently that, not being a signatory to the Armistice, she was still at war with Austria-Hungary and therefore was not bound to observe the terms of the Belgrade Convention, including the Maros line.

Rumania aimed at pushing the line of demarcation westward to secure one more or less identical with the boundary line fixed by the wartime treaty of August 17, 1916. In addition to Allied pledges, ethnic claims and general considerations of justice, Rumania pointed to her military contributions to the common cause and to her sufferings and sacrifices during the war. At the war's end Rumania's political leaders saw a unique historic opportunity of liberating their brethren in all of Transylvania, who looked expectantly toward her, and of righting old wrongs. The Hungarians, on the other hand, already under severe pressure in the north and sought, tried desperately to hold on to the Maros River—though actually claiming all of Transylvania. They charged that occupation of any land west of the Maros constituted a violation of the Belgrade Armistice.

While Rumania was primarily concerned with Transylvania, the concept of a Greater Rumania went beyond the acquisition of Transylvania. It extended to the Bukovina, the Banat and the Crişana, the strip of Magyar-inhabited territory west of Transylvania proper. Having reentered the war on November 9, she tried to seize the opportunity for rapid expansion into

these regions. On November 26 the Rumanian National Assembly of the Bukovina, on December 1 its counterpart in Transylvania, the Rumanian National Council, and on December 9 the Rumanian Assembly of Bessarabia voted for a complete union with Rumania. In mid-December Rumanian troops, after crossing the Carpathians, moved into Transylvania and a part of the Banat. In Transylvania the Hungarian minority offered hardly any resistance. In the Banat, however, the Rumanians encountered victorious Serbian troops and a determined local Serbian population.

By the end of 1918, and even more so in the spring of 1919, Rumania's territorial ambitions were largely fulfilled, provisionally at least, and this *fait accompli* was bound to make an impression upon the work of the Peace Conference.

On December 1, 1918, the Rumanian National Council of Transylvania, meeting at Alba Iulia, in a manifesto addressed to the world proclaimed its union with the "Regat," the kingdom of Rumania. It set up a provisional cabinet, sent telegrams to King Ferdinand and Queen Maria of Rumania, and made a solemn declaration of its guiding principles for the government of Transylvania, including the establishment of a democratic regime, liberty for all nationalities, and autonomy for all religious denominations; it came out also in support of a radical agrarian reform. There was no determined opposition from the overawed Magyar minority in Transylvania; the government of Michael Károlyi, in view of Hungary's chaotic internal condition and her military impotence, confined its protest to a diplomatic note.

The gathering at Alba Iulia was representative of the political will of the Rumanians of Transylvania. The Magyar minority, however, was opposed to union with the Regat, though, intimidated, it offered virtually no resistance to the drive of the Rumanians of the province for the link-up with Rumania. The German element refused to commit itself until such a time when it became obvious which way the political wind was blowing. In his noted work *Hungary and Her Successors* (1937), C. A. Macartney, who leans toward the Magyar point of view, holds nevertheless that a straight plebiscite in Transylvania under normal conditions would probably have given to Rumania roughly 60 per cent of the total votes.<sup>64</sup> Even Hungarian revisionists have not denied that the Rumanians of the province were in 1918-1919 in favor of joining the neighboring Regat. When Count Michael Károlyi, having recognized the Rumanian National Council in Transylvania which had constituted itself in October, 1918, had sent Dr. Jászi to negotiate with it, Maniu, President of the Council and supported by a unanimous party, demanded nothing less than complete separation from Hungary.

A free plebiscite which might have disclosed the

<sup>64</sup> Macartney, C. A., *Hungary and her successors*, 277, 1937.



pro-Rumanian feelings and desires of the majority of the Transylvanian population did not appear feasible under existing conditions. In mid-December troops from the Rumanian kingdom crossed the line of demarcation, claiming that the lives and properties of the Rumanians west of the Maros were in danger.<sup>65</sup> The Allies gave them specific permission to occupy territories up to a line stretching from Satu Mare (Szatmár Németi) Careii Mare, Oradea Mare (Nagyvárad, Grosswardein) to Békecsába. At the same time French troops moved into the Banat to prevent clashes between Rumanians and Serbs. Later the Peace Conference was definitely to assign these former Hungarian territories to Rumania.

#### THE BIRTH OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA

During the last phase of the war two Czechoslovak governments had been created, one in Paris, the other in Prague. The Paris government—the Czecho-Slovak National Council, as it called itself—led by Thomas G. Masaryk, Eduard Beneš, and the Slovak leader Milan R. Štefánik, received *de facto* recognition from the Allied Powers and the United States. On October 18 it proclaimed the independence of Czechoslovakia. Ten days later, on October 28, Czech nationalists in Prague followed suit with a bloodless revolution, proclaiming the independence of the new Czechoslovakian Republic on Czech soil. On October 30 a Slovak assembly at Svätý Martin pledged support to the Prague government. In a merger of the two Czechoslovak governments brought about at Geneva on October 31 it was agreed that Masaryk would become President, Kramář, who during the war had led the Czech domestic movement against Vienna, would be President of the Council of Ministers, Beneš Minister for Foreign Affairs, and Štefánik Minister for National Defense. Masaryk, hurrying home from the United States, did not reach Prague before December 21. Beneš and Kramář remained in Paris until the conclusion of the peace negotiations.

The new republic insisted on maintaining the historic unity and integrity of the lands of the Bohemian Crown. Though it met with the opposition of Austria and also of the German population of the border regions, it encountered only little active resistance from the latter. After mid-December, 1918, it had established firm authority in the border areas. Czechoslovakia justified her territorial claims to these regions by advancing not only historic, but also strategic and economic grounds. At the same time the new government rather discounted the historic claims of Hungary to Slovakia, pointing here to the ethnic kinship between, or near-identity of Czechs and Slovaks and to Allied political pledges.<sup>66</sup>

<sup>65</sup> About the virtual absence of Hungarian resistance to the Rumanian troops, see also Iorga, *op. cit.*, 263 f.

<sup>66</sup> For works about Czechoslovakia in 1918 and 1919 and the birth of the Czechoslovak state, see Masaryk, Th. G., *op. cit.*,

The Allied decision concerning the political future of Slovakia, its union with the Czech-inhabited regions, had actually been made by the Western Powers before the Peace Conference opened, in 1918. The recognition of the Czechoslovak National Council in Paris in the summer of 1918 by France and Great Britain as core of the future Czechoslovak government and its recognition on September 2 as a *de facto* belligerent government by the United States indicates that the die was already cast. The future boundaries of the Czechoslovak state were the subject of an exchange of notes between Balfour, British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and the American Secretary of State Lansing in October, 1918. While the British government admitted that in drawing Czechoslovak boundaries the German-inhabited frontier districts of Bohemia would represent a very difficult problem, it saw no problem in regard to Slovakia: "The Czechs and Slovaks having repeatedly declared their desires to form a single state, His Majesty's Government treats their territories as those of a single state."<sup>67</sup> The United States did not raise any questions about this position.

The Czechs themselves based their right as to the establishment of the Czechoslovak state upon the fact that Czechs and Slovaks were virtually one people, belonging to the same western branch of the Slavs. "If there is a distinction to be made between them, it is that Slovaks have been more degraded, their literature has not reached the same degree of development on account of the relentless oppression which the Magyars have exercised toward them."<sup>68</sup>

Dr. Krofta, Kamil, *A short history of Czechoslovakia*, New York, 1934, Beneš, E., *Der Aufstand der Nationen*, Berlin, 1928, Beneš, E., *My war memoirs*, New York, 1928, Strauss, Emil, *Tschechoslowakische Aussenpolitik*, Prague, 1936, Opočenský, Jan, *op. cit.*, Molisch, *Vom Kampf der Tschechen um ihren Staat*, 1929, Vondracek, F. J., *The foreign policy of Czechoslovakia 1918-1935*, New York, 1937, Seton-Watson, R. W., ed., *Slovakia then and now*, London, 1931 (see herein the article by Seton-Watson, Czechoslovakia and the Slovak problem, 5-64, and the article by Hodza, Milan, The political evolution of Slovakia, 65-91). About Slovakia, see also Macartney, C. A., *op. cit.*, 73 f., Čapek, Th., *The Slovaks of Hungary*, New York, 1906, Oddo, G. L., *Slovakia and its people*, New York, 1936, and de Hevesy, André, *Nationalities in Hungary*, London, 1919. The Hungarian revisionist leader Count Stephen Bethlen felt worse about the loss of Slovakia than about that of Transylvania. While he was willing to concede that "the Croats and Rumanians of Transylvania have taken allegiance of their own free will to their new masters" (*The treaty of Trianon and European peace*, 50, London, 1934), he denied that the "Slovaks joined the Czechs voluntarily."

<sup>67</sup> *For. Rel. U. S., P. P. C. 2: 376-377 f.*

<sup>68</sup> Outline of Czech claims, translation, May 20, 1918, *Nat. Arch., Inquiry Doc. 456*. Some of the experts of the American Commission of Inquiry set up by Colonel House at President Wilson's suggestion in connection with the future peace settlement reached this conclusion about the relation of Czechs and Slovaks: "Neither in speech nor in racial characteristics is there any essential difference between them and they are rightly re-

In presenting their territorial claims to the Western Powers the Czechs defined Slovakia as that part of Hungary peopled compactly by Slovaks, bounded in the north by the Carpathians and the Beskides Mountains, in the west by Moravia, in the south by the Danube and the mountains of Matra, Byk, and Tokai Hills (Hegyalia) till Bodrog and in the west bounded by the Bodrog and the Uh (Ung). Slovakia comprised a large part of the West Carpathian hilly land and the fertile plain formed by the Danube and the lower portions of her tributaries, extended from the March (Morava) in the west to the Eipel (Ipel) in the east and embraced also a portion of the Tisza-Bodrog plain. In the west, Slovakia was between 160 and 170 kilometers wide, but toward the east she narrowed down to about 100 kilometers. In 1918, of about three million people in Slovakia there were about 1,900,000 Slovaks, 120,000 Germans and about 700,000 Magyars; the latter lived mainly in the plain and in the valleys. Administratively, Slovakia comprised about sixteen Hungarian comitats of Upper Hungary and portions of two others, and had an area of about 49,000 square kilometers.

#### THE CZECH AND MAGYAR POSITION ON SLOVAKIA, ALLIED VIEWS

Though Slovakia had been part of the Kingdom of Hungary for almost a millennium, it had never formed an administrative unit of its own. The lack of precise historical frontiers made the Allied decision regarding the southern line of demarcation for Slovakia especially difficult (in the north, Slovakia was finally to receive what was roughly the old Galician-Hungarian frontier, which was a natural geographic boundary). Hungary's criticism, however, of the Allied decision regarding Slovakia was not confined to a particular line of demarcation, but based upon her desire to retain Slovakia in her entirety. The Magyars were opposed to the separation of Slovakia and her union with the Czech-inhabited regions. However much in 1918 and 1919 Magyars were to differ among themselves in their political and social outlook, in matters of foreign policy they presented a united front. Hungary, whether reactionary, liberal-democratic, social-democratic, or communist, was virtually agreed in challenging Czechs, Rumanians, and the Entente over Slovakia and Transylvania. In the course of the dispute with the Czechs, Hungary became the more aroused when it dawned upon her that she would not only lose the Slovak-inhabited districts, but also a substantial and compact Magyar minority which was settled north of the Danube and separated from the body of Hungary proper only by the river itself.

Hungarians also pointed out that Slovakia—North Hungary—and Central Hungary not only were his-

torically closely tied together, but that they also formed a natural geographic and economic unit. In their view, it was both unjust and unwise to destroy this organic unity, especially in favor of an artificial union such as the one between Czechs and Slovaks, who were not one nation but two. They also claimed that only a minority of Slovaks actually favored the establishment of a Czechoslovakian state. After the armistice the Hungarian government and its spokesman in the nationality question, Dr. Jászi, hoped that a plebiscite in Slovakia held under neutral auspices would result in Hungary's favor. Yet the Czechs who had already Allied pledges regarding Slovakia had little interest in holding an election.

Aside from Czech and Allied disinterestedness in a plebiscite in Slovakia, a free election would have required peace and order and removal of both Hungarian and Czech military forces. Such requisites were absent from Slovakia at that crucial moment. Dr. Hodza, a leader of the Slovak people and at one time Minister of Czechoslovakia, and no doubt no impartial witness, writing later about the political evolution of Slovakia, considered holding a plebiscite in the immediate post-war period in view of the general situation in and around Slovakia in practice well-nigh impossible.<sup>69</sup>

The Czech and Slovak case for a union of Slovakia with Bohemia and Moravia was most fully elucidated when Czechoslovakia's territorial claims were presented to the Peace Conference by Beneš on February 5, 1919. After a skillful exposition of the historic struggle of the Czechoslovak people against a medieval dynasty, bureaucracy and militarism, against servitude and even extermination, he referred to the exposed situation of the Czechoslovak nation and the special importance of Czechoslovakia's frontiers in Central Europe, the special mission of his nation in resisting the Teutonic flood and playing the role of protector of democracy against Germanism.<sup>70</sup> Tying Magyar domination over Slavic peoples together with German domination in general—the latter more widely feared and opposed in the West—Beneš thus created a favorable atmosphere for consideration of his claims to the four provinces of Bohemia, Moravia, Austrian Silesia, and Slovakia.

Slovakia had at one time formed part of the Czechoslovak state, but had been overrun by the Magyars in the early tenth century. Now the Slovak population together with the Czechs wished to establish the new state. There was never a suggestion of separatism in Slovakia. The same language, the same ideas, and the same religion prevailed. Slovak national enthusiasm had been bred by antagonism to the Magyars. According to Beneš, Slovakia, the southern boundary of which the Peace Conference would have to determine, was bound to include many Magyars.

<sup>69</sup> Hodza, *Polit. Evolution in Slovakia*, in Seton-Watson, *Slovakia then and now*, 83.

<sup>70</sup> *For. Rel. U. S., P. P. C. 3: 877-878.*

garded as one people." (*Nat. Arch., Inquiry*, Doc. 514, Boundaries in Austria-Hungary, pp. 1-15.)



MAP 3. The frontiers of Hungary in 1928. Shaded areas are those with fifty per cent or more of the population being Magyar. From *Foreign Affairs* 6 (1928) : 436.

While Beneš' detailed exposition of the German problem in Bohemia had elicited a great deal of interest and intensive questioning, it was revealing that Lloyd George, immediately after the Czech foreign minister's rather brief discussion of Slovakia, expressed the opinion that no doubt existed about the Czechs' claim to Slovakia proper. He suggested that, provided the other members of the Council of Ten shared this view, Dr. Beneš should confine his remarks to the doubtful points. It was then generally agreed that the claim to Slovakia presented no difficulties and that the only points requiring elucidation referred to Slovakia's, meaning Czechoslovakia's, frontiers with Hungary.<sup>71</sup>

It was evident that the main hurdle had been cleared. Beneš, resuming his exposition, asked for the Danube as frontier: "Slovakia was a Danubian country." The Magyars, when invading Hungary, had thrust the Slovak people into the mountains and had cleared them from the right bank of the Danube, but on the left bank the Slav population had not been exterminated. The Czechoslovak state "was surrounded on three sides by the Germans and on the fourth by the Magyars. It was an industrial country and absolutely required some access to the sea." The Danube, if internationalized, would afford them this access. The Danubian frontier

was thus a "geographic necessity and the new state could not survive without it." While he admitted that the Czechoslovak state would include a Magyar population in the Danubian valley—altogether 650,000 Magyars would become subjects of the new state—he pointed to the scattered communities of Slovaks, altogether allegedly 450,000, which would remain with Hungary. "These would be abandoned in compensation for the Hungarians absorbed." In reply to a question of Lloyd George whether Czechoslovakia would not be satisfied by obtaining access by railway to fixed points on the Danube, Beneš stressed that the Danube valley and the Slovak uplands were "so interdependent that great disorganization would ensue on their separation. . . . The uplands were industrial and the valley was agricultural."<sup>72</sup>

Czechs and Slovaks in 1918 and 1919 did not deny that the ethnic composition of the Hungarian districts north of the Danube was chiefly Magyar (80 per cent) and that the Czechoslovak population in them was only 11 per cent.<sup>73</sup> No larger percentage was claimed for Pressburg itself, with the remainder of the city's population about equally divided between Germans and Magyars; yet the surrounding countryside, it was stressed, was inhabited by Slovaks.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 883-885.

<sup>73</sup> Les revendications territoriales de la république tchécoslovaque, *Nat. Archives, Inquiry*, No. 108.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 883.

Not only Czechs and Slovaks and their friends among Entente statesmen, but also American experts of the Inquiry, who on the whole tended to be more impartial, had already in the summer of 1918 reached the conclusion that a practical boundary between the two countries would make it necessary to include outlying Magyar districts, aggregating about 14,000 square kilometers and separating about one million Magyars from Hungary. Professor Seymour held that "they could not be included within lesser Hungary"—a state of little more than nine million people which he partly anticipated, partly projected—"unless the northern frontier were pushed back considerably. The main objections to such an enlargement of the Magyar frontier are of a topographical character, particularly that it would narrow the Czechoslovak state to a dangerous degree."<sup>74</sup>

Beneš had made definite claim to the Magyar-inhabited strip of territory north of the Danube which was then already in control of Czechoslovakia and was finally allotted to her in the Peace Treaty. Strategic, geographic, and economic considerations marshalled by the Czechs and leading Slovak spokesmen gained the upper-hand over ethnic and economic reasons as advanced by the Magyars. The Czechs, allies of the Western Powers in the war, were of course assured of friendly consideration of their point of view.

The impression has often been given that only the French endorsed the extreme territorial demands of her friends and allies in Central and Southeastern Europe against the Magyars, that the English followed reluctantly, and that the Americans were either outvoted or ignorant of the intricacies of the complex nationality and territorial and geographic problems of the area. It is also asserted that at the Peace Conference President Wilson's idealism lost out to Clémenceau's realism. However, as the Council's session of February 5, 1919, reveals, Lloyd George gave his full approval to the separation of Slovakia from Hungary and raised little objection against the Danube as a frontier between Czechoslovakia and Hungary. And a perusal of the careful studies on Hungary by the American experts of the Inquiry punctures also the other part of the myth. As far as the link-up of Slovakia with the Czech-inhabited regions was concerned, and also in regard to what was considered the unavoidable inclusion of hundreds of thousands of Magyars into Slovakia, there was little actual difference between the American expert recommendations and the final boundary as it was decided upon.

One of the top American experts, Professor Charles Seymour of Yale University in his *Epitome of Re-*

ports on Just and Practical Boundaries within Austria-Hungary, apparently completed in the summer of 1918, did not limit himself to a plan for a reorganization of the Empire, but also considered dismemberment of the Habsburg Monarchy, and even the separation of many Magyars from the newly emerging Hungary.

The proposed boundaries would dismember an historic state. "Just and practical" boundaries for the other nationalities are unjust from the Magyar point of view. The Magyars have been masters of Hungary for eight centuries. To place a large proportion of them (nearly 25%) under the control of nationalistic groups whom they have regarded as serfs and inferior would start violent irredentism and create future dissensions and war.

Yet while not blinking the fact that this policy would create most serious dangers, Professor Seymour, aware of the necessity of creating economically and militarily viable succession states, recommended that the new Hungary was to have a population of only nine million people and that about two million Magyars be left under the domination of other nationalities, a recommendation which differed only little from the final postwar settlement. Nor did it greatly differ, as Professor Seymour conceded, from the Czechoslovak-Hungarian boundary as claimed by Masaryk himself.

#### SLOVAKIA BEFORE THE WAR

Ever since the Compromise of 1867, Magyarization in Slovakia and elsewhere in Hungary, dating back to the 1840's, had proceeded at a more rapid pace, in spite of the rather liberal and farsighted nationality law which had been adopted in 1868. The Slovak language was not even tolerated in the railway stations, the post offices, and the cemeteries. Because of the deliberate policy of assimilation and oppression which lay heavily upon the Slovaks, their Magyarization had made giant strides before 1914. Beneš admitted before the Peace Conference that the Slovaks had become "more or less magyarized," though he stressed that "the population still felt Czech and wished to belong to the new state."<sup>75</sup> Compared to Rumanians and also to Croats, Slovak national consciousness before and during the war was lagging. Contemporary estimates put the number of educated and nationally conscious Slovaks only between 750 and 1,000.<sup>76</sup> While in Transylvania the two national Rumanian churches, the Greek Orthodox and Uniate churches, had operated as bulwark of Rumanian culture and language against the inroads of Magyardom, the religious affiliations of the Slovaks provided no comparable defensive armor: the great bulk of the Slovaks were Catholics just as the Magyars, only 16 per cent were Protestants, Lutherans and Calvinists. The so-called "Magyarone" spirit, extant especially among the Slovak Catholic clergy and officials, had raised high hopes among the Magyars that complete assimilation of

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, *Inquiry* Doc. 509, Reports about just and practical boundaries within Austria-Hungary, 70; for the following, *Epitome*, Reports on just . . . boundaries, *Inquiry* Doc. 514 (no date, but most likely submitted between June and August, 1918), and Reports . . . *Inquiry*, Doc. 509, 13a.

<sup>75</sup> *For. Rel. U. S., P. P. C. 3*: 884, 883.

<sup>76</sup> Seton-Watson, *Slovakia then and now*, 30.

the Slovak nation was already in sight, and the loss of Slovakia in 1918 was, therefore, to cause bitterness and resentment.

Magyar domination in prewar Slovakia had extended to virtually all aspects of Slovak life. It was also strikingly apparent in the Hungarian Parliament in which only two Slovak deputies represented their people. When the Czech deputies in the Austrian Parliament in their Declaration of May 30, 1917, demanded an independent Czechoslovakian state within the boundaries of the Habsburg Empire, the Magyar government exerted pressure upon leading Slovaks to disavow the Declaration, but such was Magyar unpopularity that it did not succeed. While their repressive policy had made deep inroads into the Slovak nation, it had also aroused Slovak resistance and had laid the foundation of solidarity with their Czech brothers.

#### THE STRUGGLE OVER SLOVAKIA SINCE OCTOBER, 1918

In October, 1918, Slovak opposition to Magyar rule was voiced loud in the Hungarian Parliament. The government was served notice that a Slovak National Council was in existence and that it would claim a separate representation at the Peace Conference. Soon thereafter the political ambitions of the Slovak people found expression in a gathering called by the Council at Svätý Martin on October 29–30. In its first resolutions the assembly claimed the right of national self-determination and independence. Then, however, Dr. Hodza arrived from Budapest and informed the meeting that, in the meantime, Czechoslovak independence had been proclaimed and that Count Andrassy, the new Austro-Hungarian Foreign Minister, had accepted President Wilson's conditions for an armistice, including the recognition of Czechoslovak and Yugoslav independence. The conference then endorsed the new Czechoslovak state and relinquished its demand for a separate representation at the Peace Conference. It has been the Czech contention since that the Slovaks of the homeland thus gave their support to the Czechoslovak Republic.

Earlier in the year, on June 30, 1918, climaxing Masaryk's endeavors in the United States, Czechs and Slovaks had signed the Agreement of Pittsburgh, pledging cooperative effort toward creation of a single state. The Provisional Assembly of Czechoslovakia, which first met in Prague on November 14, included 34 Slovak representatives selected by the Slovak National Council.<sup>77</sup>

Negotiations between the Slovak Council and the new Hungarian government headed by Michael Károlyi continued even after the meeting at Svätý Martin in late October. However, Dr. Hodza, the Slovak representative, apparently did not believe Dr. Jászi's assurances that the policy of assimilating the Slovak

people would be discontinued and also rejected Károlyi's invitation to enter the cabinet. On the Hungarian side, the negotiations were spurred by the hope of retaining Slovakia. On the Slovak side, in view of many political and territorial uncertainties, it was no doubt held to be advantageous to continue talks with Budapest in order to impress Prague and to assure the Slovak people of the largest possible autonomy in the new Czechoslovak state or to obtain the best possible conditions from the Magyars if, contrary to widely shared expectations, Slovakia should remain with Hungary.

While Dr. Hodza was in Budapest, Slovak leaders with General Stefánek, Minister for National Defense of the Prague government, a national hero and himself a Slovak, occupied some districts in western Slovakia. Accompanied first only by a few legionaries, they had proclaimed the union with the Czechs at Skalica on November 6. Yet the new state had virtually no army within its borders; the bulk of the Czech troops, which totaled less than 200,000 soldiers, was still in Russia, while many other units were in France and Italy. It was not before mid-November that the first regiments of the Czechoslovak legions had returned from France and Italy. Under such conditions four Hungarian divisions had been able to drive the Czechs from the thinly occupied Slovak regions. Not before late in 1918 had the government at Prague established control over most of Slovakia. In occupying Slovakia the Prague government had, however, committed many a tactical blunder.<sup>78</sup>

Among the officials and bureaucrats governing Slovakia in 1918–1919 was an unusually large number of Czechs, and many even of the Slovaks employed seemed to be out of touch with the local Slovak population. Yet the cultural and political backwardness of Slovakia and the respectively small number of Slovak intellectuals were partly responsible for the centralization upon which Prague was to insist from the very beginning. This in turn created opposition which was quickly exploited by Magyars and pro-Magyar elements and was soon to play into the hands of Magyar Bolsheviks.

In view of these adverse military developments in Slovakia during the month of November of 1918, Beneš had intensified his efforts in Paris to obtain satisfaction from the Allies. He pressed especially for a clear interpretation of the Belgrade Armistice relating to Hungary's northern frontier, though none of its provisions had made reference to Northern Hungary and to a line of demarcation separating Czechs from Hungarians.

The government at Prague, like the one at Bucharest, was no participant and no signatory to either of the two armistice agreements, the one between the Allied Powers and Austria-Hungary on November 3, and the other with Hungary alone on November 13.

The absence of any reference to a Czech-Hungarian

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 24 f.

line of demarcation either in the armistice agreement at Padua or the military convention at Belgrade had first greatly encouraged the Magyars. Yet one week after the Belgrade Convention, on November 20, the Czechoslovak government sent a diplomatic note to Budapest declaring that the armistice terms were not binding for it and that "according to the acknowledgment of the Entente the districts in Hungary inhabited by Czechoslovaks no longer belonged to the Hungarian state."<sup>79</sup> Actually, by this time the Entente had not yet sent official word on the future of Slovakia either to Prague or to Budapest.

Yet Beneš' persuasive efforts finally met with success. On November 27 he was confidentially informed by the French Foreign Minister Pichon that Magyar troops were being ordered to withdraw from the "areas illegally occupied by them."<sup>80</sup> On December 3, Colonel Vyx, representative of the Allies who had recently arrived in Budapest, notified the Hungarian government officially that the Western Powers recognized Slovakia as part of the Czechoslovak Republic and had fixed a line of demarcation which separated it from the new Hungarian Republic. He demanded the immediate evacuation of Slovakia by Hungarian troops.

About two weeks later the Czechoslovak government was sent official notification by Pichon concerning the lines of demarcation of the new Republic.<sup>81</sup> He declared that the Czechoslovak state should have for its frontiers,

at least until the decision of the Peace Conference is reached, the boundaries of the historic provinces of Bohemia, Moravia, and of Austrian Silesia. In regard to Slovakia the boundary line should be drawn in the following manner: along the Danube from the present western boundary of Hungary to the river Eipel, along the stream of the Eipel to the town of Rima Szombat, then in a straight line proceeding from west to east to the river Ung, then following the course of the Ung to the river of Galicia.

He further remarked that this boundary line was "identical with the one behind which General Franchet D'Esperey has invited the Hungarian Government to withdraw its troops." "The request had been complied with," he wrote on December 19, and was already an "accomplished fact."<sup>82</sup>

Though Pichon had made it clear to Budapest and Prague that the line of demarcation was not yet a political frontier and that the determination of a definite boundary lay only within the jurisdiction of the Peace Conference, the implications of the Allied order were rather obvious. Czech evacuation thereafter of any substantial portion of occupied Slovakia could hardly be expected.

Before the opening of the Peace Conference, Czechoslovakia had thus won a decisive victory in Paris. But

the line of demarcation separating Czechoslovakia from Hungary on which the Allies had agreed was not to remain unaltered. In fixing the line the Allies had followed the suggestions of Dr. Hodza. Beneš, however, still in Paris, had come out strongly in favor of his own line of demarcation which was more favorable to Czechoslovakia in the west than Hodza's line, though not quite as favorable in the east. The Western Powers acceded to Beneš' entreaties, and on December 23 Colonel Vyx presented a new note to the government of Michael Károlyi. And once more the Hungarian government launched upon a vigorous protest against the persistently adverse decisions handed down from Paris, but again abided by them. The Hungarian troops were to withdraw to the south of a line claimed by the Czechs as delimiting the historic boundaries of Czechoslovakia. The Czechs insisted on a line which followed the Danube to the mouth of the Ipoly (Eipel) River. By mid-January however, they were actually south of the Ipoly. In the south, Serbian troops had likewise crossed the line of demarcation, the Drava River, and were continuing to push north, occupying finally the region containing the coal mines around Pécs. As far as Transylvania was concerned, Rumanian troops, in accordance with Allied permission, had already entered the region west of the Maros River in mid-December.

The results of this continuous shrinking of Hungarian-controlled territory were devastating, judged from the economic, the political, as well as the psychological point of view. The loss of valuable natural resources and industrial regions, and of non-Magyar and Magyar population, paralyzed the Hungarian nation: it shattered its morale and undermined the rapidly diminishing prestige of the democratic and pro-Western government of Michael Károlyi.

Since January, 1919, Slovakia was an integral part of the Czechoslovak Republic. In the spring of 1919, however, Hungarian Bolshevism was to make a determined effort to wrest Slovakia from the Czechoslovak state, and Transylvania from Rumania, and to return these provinces to Hungarian rule. This move was to arouse their neighbors and the Peace Conference, the authority of which was thus seriously challenged. The failure of the attempt to recover these losses was a shattering blow both for Bolshevism and Magyar nationalism which were then linked in a curious alliance.

The definitive frontier between Czechoslovakia and Hungary, which was laid down in the Treaty of Trianon in 1920, was to differ only in minor points from the line of demarcation drawn by the Allies and communicated by them to Budapest in early December, 1918.

#### HUNGARY FROM THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION TO THE FIRST SOVIET REPUBLIC

In October, 1918, it had become apparent even to the Hungarian ruling circles that the Austro-Hungarian Empire had lost the war and that its break-up was im-

<sup>79</sup> *For. Rel. U. S., P. P. C. 2: 378.*

<sup>80</sup> Macartney, *op. cit.*, 105.

<sup>81</sup> *For. Rel. U. S., P. P. C. 2: 383; Dec. 19, 1918.*

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*

pending. Yet while the Emperor was willing to make an attempt to save the Empire and the dynasty through far-reaching concessions to the oppressed nationalities in the Austrian half of the state, the ruling Magyar upper class, until the very last, appeared confident that it could save itself and the Magyar nation, retain Hungary's boundaries and preserve its own dominant position over the other races of the Hungarian half of the Empire. It seized on the illusory hope that it could accomplish all this not through any major reform or reorganization of the state, but simply by abandoning Austria. Cutting ties with Austria seemed to them an act of self-preservation. Since the House of Habsburg and the Dual Monarchy could be expected to be the targets of Allied revenge, independence from Austria, long preached even after the Compromise of 1867, appeared now to virtually all Magyars the only means of divesting themselves of a deadly liability. During the last days of October, 1918, the Hungarian political parties, even Tisza and his followers, were agreed on the need for establishing a separate political entity, Hungary, and on a separate peace treaty.

Yet there were ominous signs that the Magyars because of their varied social, economic, and cultural structure were sharply divided among themselves over most other issues and that the spirit of revolution and social unrest had deeply affected many of them. While the Austro-Hungarian army was disintegrating, Magyar troops too had reached the breaking point and many of their units mutinied. They refused to continue fighting for Austria and insisted on returning home to take part in the defense of Hungary proper.<sup>83</sup> At the same time they raised far-reaching political and economic demands, which were bound to transform the old Hungary into an entirely new state.

On October 30, Emperor Karl was forced to make Count Michael Károlyi Prime Minister of the Hungarian half of the Empire. Events then outpaced each other. There followed the armistice of Padua and the Convention of Belgrade. On November 16, four days after a republic had been proclaimed in Austria, Hungary followed suit.

The new Hungarian Republic faced staggering problems. The whole political and administrative organization of the country was in a state of collapse and its economic situation, in the wake of the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian economic realm and in view of further threatening territorial losses, was appalling. The railway system had virtually broken down. Hundreds of thousands of ragged and war-weary soldiers were streaming back from the front. From the neighboring countries tens of thousands of Magyars were seeking refuge in a truncated country against which the Entente continued to maintain its blockade. The dis-

solution of the army and the growing unemployment added to the serious economic condition. With her agricultural, industrial, and natural resources diminished, and being almost entirely surrounded by Czechoslovakia, Rumania, and Yugoslavia, Hungary seemed to be in no position to assist her brethren in these hostile succession states which faced the future with anxiety.

Hungary was largely an agricultural country which in the past had been dominated by the big landowners and the gentry. In the new Republic the peasants and agricultural laborers, still the majority of the population, were avid for land and at the moment stirred up, but in the long run they tended to be politically lethargic. With a small industrial base, both bourgeoisie and proletariat were weak in numbers, though the latter had enormously increased owing to the rapid growth of war industries. Sharp extremes of wealth and poverty characterized Hungary's class structure. The middle class, rather unorganized, was subservient to feudal and clerical forces, and in finance and industry the Jewish bourgeoisie played an important role. It was the "absence of a strong middle class capable of holding the balance between the main parties,"<sup>84</sup> which appeared to an American observer, Professor A. C. Coolidge,<sup>84a</sup> one of the country's main weaknesses. The best organized group after the October Revolution was the Social Democratic Party which had its main support among the workers and whose demands for better living conditions and political rights became more and more insistent.

The new government, headed by Count Michael Károlyi, represented a coalition of his own small Independence Party and the Social Democrats. His fellow aristocrats looked upon Károlyi, who had espoused ideas of political and social reform, as a traitor to his class, and they worked from the very beginning for his overthrow. He appeared to Professor Coolidge

well educated, experienced, broadminded. . . . He is doing his utmost under trying circumstances with not too great a confidence in the future. One feels attracted to him and sorry for him. He seems . . . permanently worried, which is perhaps not surprising.<sup>85</sup>

Foreign policy and unsettled boundaries aside, Hungary's social divisions, pressing postwar economic problems and the tendency of many Magyars to political

<sup>84</sup> For. Rel. U. S., P. P. C. 12: 381.

<sup>84a</sup> A. C. Coolidge, Professor of History at Harvard University, was head of the American Mission in Vienna and visited Hungary several times during the year 1919.

<sup>85</sup> For. Rel. U. S., P. P. C. 12: 381; see also Archibald Cary Coolidge: *Life and Letters*. By H. J. Coolidge and R. H. Lord, Boston and New York, 1932 (espec. chap. xii) and Roosevelt, N., *A Front Row Seat*, Oklahoma Univ. Press, 1953 (on Coolidge, 94, on Károlyi, M., 102). Ashmead-Bartlett, E., *The Tragedy of Central Europe*, London, 1923, Sangeorgi, G. M., *L'Ungheria dalla repubblica di Károlyi alla regenza di Horthy*, Bologna, 1927.

<sup>83</sup> Glaise-Horstenau, *op. cit.*, 243, 246. See also Szende, Zoltán, *Die Ungarn im Zusammenbruch von 1918*, Oldenburg, 1931.



extremism were not of a nature to encourage the growth of democratic and orderly government.

It was the absence of a reliable army which was one of Károlyi's major concerns. As one observer put it, "the military weakness of the government, of the state, is only too evident."<sup>86</sup> The government feared that it might be arrested any moment. In December, 1918, mutinies had greatly increased and sporadic acts of violence and terrorism occurred widely throughout Hungary. The specter of Bolshevism hung over the country since the Hungarian October Revolution. "It was first an inchoate, diffuse Bolshevism," wrote Oscar Jászi, "a Bolshevism without doctrine, a Bolshevism of simple robbery and anarchy,"<sup>87</sup> the aftermath of the overexcitement of life at the front, which pervaded Hungary. When in early 1919 violence and civil war swept Germany and split her socialist parties, Bolshevism, now in a definite political form, appeared a serious threat to many Hungarians.

The Hungarian Communist party had been founded on November 24, 1918, with Béla Kun and other Hungarian communists who had just returned from Russia playing the leading role. Simultaneously, they had decided upon the publication of a communist organ, *Vörös Újság*. The small Communist party gained a momentum which far exceeded its size. Through an adept and reckless propaganda it quickly exploited the rapid disillusionment of broad masses of the population with the new republic which had proved unable to satisfy their great expectations.<sup>88</sup> The fateful decision of the Károlyi government to postpone the elections for a new constituent assembly until the country was cleared from foreign occupation troops and its inability to solve the pressing agrarian problem and win over the peasants to its side, deprived it of badly needed support, of a popular mandate, and played directly into communist hands. By the end of 1918 already, the revolutionary enthusiasm of the October and November days had given room to disillusionment and depression. As the *Pester Lloyd* remarked, "The Revolution had lost its soul."<sup>89</sup>

Cnobloch, Austrian envoy in Budapest, anticipated as early as January, 1919, the impending explosion. He voiced

concern . . . that the formation of a purely socialist government in Hungary must automatically lead to Bolshevism, due to the undisciplined character and the inadequate education of the proletariat as well as due to the circumstance that the socialist organizations here are still much younger than in the states of the West. This development was mightily furthered by the deplorable economic and political situation of the country. In this case, however, the Entente

<sup>86</sup> *For. Rel. U. S., P. P. C. 12*: 381.

<sup>87</sup> Jászi, O., *Revolution and counterrevolution in Hungary*, 58, London, 1924.—Many of the books and pamphlets on Hungary since the October Revolution of 1918 and about the Soviet regime are extremely partisan, give no sources, and have little value.

<sup>88</sup> Böhm, *op. cit.*, 105 f.; see the entire chap. 12.

<sup>89</sup> *Pester Lloyd*, Dec. 28, 1918, morning ed.

. . . might intervene or might permit intervention through loyal succession states, which perhaps would not even dislike to undertake such a mission.<sup>90</sup>

This turned out to be a true prophecy in many respects.

Károlyi had become premier of a coalition government in which his own followers numbered only eighteen deputies. The cabinet soon met with increasing pressure from the Left within the country and from the Entente from without. In December, 1918, as was seen before, the Entente permitted Czechoslovakian and Rumanian troops to occupy additional territories, as it asserted, in accordance with the armistice terms, and to the growing disappointment and under the rising protest of the Magyar people the territory and resources of which were steadily reduced. Under these circumstances, the government, facing a demoralized and unruly populace, found the solution of its internal problems increasingly difficult. Both the government and the nation looked with feelings compounded of anxiety and hope toward the Paris Peace Conference.

From its very beginnings the Károlyi government had counted heavily on lenient treatment by the Entente, though none of the policy statements or acts of Western statesmen had given any real encouragement to this hope. Most Hungarians, whatever their political convictions, set unreasonably high hopes on the Peace Conference. They expected that they would be able to persuade it to preserve Hungary's historic boundaries and economic unity in the Danubian basin in return for accepting some sort of Danubian Confederation. Such a project was the one suggested by Dr. Jászi, Minister for Nationalities in 1918; it was designed to preserve Hungary's territorial integrity by tying the Slovaks, Rumanians, Croats, and others through various kinds of concessions to the Hungarian state. But it met with a cool reception in the new national states.

Not only the position of the Right, but also that of the Left and of Károlyi himself, as he was later to concede, was highly nationalistic and excessively concerned with Hungary's boundaries. "When it comes to a question of the Hungarian integrity, all parties are in accord,"<sup>91</sup> reported Captain Nicholas Roosevelt after his return from Budapest to the American Commission to Negotiate in Paris. And his superior, A. C. Coolidge, wrote to the same Commission that even the Hungarian Social Democrats were "patriotic enough and dread the partition of their country as much as the Conservatives."<sup>92</sup> When the Hungarian hopes relating to the historic integrity of their country were definitely crushed with the presentation of the Entente's ultimatum in March, 1919, Károlyi saw no other exit than resignation. Though the Károlyi government, unable to solve its internal problems, might sooner or later

<sup>90</sup> *Österreichisches Staatsarchiv*, Vienna, Austria, formerly Haus-, Hof-, und Staatsarchiv (listed in the following as OS), Fasz. 262, folder ixb: Ungarn und Varia, Jan. 18, 1919.

<sup>91</sup> *For. Rel. U. S., P. P. C. 12*: 418.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 381.



have succumbed on this ground, the final blow which actually swept it from office originated in Paris.

#### THE ALLIED ULTIMATUM, TWO DATES, AND THE FALL OF MICHAEL KÁROLYI

On February 21, during the temporary absence of Clémenceau from the sessions of the Paris Peace Conference, Tardieu, Chairman of the Committee on Rumanian and Yugoslav Affairs, while presenting a preliminary report on Hungary's border situation, made several recommendations. To prevent conflicts between Rumanian and Hungarian troops in Transylvania, the Committee suggested

(1) the fixation of two lines at a certain distance from each other beyond which the Hungarian and Rumanian troops should not be permitted to advance; (2) the establishment of a neutral zone between the two proposed lines, to be occupied by Allied troops with a view to preventing the spreading of Bolshevism which was prevalent in Hungary.<sup>93</sup>

The line of demarcation behind which the Hungarians were to withdraw, was quite similar to the one assured to the Rumanians in the wartime treaty of August 17, 1916. The neutral zone comprised the strip of territory be-

<sup>93</sup> This and other pertinent documents in Deák, F., *Hungary and the Paris peace conference*. The diplomatic history of the treaty of Trianon, 59-60, New York, 1942. (The author treats only briefly the relations between the Conference and Soviet Hungary.)

tween this line and the one east of it to which the Rumanians had advanced in February, a strip varying in depth from between 20 to 40 kilometers.

The Council of Ten referred the Committee's suggestion to the Supreme Council; the latter, among other matters, should decide whether the neutral zone ought to be occupied by Allied troops, in view of the need for "maintaining order against possible Bolshevist [!] attempts."<sup>94</sup>

It became rather obvious that the Allies were taking the side of Rumania against Hungary, of an ally against an enemy nation. They wished to honor a wartime promise, at least in its essence if not to the last detail, and rationalized their stand by pointing to the danger of Bolshevism which the defeated nation allegedly was about to embrace. They echoed the views of Bratianu who since the armistice had repeatedly accused the Hungarian government of Bolshevist tendencies, and also of Beneš who in early November, in articles written in the *Times* and *Matin*, had pictured the Bolshevist menace in Hungary in the darkest colors.<sup>95</sup> Both were determined to discredit Hungary

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 60-61; on the neutral zone see also *For. Rel. U. S., P. P. C. 4*: 58-61; 145-147, and 157-158.

<sup>95</sup> The articles are quoted by Horvath, in Apponyi, ed., *op. cit.*, 90; see the entire essay, 21-121. Immediately after the armistice, before the Peace Conference opened its doors and before a Bolshevist government was set up in Budapest, the



MAP 4. Territorial provisions of the peace treaty of Trianon. Pre-war Hungary covered an area of 325,000 square kilometers, of which the treaty took away 232,000. From Pesti Hírlap, *Justice for Hungary* (Budapest), p. 2.

and to win Western support for the union of Transylvania with the Regat, respectively of Slovakia with Bohemia and Moravia. Yet, whatever the peril of Bolshevism in February, 1919, its victory in Hungary seemed hardly inevitable. And it could be argued that the Allies, by giving increasing support to Rumania in the Transylvanian question and by deepening Magyar grievances, were to make the threatened marriage of Hungarian nationalism and Bolshevism more likely; Allied policy in its vacillating and piecemeal fashion, extending over an excessively long period the unfavorable decision for Hungary was to heighten the very menace it was designed to prevent.

Ultimately the frontier, as laid down in the Treaty of Trianon, was to leave the neutral zone with Hungary. Rumania thus fell short of receiving this strip

Rumanian government used the bogey of Bolshevism in furthering its own territorial ambitions. Most revealing in this respect is the following joint telegram sent by the Allied Ministers from Jassy (*For. Rel. U. S., P. P. C. 2: 397*) as early as November 12:

"The Roumanian government had ceased all movements of Roumanian troops at the moment prescribed by Marshal Foch. This order maintained by all the enemy military forces. But the Roumanian government has brought to our notice the necessity in which it finds itself to intervene everywhere anarchy has been organized by the enemy after his retreat where the Roumanian population claims its protection especially in Bukovina and in Transylvania where grave excesses are being committed by the Austro-Hungarian Bolsheviks[!]."

Later, the Rumanian government, while informing the world of the proclamation of the union by Transylvania with Rumania, took the opportunity of charging the "Magyar government" which was then headed by Michael Károlyi with "encouraging" "the Bolshevik menace" (*For. Rel. U. S., P. P. C. 2: 396*, Dec. 7, 1918, Aide-Memoire; see also Deák, *op. cit.*, 40, where Rumania again accused "the Budapest government" of "encouraging Bolshevik propaganda"). Bratianu, while early in 1919 pressing for a modification of the armistice terms in Rumania's favor and asking that Rumanian troops be permitted to enter Hungarian territories claimed by her, repeatedly drew attention to Rumania's internal situation and the "menace from Bolshevism" (*For. Rel. U. S., P. P. C. 2: 406*, Bliss to the Acting Secretary of State, Paris, Jan. 11, 1919) to underline the urgency of territorial concessions for the sake of maintaining order and stability.

A similar course was pursued by the Czechoslovak Foreign Minister Beneš. In the above articles written in early November in *Times* and *Matin* he accused the Vienna government of "threatening the Entente with an outbreak of Bolshevik revolution in Vienna," attempted to cast doubt on the democratic convictions of the Austrian Foreign Minister Dr. Otto Bauer—"he undoubtedly favors—by every means the extremist movement in other countries"—and pointed to the order established in the Czechoslovakian republic, though the latter was battered by rising Bolshevik waves. "The Czechoslovak Republic is making headway, order is restored and normal economic life is developing. In this respect it stands alone in Central Europe, but at present our Republic is seriously menaced by this Bolshevik movement acting from without" (*For. Rel. U. S., P. P. C. 2: 379-380*).

Michael Károlyi and the Hungarian government pointed to the very same menace, but for the opposite purpose, namely to obtain the most lenient treatment on the part of the Paris Peace Conference.

of territory which among others had been promised to her in the wartime treaty of August, 1916. In view of this final Allied position—leaving other considerations aside—one cannot help but question the wisdom of the West's policy in February and March, 1919, when the Allies placed before Hungary even more severe, unacceptable demands.

Though the Western Powers had reached a decision on the new line of demarcation in Transylvania and a neutral zone as early as February 26, it was not until several weeks later, March 20, that it was presented to Hungary in the form of an ultimatum. The interval between these two dates was to puzzle many. Whatever its cause, the ultimatum was completely unexpected<sup>96</sup> by the Hungarian government, as Cnobloch, Austria's envoy in Budapest, revealed.

The ultimatum was presented to the Károlyi cabinet by Lieutenant Colonel Vyx, Chief of the Allied Military Mission in Hungary, at the instruction of General de Lobit, Provisional Commander of the Allied Forces in Hungary. Referring to the decision of the Paris Conference of February 26, 1919, the Hungarian government was ordered to withdraw Hungarian troops from Transylvania beginning on March 23; the withdrawal was to be terminated within ten days. The Hungarian government was further informed that General Gondrecourt would occupy the neutral zone with interallied troops. The civil administration of the neutral zone would remain in the hands of the Hungarian government under the control of the Commander of these military units.<sup>97</sup> Colonel Vyx allegedly remarked that the new line of demarcation, which once again took purely Magyar districts from Hungary, would be the definite political frontier, though he denied this subsequently. He warned that the rejection of the Allied demand would be followed by the withdrawal of the Allied missions from Budapest, which was generally interpreted as a threat to renew the state of war with the Hungarian republic. The ultimatum insisted upon compliance with the new demands within the next few hours.

Wilhelm Böhm, leading Hungarian Social Democrat witnessed the delivery of the ultimatum. He reports that Colonel Vyx, asked whether he was aware "what consequences in the current confused situation the overturn of the government was bound to have . . . that it could lead to anarchy and revolution, and whether it was not advisable to make a last attempt in Paris to postpone the matter," merely shrugged his shoulders and declared that it did not matter to him how the Károlyi government would respond. He warned however, that the Allies might cancel the armis-

<sup>96</sup> OS, Fsz. 262, folder ix b: Ungarn, March 21, 1919.

<sup>97</sup> Deák, *op. cit.*, 407-409; also *Documents concernant l'exécution de l'Armistice en Hongrie (Nov. 1918-Mars 1919)*, 117-119, Budapest, 1919. The Austrian envoy in Budapest, Cnobloch, transmitted Károlyi's reply to Colonel Vyx, OS, ex 887, "Innere Lage in Ungarn," March 22, 1919.

tice and resume hostilities. Two Hungarian colonels, Stromfeld and Tobor, when consulted about the Vyx ultimatum, cautioned the cabinet that its acceptance would cause a tempest which would sweep away any government prepared to carry out its provisions.<sup>98</sup> Their reply was characteristic of the mood of the Hungarian nation at that critical moment.

In his answer to Colonel Vyx on March 21, Count Károlyi emphasized that the Hungarian government "finds itself unable to take note of this decision of the Peace Conference and to safeguard its execution." He charged that it ran counter to the armistice provisions of November 13.

The Hungarian government, not being in a position to bear the responsibility for the execution of this decision, as it was not invited to the Peace Conference and could not participate in taking this decision, found itself to-day obliged to hand in its demission.<sup>99</sup>

Count Károlyi resigned, assuming that a purely socialist cabinet would be formed. The latter, he appears to have believed, would refuse to accept the new armistice line and would possibly threaten to fight a patriotic war. He held that the Social Democratic Party was the only political force capable of controlling the army and of ordering it to the front as well as the only party capable of gaining new friends for Hungary in East and Central Europe. Count Károlyi had reached the bitter conclusion that Hungary had little to expect from the victorious Western democracies.

The socialist ministers, however, without Károlyi's knowledge, had entered into an agreement with Béla Kun, the imprisoned Bolshevik leader, for a union between the Social-Democratic Party and the Communist Party. Judging by its program, there was no doubt that the Hungarian Communist Party was the dominant element of the new political combination.<sup>100</sup> Béla Kun moved directly from the prison into public

office as head of the new government and commissar for foreign affairs. Alexander Garbai, a former bricklayer, became President of the Soviet Republic.

Károlyi's disappointment with the West and his hopes for Hungary, based on the new orientation toward the East, were also echoed in the speech of the new President of the Soviet Republic, Alexander Garbai:

We had genuinely believed that the Entente took democracy seriously. . . . This demand [Vyx ultimatum], however, destroys this conviction of ours. . . . We therefore can't expect from the West anything but a dictatorial peace.

The Socialist Party, he asserted, had been "pushed into the new direction by the Entente." The new course was based upon the expectation that "we ought to get from the East what the West has denied us."<sup>101</sup>

Under the impact of strong pressures of foreign policy the Magyar nation had embarked on an adventurous journey. Only the future could show whether the Bolshevik and nationalistic assumptions which underlay the new course were realistic and justified.

### III. THE PEACE CONFERENCE ON HUNGARY'S BOUNDARIES PRIOR AND AFTER THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE SOVIET REGIME

#### THE ORGANIZATION OF THE CONFERENCE

The Paris Peace Conference opened on January 12, 1919. During the interval of about two months between the signing of the Armistice and the beginning of the Peace Conference the internal situation of the vanquished nations had worsened and radicalism had been on the ascendancy. Civil War had broken out in Germany in December, 1918, and in January, 1919, and the Bolshevik threat had become more menacing to all of Central Europe. On the other hand, by early January the passions generated by the war, which had also affected the victorious Western Powers, had on the whole somewhat abated. The Allied statesmen, instead of rushing headlong from the battlefield into the conference room, had in the meantime become accustomed to considering again questions of peace, not problems relating primarily to the conduct of war. Allied delegations had benefited by the delay in the opening of the Peace Conference, which enabled them to give closer examination to the numerous territorial problems which were expected to figure large on its agenda. There were, however, obvious dangers in postponing the opening of the Peace Conference. It meant delaying the political and social consolidation and territorial stabilization of Central and South-eastern Europe, regions which were seething with social unrest and pulsating with revolution.

For the succession states, however, such as Czecho-

<sup>98</sup> Böhm, *op. cit.*, 268-269.

<sup>99</sup> The document is quoted in Deák, *op. cit.*, 409.

<sup>100</sup> *Memoirs of M. Károlyi*, 152 f., also *OS*, ex 887, "Innere Lage . . . , "March 26, 1919; Böhm, *op. cit.*, 291 f., a major participant in the Soviet regime, based his account also on the archives of the Red Army. Böhm confirmed Károlyi's assertions that the coalition between Social Democrats and Communists was formed behind his back and that his alleged transfer of power directly to the communists was a myth based on a forged proclamation. See likewise Károlyi's article *Geschichte meiner Abdankung*, *Arbeiterzeitung*, Vienna, July 25, 1919. There is no scholarly biography of Béla Kun, though there are numerous references to him in the anti-communist literature and in communist pamphlets of the twenties and later on. A substantial part of the anti-communist literature is antisemitic and dwells on the Jewish background of Béla Kun as well as that of numerous other leading communists, without pointing out that the bulk of Hungary's Jewry for a number of reasons, no doubt also because of its economic status, was opposed to Bolshevism. About Béla Kun in 1918 and 1919, see *Kun Béla a magyar Tanácsköztársaságról*, Budapest, 1958. For a highly critical account, see Géza Herczeg, *Béla Kun. Eine historische Grimasse*, Berlin, 1928 (no sources are given).

<sup>101</sup> *Pester Lloyd*, March 22, 1919.

slovakia, Yugoslavia, and Rumania, the procrastination was on the whole beneficial. The interval of two months between the signing of the Armistice and the opening of the Peace Conference gave them the time necessary for setting their house in order and establishing representative governments; delegates could be appointed to the Conference who were able to speak with authority for the new nations. It was also during this period that the succession states brought under their effective control territories inhabited by their kinsfolk or important to them on economic and military grounds and pledged to them by the Allies; most of these territories the Peace Conference was later to assign to them definitely.

The Supreme Council or Council of Ten, which was actually the successor of the Supreme War Council, represented the highest authority of the Paris Conference.<sup>102</sup> It consisted of two representatives from each of the Principal Allied and Associated Powers, that is the United States, Great Britain, France, Italy, and Japan. Yet when the Council proved to be too large and unwieldy a body, its functions were divided between the *Council of Four*, composed of the United States, Great Britain, France, and Italy, and the *Council of Five* or *Council of Foreign Ministers* of the Allied or Associated Powers which included, in addition to the respective representatives of the four foregoing Powers, also the Foreign Minister of Japan. After the peace treaty with Germany had been signed on June 28, 1919, these Councils were succeeded by the Council of the Heads of Delegations, consisting of delegates from the five major powers. The reorganization of the Conference in late March, which provided for a Council of Four and a Council of Five, coincided more or less with the establishment of the Soviet regime in Budapest.

The organization of the Peace Conference was clearly based upon the recognition of the primacy of the Great Powers. The latter, as Clémenceau at the outset reminded the smaller states—those with limited interests—disposed in the aggregate of a military force of twelve million soldiers and sailors.<sup>103</sup> Delegates from the smaller states and succession states were asked to put forth in writing their territorial and other demands. In addition, they were invited to present the claims of their states orally before the Supreme Council. Plenary sessions were provided for, but only six were held, and their claim to real power and influence proved

rather empty. While each of the five Great Powers were given five plenipotentiaries, Rumania and Czechoslovakia received two each, Serbia three, though the new state of Yugoslavia on the other hand was not recognized by France and Great Britain until June 2, 1919; the United States had already extended recognition in January.

While the German and Austrian delegations made an appearance before the Council, the Hungarians, owing to the tensions existing between the Allies and the Soviet Hungarian regime and the nonrecognition of the Soviet government by the Allied Powers, were not invited to the Conference. Had an invitation been extended to them, Hungarian delegates would have been able to avail themselves of the opportunity, limited as it no doubt would have been, of presenting their case and of countering more effectively the claims of their opponents. Yet the German and Austrian delegations which finally went to Paris were unable to ameliorate appreciably their countries' peace terms. Although the Soviet Hungarian government was not invited to Paris, neither had an invitation been extended to its democratic predecessor. The numerous feelers which the government of Michael Károlyi had stretched out toward the West, had met with forbidding silence.

Though the Allied decision on Transylvania had been reached without any Hungarian representatives having been heard and consulted, Hungarian voices could not be entirely muted. Numerous pamphlets in English, French, and Italian, printed for the most part in Budapest, were circulated in Paris in 1919, some apparently during the period the Soviets ruled Hungary.<sup>104</sup> Some of these, judging by their contents, were not inspired by Hungarian communists, but, not running counter to their territorial interests, may have been tolerated by them; others apparently were circulated in Paris after the fall of the Soviets. All stressed that it was imperative to maintain Hungary's territorial integrity and also to restore Hungarian control over Transylvania. The Western Powers were thus well acquainted with the Hungarian "maximalist" position.

Though the exclusion of representatives of Hungary from the Peace Conference was regrettable, under the circumstances, the existence of an aggressive and threatening Soviet regime in Hungary, it seemed virtually unavoidable. Hungarian maps, memoranda, and

<sup>102</sup> Temperley, *op. cit.* 1: 267; see Organization of the Conference, *ibid.*, 236–278; about the executive functions of the Peace Conference, see Maintenance of the Authority of the Conference: Poland, Germany, Hungary, *ibid.* 1: 351 f. See also Lansing, *The peace negotiations*, 213–214, 218–219. Thompson, Chs. T., *The peace conference day by day*, introductory letter by Col. House, E. M., New York, 1920; Haskins, Ch. H., and Lord, R. H., *Some problems of the peace conference*, Cambridge, 1920 (on Hungary's losses, 237–244).

<sup>103</sup> Temperley, *op. cit.* 1: 249, also 248, 257.

<sup>104</sup> *Paris peace conference 1919. Delegation propaganda. Hungary. Authentic.* Stanford University. Hoover Library. See espec. No. 26–27, Dr. Szekeres, J., *The new Balkans of Europe*. No. 23, *Pro Hungaria*, 13, No. 28, Tolnay, C., *L'integrità territoriale dell'Ungheria dal punto di vista delle ferrovie*, 1919. No. 32, Wlassics, Baron Julius, *The territorial integrity of Hungary and the League of Nations*, 13, Budapest, 1919 (also in French, No. 13). Lóczy, Louis, *La Hongrie géographique, économique et sociale*, 2nd ed., Budapest, 1919. See also *Paris peace conference 1919. Not authenticated propaganda*; espec. Teleki, P., *Short notes on the economic and political geography of Hungary*, 1919.

notes were, however, made available to the territorial committees of the Peace Conference and were taken into account by them. It also ought to be borne in mind that the official pre-war statistics which served as basis for the drafting of the new frontiers, was Hungarian, not Czech, Rumanian, or Serbo-Croatian.

It was no doubt damaging to Hungary's cause that in the critical days of the spring of 1919 intense Magyar nationalism combined with the menace of Bolshevism and threatened to set Europe afire. The unfortunate alliance between Magyar nationalism and social radicalism of the Bolshevik variety with its Messianic overtones and aggressive purposes was hardly likely to endear the Hungarian nation to the Peacemakers.<sup>105</sup> Nevertheless, the policies regarding Hungary's frontiers which the Allies adopted in Paris were, as shall be seen, not decisively influenced by the revolutionary and nationalist course chosen by the Soviet government.

#### TERRITORIAL DECISIONS PRIOR TO THE OPENING OF THE PEACE CONFERENCE

The Allies were pledged and resolved to make far-reaching concessions to her friends and allies in Central and Southeastern Europe, to Czechoslovakia, Rumania, and Yugoslavia. Early declarations of policy to this effect, indefinite though they were bound to be, would have had a generally beneficial effect on the consolidation of Europe. Yet after the conclusion of the armistice the Allies did not immediately clarify their policies either in regard to Transylvania and the entire complex of Hungary's boundaries with Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia. The uncertainty which therefore continued to reign in these areas added substantially to the rivalries, tensions, and suspicions which hung threateningly over the relations between Hungary and her neighbors between November, 1918, and June, 1919, when finally the new boundaries were made public.

The failure of the Western Powers immediately after the end of the war to clarify their intentions in regard to Transylvania, Slovakia, and for that matter to all disputed border regions of Hungary was due to several circumstances. A definite delineation of the frontiers was considered the proper function of the Peace Conference, and the reluctance to make definite decisions prior to the opening of the Conference was only natural. Beset, furthermore, by numerous urgent international as well as internal problems, the Allied Powers may have held it best to let time take care of some, without having to meet complex border questions head-on with a ready solution. Allied indecisiveness was also due to the rapid disarmament and subsequently the virtual absence from the disputed areas of Allied troops, except two French divisions in the south of Hungary, and their un-

willingness to dispatch additional military units into these areas. Later, during the Conference, the Great Powers felt it necessary to conceal the extent of their hasty disarmament and their military unpreparedness not only from the recent enemy but also from their smaller friends and allies in Central Europe to avoid losing prestige and influence with them. Allied declarations of broad general policy concerning the disputed regions soon after the Armistice might have clarified the political air, impressed the new nations with Allied firmness, and made them settle down. Whatever the motives which caused the Allied Powers to refrain from such course of action, under prevailing conditions, the social, economic, and political stability of Central and Southeastern Europe, which the Western Powers recognized as being of immediate urgency, was tied up with its territorial problems, and the latter therefore required immediate attention and some broad decisions.

Without encroaching upon the ultimate authority of the Peace Conference the Allies might well have reached some general decisions concerning the disputed areas soon after the end of the war and communicated these to the governments of Hungary and her neighbors. What they actually did, or had done through their military, was to decree the occupation of additional Hungarian territories, which ultimately had most far-reaching consequences, though in the majority of cases these provisional lines of demarcation still did not constitute a political frontier and were no definite commitment. On this very ground such Allied measures as were taken in 1918 and early 1919 did not contribute to the pacification of the international atmosphere, but rather intensified the jockeying for position by all parties concerned.

A complete rather than piecemeal occupation of the disputed Hungarian territories, accompanied by explanatory declarations of broad policy, would psychologically have proved less painful and politically less disruptive. The Hungarian government and people would have been less inclined to entertain unrealistic hopes about preserving the country's territorial integrity, and the extremist groups at the left and the right would have been unable to exploit the question of Hungary's boundaries and to fan the fires of Magyar nationalism, with consequences which were disastrous to Hungarian democracy. Earlier decisions, even though indicating only the general outlines of the Peace, would also have contributed to the stabilization of the area. They would have assured Hungary's neighbors, Czechoslovakia, Rumania, and Yugoslavia, of the fulfillment of their basic aspirations, would thus have allayed some of their uncertainties and fears and made them less bellicose.

On December 20, 1918, Beneš, in the attempt to reduce the danger of conflict which because of the unsettled frontier faced the new Czechoslovakian Republic, recommended that the Allies take

<sup>105</sup> Churchill, W., *The aftermath*, 235, "The Hungarian people were at their weakest when the crucial issues of their future were decided."

stringent and categorical measures. The frontiers of the territory to which it [the Czechoslovak state] is entitled, must be settled in agreement with the Allies and the United States. [Such a measure] of course, may be of a provisional nature, [since it is] only within the province of the Peace Conference to lay down definite decisions on this subject. . . . In the meantime, however, an enduring state of affairs

must be established. The Allies should declare that the Czechoslovak state had "the right to govern the peoples living within the historical boundaries of Bohemia and Moravia, of Austrian Silesia and Slovakia,"<sup>106</sup> the latter being bounded by the Carpathians, the March, the Danube, and the Ipoly. While Beneš' demand was in the apparent interest of Czechoslovakia, it had much to recommend from the point of view of general and early European stabilization and pacification.

In the absence of a clear and firm Western policy since the armistice and in view of the attendant uncertainties and fears, the smaller nations of Central and Southeastern Europe, both Hungary's neighbors and, since March, 1919, also the Hungarians, frequently ignored commands of the Western Powers and of their leading statesmen at Paris; they were all hopeful to be able to create a *fait accompli* favorable to their side. These challenges, painful and embarrassing to the Peace Conference as they were to become especially in the spring of 1919—and forerunners of the more serious challenges in the years ahead—might have been avoided, if the Allies had maintained a stronger military posture in the area and if they had spoken with a clearer and more resolute voice.

Allied policy toward Hungary and her neighbors in the months immediately following the armistice until the spring of 1919 was marked by indecision, procrastination, and repeated yielding to those states which exerted greatest pressure. In this period, these were Czechoslovakia, Rumania, and to a lesser degree Yugoslavia, states with whom a great deal of the initiative lay.

#### CZECHOSLOVAKIA'S AND RUMANIA'S CLAIMS AND THE TERRITORIAL COMMITTEES

In the foregoing, reference has been made to the disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and the rise of new nations which were anxious to gain independence and security, but were also territorially ambitious and claimed neighboring Hungarian territory. Though at the war's end they had received no definite commitments from the Great Powers, Rumanians, Slovaks, Croats, and Serbs, and others turned against their former masters, the Magyar people. They rested their case on the nationality principle, earlier Allied wartime pledges, and economic and strategic grounds as well. Hungary's military eclipse gave them a unique opportunity to shake off centuries-old oppression and to gain

national liberty and independence. By the time the Peace Conference opened its doors, the Magyars had already lost actual control of many disputed border provinces. Under these circumstances it was most unlikely that Hungary would regain by diplomacy what she had been forced to relinquish step by step to her neighbors with Allied acquiescence, if not at Allied command.

In early February, 1919, both Rumania and Czechoslovakia presented to the Supreme Council in Paris their claims to former Hungarian territories. Rumania's case in regard to Transylvania was presented by Premier Bratianu who headed his country's delegation. He pointed to Hungarian pre-war statistics according to which the Rumanians constituted 55 per cent and the Magyars only 23 per cent of the population. The correct proportion between the two nationalities in Transylvania, Bratianu insisted, were rather 72 per cent as against 15 per cent. He asked for formal recognition of the union between Rumania and Transylvania which had already been proclaimed in December.<sup>107</sup>

The Council, however, voiced some doubt as to the legality of this act and, beyond it, raised the question as to the validity of the secret wartime treaty of the Allies with Rumania in which they had promised the latter Rumanian-inhabited territories such as Transylvania, the Bukovina, and the entire Banat. Clémenceau expressed the opinion that Rumania's separate peace with the Central Powers in May, 1918, had canceled the Allied treaty with Rumania, while Lloyd George merely observed that Rumania was now claiming more than it was entitled to under the wartime treaty.<sup>107a</sup> Italy in general was sympathetic to Rumania's demands in regard to Hungary, though, to weaken neighboring Yugoslavia with which it was then greatly embroiled, it tended to side with Hungary in matters involving Hungarian-Yugoslav territorial differences. Relying, like Rumania, upon a wartime pledge, given in the treaty of

<sup>107</sup> Miller, D. H., *My diary at the conference at Paris* 14: 162 f., or *For. Rel. U. S., P. P. C.* 3: 835 f., espec. 840 f. About Hungary's claims to Transylvania, *ibid.* 12: 406-408. About Rumania and Czechoslovakia at the Peace Conference, see also Djuvara, M., *op. cit.*, *La Roumanie devant le congrès de la paix*, 271-294, Paris, 1919, and Spector, Sherman, David, *Rumania at the Paris peace conference. A study of the diplomacy of Joan C. Bratianu* (Dissertation, Columbia Univ., 1960. Critical of Bratianu). Raschofer, H., *Die tschechoslowakischen Denkschriften für die Friedenskonferenz von Paris, 1919-1920*, Berlin, 1937. See also Albrecht-Carrié, R., *Italy at the Paris peace conference*, New York, 1938, and Lederer, I. J., *Yugoslavia and the Paris peace settlement: Yugoslav-Italian relations and the territorial settlement, 1918-1920*, unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 1957.

<sup>107a</sup> The same point of view was expressed by the American minister in Rumania, Vopicka. See his letter of December 27, 1918, to the Acting Secretary of State: "I know that Bratianu is forcing the Entente Ministers to give to Rumania not only everything which was promised by the Entente, but a great deal more" (*For. Rel. U. S., P. P. C.* 2: 402). That Rumania's demands, considered in their entirety, were extreme, was a rather widely shared view in Paris.

<sup>106</sup> *For. Rel. U. S., P. P. C.* 2: 381-382.



London, she was disposed to uphold the validity of intra-Allied wartime promises.

Basing himself squarely on the treaty of Bucharest of August, 1916, Bratianu at the very outset insisted on a Great Power status for Rumania and also demanded that the Allies honor their wartime promise in its entirety. There seems to be little doubt that the Allies treated the question of the legal validity of the treaty of Bucharest rather cavalierly, especially in view of their determined and successful effort of having Rumania reenter the war in November, 1918.

Bratianu's extreme demands and often intransigent stand—his opposition for instance to compromise with the Serbs over the Banat, which Jonescu, leader of Rumania's Conservative-Democratic party favored—aroused a great deal of hostility against him.<sup>108</sup> Few political leaders in Paris managed to attract as much antagonism as Bratianu, who alienated not only Clémenceau, but also most other prominent Western statesmen. In spite of the Allied dislike of Rumania's leading spokesman and their doubts as to the validity of the treaty of Bucharest of August, 1916, Rumania's services in the war were by no means written off. Her territorial claims were actually, as will be seen, to fare extremely well at the Conference, though her acquisitions were to fall short of the pledges contained in the secret treaty of Bucharest.

After hearing Bratianu and discussing the issues presented, the Supreme Council decided finally to set up the "Committee for the Study of Territorial Questions Relating to Rumania" the name of which, when later charged with the study also of the boundaries of Yugoslavia, was modified to read "relating to Rumania and Yugoslavia." Tardieu was made chairman of the Committee; American delegates serving on it were Dr. Day and Dr. Seymour.

The Czech claims were presented to the Supreme Council on February 5 by Beneš who asked, among other regions, for Slovakia and for the Danube as the southern boundary; the Danube would give a landlocked country as Czechoslovakia access to the sea.<sup>109</sup> Extending the frontier southward to the Danube would mean the separation from Hungary of a purely Magyar-inhabited region north of the Danube. Beneš asserted, that only about 350,000 Magyars would thus be included in the new republic.<sup>110</sup> Among other territories, Czechoslovakia asked also for the inclusion of Carpatho-Ruthenia, though she did not press this claim, pointing merely to the mutual advantage of a common frontier with Rumania. Following the precedent set a few

days before, the Supreme Council created the Committee on Czechoslovak Questions; the American delegates on the committee were Drs. Seymour and A. W. Dulles.

Within a few weeks after the Peace Conference had opened, Allied experts were thus at work considering the claims of Hungary's neighbors—with the exception of those of Austria—and Hungary's new frontiers. The work of the committees proved to be of greatest importance. Their territorial recommendations were later accepted by the Supreme Council virtually unchanged.

Hungarian revisionists were subsequently to charge that the task of drawing the frontiers had been entrusted to men either ignorant of, or having no sufficient knowledge of the realities, of the geography and economics of Central Europe, and to people bent on revenge and punishment.<sup>111</sup> Actually, this assignment was turned over to men who were either area experts or, if not professionally equipped, men with broad outlook and wide experience. The result of their labor was a thorough study of the problems of the respective regions and a searching inquiry into alternative solutions. In the United States a body of scholars had turned to the study of the ethnic aspects, the historic background and the economics and geography of the various disputed areas and border regions soon after the entrance of the United States into the war, and Great Britain and France had likewise made careful preparations. The members of the territorial committees arrived at their conclusions only after prolonged deliberations, and then followed the inevitable compromise between different teams of specialists representing different national points of view. Complete objectivity, treating friend and foe alike, could hardly have been expected, especially not in view of Allied wartime pledges.

A French delegate had put the case of supporting an ally against a former opponent succinctly when he asserted: "Having a choice to make between an Allied and an enemy country, the Commission must not hesitate, however strong its desires of legitimate impartiality may be, to favor the Allied side." The French treated the Hungarians as an "enemy people who could not be depended upon in any future struggle to range themselves against the Teuton."<sup>112</sup> On the other hand, when Beneš addressed the Council in Paris, he shrewdly pointed out that the Czechs had always felt "that they had a special mission to resist the Teutonic flood."<sup>113</sup> The British delegate, Sir Eyre Crowe, in his statement of February 25 before the Committee for the Study of Territorial Questions relating to Rumania had voiced views virtually identical

<sup>108</sup> Clark, *op. cit.*, 282–284; see also Dillon, *The inside story of the peace conference*, 83–85, New York, 1920.

<sup>109</sup> Miller, *op. cit.* 14: 211 f.; see also *For. Rel. U. S., P. P. C.* 3: 877 f. Beneš' presentation has been previously discussed.

<sup>110</sup> Some years later Beneš admitted the inaccuracy of these figures; see *Aufstand der Nationen*, 687–688; under the pressure of time he had relied largely on his memory. He asserted, however, that these figures had little, if any, bearing on the actual decisions taken.

<sup>111</sup> Bethlen, Ct. Stephen, *Treaty of Trianon and European peace*, 89–90, also 68, London, 1934.

<sup>112</sup> George, D. Lloyd, *Memoirs of the peace conference* 1: 597, New Haven, 1939.

<sup>113</sup> Quoted *ibid.*, 605–606.

with those of his French colleagues, applying them directly to the Hungarian-Rumanian dispute. "When we come to face these ethnographical difficulties, it makes a great difference whether they arise between the Rumanians and Hungarians who are our enemies." Justice, of course, ought to be meted out to both sides, yet the balance must naturally be inclined towards the ally Rumania, rather than to the former foe Hungary.<sup>114</sup>

Though national self-determination was understood to be the guiding principle in drafting the new boundaries, it never was considered the only one. Had it been, Hungary most likely would not have been satisfied, since both Transylvania and Slovakia, not to mention other territories, would surely have been lost. Yet many other criteria, economic, geographic, historic, and military, were applied in drawing the final frontiers, and in combination they added up to grievous, in some cases quite unnecessary, losses for Hungary.

#### ORGANIZATIONAL AND POLITICAL DEFICIENCIES OF THE CONFERENCE

The British diplomat Harold Nicolson, criticizing later the work of the Peace Conference especially in regard to Hungary, has made the point that there was no coordination and correlation between the two committees dealing with Hungary's new frontiers. Neither of the two committees had a conception of the total territorial demands which would be made on Hungary. Had each committee known how large territorial cessions the other would recommend, it would have proceeded with greater caution and moderation. Even in setting up the committees, he held, an over-all plan was badly lacking. All territorial committees had been appointed *ad hoc*; they were

nominated from day to day, not to deal with any general principle, but to deal with the incidental occurrence that some Ally or some New State had presented a memorandum to the Conference demanding certain territory.<sup>115</sup>

Thus their main task was not to recommend a general settlement with a defeated enemy country, but merely to reach conclusions as to particular claims of states allied with, or friendly to, the Great Powers. What they thus lacked was the right focus. These procedures produced, Nicolson asserted,

unfortunate results. The Committee on Rumanian Claims, for instance, thought only in terms of Transylvania, the Committee on Czech Claims concentrated upon the southern frontier of Slovakia. It was only too late that it was realized that these two entirely separate Committees had between them imposed upon Hungary a loss of territory and population which, when combined, was very serious indeed. Had the work been concentrated in the hands of a "Hungarian" Committee, not only would a wider area of frontier have been open for the give and take of discussion, but it would have been seen that the total cessions imposed

placed more Magyars under alien rule than was consonant with the doctrine of Self-Determination.<sup>116</sup>

When finally a "Coordination-Committee" was appointed, it proved to be too late to rectify earlier mistakes.

There appears to be a great deal of truth in Nicolson's comments as to the absence of an over-all focus, the lack of coordination in creating the committees and lack of correlation in their work. Still, the thesis that the harshness of the Peace of Trianon was due entirely or mainly to a technical oversight, to mere organizational deficiency, is difficult to accept in its entirety. It is a view which Nicolson himself seems to repudiate when he, in another connection, advances criticism of a substantive nature, the disregard of the principle of national self-determination. By and large, he tends to exaggerate the organizational weakness of the Conference, as for instance the lack of coordination in the work of the committees. Not only were the Powers at times represented by the same delegate on more than one Committee, but also the Committees occasionally met in joint session.<sup>117</sup> Furthermore, the reports of both Committees were in the hands of the Council of Ten in March, of the Council of Four in May, 1919, and these bodies had thus sufficient time to ponder about the significance of the proposed territorial changes in their entirety and their likely combined impact on the Hungarian Republic. Even if each Committee, owing to its narrow frame of reference, may have lacked the broader view, their superior bodies were not hampered by such limitations. A reading of the record would seem to indicate that attention was paid to the totality of territorial losses of the enemy states.

It is correct that the primary task of the committees was to draw boundaries acceptable to Hungary's neighbors rather than to Hungary herself. Friend and foe could not expect equal treatment. When the Austro-Hungarian armies had laid down their arms, it was not on the basis of Wilson's Fourteen Points;<sup>118</sup> to the— for Austria—all-important Point Ten and to others, specific and unmistakable exception had been made. The major purpose of the committees of the Conference was to assure first the "economic viability" and effective defensive posture of Czechoslovakia, Rumania, and Yugoslavia and, secondly, within the framework and often narrow limits thus established, provide for

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, 127–128.

<sup>117</sup> Temperley, *op. cit.* 1: 258, chap. vii.

<sup>118</sup> Temperley, H., How the Hungarian frontiers were drawn, *Foreign Affairs*, April, 1928, contrasts the peace treaty of Versailles with that of Trianon. While the Allies had made an offer to Germany to make peace on the basis of the Fourteen Points and other addresses of President Wilson in 1918, Hungary had laid down her arms surrendering unconditionally. "As no offer of political terms was made to Austria-Hungary collectively or to the two component states separately, the Allies were not legally committed to dealing with them on the basis of the 'Fourteen Points'" (433).

<sup>114</sup> Quoted *ibid.*, 597.

<sup>115</sup> Nicolson, H., *op. cit.*, 127.



the best possible solution of the problem of Hungary. After the ethnic, economic, and military minimum demands of Czechoslovakia, Rumania, and Yugoslavia had been met, and only then, could the pleas and wishes of Hungary be considered. The doctrine of national self-determination was merely one, though admittedly the most significant one, which was expected to guide the experts on the five territorial committees set up by the Peace Conference. Economic, geographic, military, and historic considerations and of course wartime pledges also were expected to carry weight. Nicolson and other critics of the peace treaties in general have tended to disregard the fact that, though the nationality principle was extolled and its preeminence recognized by the Peace Conference and by public opinion in general, the importance of other criteria was at no time minimized.

Nicolson has pointed specifically to the lack of guidance given to the committees "as to the inevitable conflict between 'self-determination' and 'economics'" as another error of the Conference.

The French were always insisting that our main duty was to render the New States what they called "viables," or in other words to provide them with those essentials of security, transport and economic resources without which they would be unable to establish their independence. We were never told how far we were to accept this argument. Nor was any guidance accorded on the point whether "historical" claims should be admitted . . . or whether the principle of "Sanctity of Treaties" (generally the Secret Treaties) was in fact to be maintained. As a result, all those principles were cited together to justify our recommendations.<sup>119</sup>

The question must be raised whether the Conference of 1919, or for that matter any conference, could have given to the territorial committees any concrete guidance in such matters. It would seem most difficult to point out the relative value to be assigned to the different criteria, as for instance to self-determination, viability, historic rights, etc., and to do this with mathematical exactitude or anything approaching it. Different persons and nations, depending on particular circumstances, and a changing self-interest, would most likely be inclined to assign different values to these criteria. Aside from the difficulty of assessing the relative importance of these criteria and expressing it in any formula or guiding directions, did not the Conference, by refraining from directing the work of its committees down to the last detail, give them actually more freedom, more leeway, assuring thus more satisfactory results?

One may admit the validity of both some of the technical and the nontechnical points of criticism, the latter relating to matters of policy, made by Nicolson and other critics of the Peace Conference—which apply also to the treaty concluded with Hungary—and still question whether it is these shortcomings which to any substantial measure account for Hungary's territorial

losses. Perhaps these losses would have been slightly smaller, if some or all of the listed errors had been avoided. Yet considering that the claims presented by Hungary's neighbors were not only ethnic ones, but also based upon geography, economics, transportation, defense, history, and the sanctity of treaties (Allied wartime pledges), and that the Allies had, within limits, recognized the validity of all of these criteria, it was inevitable that Hungary's final frontiers, in Nicolson's words, were not fully consonant with the doctrine of self-determination. In view of the intense national emotions, the vital interests involved and unreasonably high expectations of the Magyar people in 1918–1919, any peace treaty falling short of Hungary's historic integrity—a principle which, incidentally, discounted the right of the non-Magyar peoples to national self-determination—was bound to arouse Magyar ire and hostility and so create dangerous tensions.

As Harold Nicolson, to some degree at least, has pointed to a mistake in policy rather than in the mere technics of the Peace Conference, other critics and historians of the Peace Conference and of the Treaty of Trianon in particular have found major weaknesses even more in substantive than in procedural and organizational areas, in the realm of policy.

Once the decision had been reached by the Western Powers to establish a Czechoslovak state, it had to be made viable. Considering the geopolitics of the region, it was unavoidable to include German and Magyar minorities in the state. Ethnic considerations as well as viability—the latter having both economic and military aspects—determined Allied policy also in drawing the Hungarian-Rumanian and Hungarian-Yugoslav frontiers. President Wilson, as well as English statesmen, was by no means inclined to underestimate the importance of economic viability.<sup>120</sup>

This position was already made clear in a British memorandum of November 13, 1918—the day the Belgrade Armistice was signed—relative to the future boundaries of the Czechoslovak State, which at the suggestion of Secretary Balfour was sent to the United States for consideration and comments. The question was here raised as to what extent the ethnic divisions could be made the basis for tracing the frontiers of the new state. Strategic defenses or economic resources, it was suggested, were in some districts of such paramount importance as to override all other considerations.<sup>121</sup>

To minimize her territorial losses, Hungary could be expected to stress historic and, if this failed, ethnic-linguistic criteria—a pattern which it followed in both Slovakia and Transylvania—and the Czechoslovaks, Rumanians, and Yugoslavs were likely to stress beyond ethnic criteria economic and military ones; the new borders had to be defensible and to embrace economi-

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, 434.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, 440.

<sup>121</sup> *For. Rel. U. S., P. P. C. 2: 376–377.*

cally viable states. Justifiable criticism of the Peace Treaty of Trianon should, considering the circumstances then existing, not be based on the discrepancy between the actual frontiers and the ethnic borders which at times were difficult to establish even by the most objective experts. In view of the political and military realities of 1919, the Allied pledges to Hungary's neighbors, the right of peoples oppressed for centuries to a reasonable guarantee of their independence, which could be accomplished only by including some Magyar population in their new states, the only question, as the British historian Temperley put it, was whether the Peacemakers threw in "more [Hungarians] than was necessary to make the new state viable."<sup>122</sup>

#### FEAR OF COMMUNISM AND HUNGARY'S FRONTIERS

H. W. V. Temperley, one of the foremost students of the history of the Peace Conference, has expressed the view that the drawing of the Hungarian frontiers was greatly influenced by the establishment of the Soviet regime in Hungary in late March, 1919; it had aggravated Hungary's misfortune and actually increased the penalty of her defeat.

No event affected the frontiers of Hungary more decisively than the Socialist revolution which broke out at Budapest in April [actually March 20, 1919] and enthroned Béla Kun as dictator.<sup>123</sup>

And again, when Kun sent forces against Czechoslovakia and Rumania, Temperley holds that

it was this action that forced the Big Four to come to a decision regarding Hungary's new frontiers and order B. Kun to retire behind them. This was the true and final decision.<sup>124</sup>

There can be no question as to the impact of the Hungarian communist revolution upon Paris. It is also correct that the final Allied decision regarding Hungary's frontiers was their riposte to Soviet Hungary's aggressive moves. Yet, as Temperley admits, the Allied decision of June 13 was merely the final one, the climax of a number of decisions and moves some of which were made even before Kun came to power and which in turn shaped the last one. In other connection, he duly stressed the importance of the work of the territorial committees which, after all, laid the groundwork for the final decision and, in his own words, "in fact determined [!] the fate of Hungary."<sup>125</sup>

<sup>122</sup> Temperley, *Hungarian frontiers . . .*, *op. cit.*, 438. Reappraising in 1928 the treaty of Trianon, Temperley pointed out in which respects the Allies might have taken Hungarian wishes more in account than they had done. Yet it seems highly doubtful, as the author himself appears to have been aware of, that such modifications as he outlined would have appreciably lessened Hungarian opposition to the treaty of Trianon.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, 434.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, 435.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, 434.

The report of the committee on Czechoslovakia's boundaries was completed before the accession to power of the Hungarian communists; the reports on Rumania's and Yugoslavia's frontiers with Hungary were concluded thereafter. The report of the first-named committee could obviously not be influenced by fear of and hostility to Hungarian communism. Francis Deák in his study *Hungary at the Paris Peace Conference* (1942) holds "that fear of communism was not decisive in the [Czechoslovak] Committee's conclusions" and continues, "There is no evidence that the Committee's conclusions were influenced thereby."<sup>126</sup> The record of the discussions does not bear out the assumption that the committee dealing with Rumanian-Hungarian and Yugoslav-Hungarian frontiers was swayed in favor of Rumania and Yugoslavia by last-minute developments in Hungary, the seizure of power by the Bolsheviks.

As far as the Hungarian-Yugoslav boundary was concerned, the American, British, and French members had virtually agreed on a line, essentially the one suggested by the Serbs themselves, by February 28—three weeks before Béla Kun came to power—though the committee's report did not reach the Supreme Council before April 6.<sup>127</sup> With regard to the Rumanian-Hungarian border, the one finally agreed upon and communicated to the Béla Kun government on June 13 was rather more favorable for Hungary than the Allied decision on the Rumanian-Hungarian line of demarcation and the neutral zone which was adopted in Paris in late February and presented to the democratic Hungarian government headed by Károlyi on March 20.<sup>127a</sup>

Count Stephen Bethlen, a leading Hungarian revisionist, has asserted that the Soviet Hungarian regime cost Hungary Carpatho-Ruthenia: "The Ruthenian territory was allotted to the Czechs . . . and this was decided upon only after Communism had broken out in Hungary."<sup>128</sup> Actually in the autumn of 1918 Secretary of State Lansing had suggested in a memorandum that Carpatho-Ruthenia be given to a "Russian Confederation," apparently having then no intention of leaving it with Hungary.<sup>129</sup> It is also of interest to note that Count Bethlen did not claim that Hungary had lost any other territories on account of the establishment of a Soviet regime in Budapest.<sup>130</sup>

Only with regard to the Burgenland, as the portion of West Hungary ceded to the neighboring Austrian Republic was called, does it appear that the Austrian

<sup>126</sup> Deák, *op. cit.*, 46, 51.

<sup>127</sup> See documents No. 10 and 12, *ibid.*, 410-418 and 426-430.

<sup>127a</sup> *Allied and Associated Powers. Committee for the Study of Territorial Questions relating to Rumania.* Minutes. A photostatic copy of the original manuscript is in The New York Public Library.

<sup>128</sup> Bethlen, *op. cit.*, 49.

<sup>129</sup> Lansing, R., *The peace negotiations*, 194.

<sup>130</sup> Bethlen, *op. cit.*; also Horvath, in Apponyi, A., ed., *op. cit.*, 100-101.

demand for its separation from Hungary was acceded to by the Allies because they wished to penalize a nation which had embraced communism, and reward adjacent Austria which had rejected the lures from Budapest.<sup>131</sup> The transfer, however, was also in accordance with the nationality principle, since the Burgenland had a German-speaking majority. The Austrian capital, the Allied Powers held, would receive additional protection, if Bolshevism would be kept "at a reasonable distance in both present and future."<sup>132</sup> By the time the Austrian government was notified of the Allied decision concerning West Hungary, on July 20, the Allied position against Béla Kun had hardened and the Allies were more anti-Soviet than at any previous moment.

In the immediate postwar period both communism and anti-communism held a firm grip on the mind of many people. Though the boundaries of Hungary were drawn in the spring of 1919 when the Soviets ruled Budapest, an examination of the possible influence of anti-communist views upon the determination of the final frontiers of Hungary lends no support to the view that they were made significantly worse because the Allies feared a communist Hungary and wished to strengthen their noncommunist neighbors.

#### IV. THE SOVIET HUNGARIAN REPUBLIC AND FIRST ALLIED REACTIONS

##### THE SOVIET HUNGARIAN REPUBLIC, SOVIET RUSSIA, AND REVOLUTIONARY PROPAGANDA

The Allied ultimatum to the government of Michael Károlyi had ushered in the Soviet Hungarian regime. Issues of foreign policy were not only decisive at the birth of the Soviet republic, but also continued to dominate Hungarian affairs during the Soviet period and shaped the course of Hungary's internal political development during these months.

The Hungarian Soviet Republic was hardly set up when it turned toward the East. In a radio dispatch to Soviet Russia, the new rulers dutifully reported to Lenin that a proletarian dictatorship had been established in Hungary and simultaneously saluted him as the leader of the international proletariat, thus clearly subordinating themselves to Moscow's authority. The Hungarian government then asked for a treaty of alliance with Russia and requested pertinent instructions.<sup>133</sup>

<sup>131</sup> Bauer, O., *Österreichische Revolution*, 153, Vienna, 1923; also Macartney, *op. cit.*, 48-51 f. Professor A. C. Coolidge is alleged to have played an important role in the final decision to transfer the Burgenland to Austria (N. Roosevelt, *A Front Row Seat*, 226).

<sup>132</sup> Temperley, *op. cit.* 4: 382-386.

<sup>133</sup> *Pravda*, March 24, 1919; see also Low, A. D., The First Austrian Republic and Soviet Hungary, *Journal of Central European Affairs* 20: 179, 1960. About the origins of Hungarian communism and conditions in Hungary prior and during the Soviet regime, see Böhm, W., *Im Kreuzfeuer zweier Revo-*

lutionen, in turn, told the Hungarian comrades of the huge enthusiasm which their revolution had aroused in Russia. He promised to send them the resolutions of the Third International, which at that very moment held its founding congress in Moscow, as well as information about Russia's military situation,<sup>134</sup> the latter in a possible move to discourage too great a reliance of the Hungarian comrades upon Russian assistance.

From its first days Hungarian communism, however, not only looked eastward, but also turned to her immediate neighbors, to Germany, and to the West. In an appeal "To All," the Hungarian Socialist Party, as the party even after the fusion of Social Democrats and Communists called itself, extended its greetings to the working classes of Great Britain, France, Italy, and America, and called on them not to tolerate the infamous campaign of their regimes against the Soviet Hungarian government. It also appealed to the workers and peasants of the adjoining victorious countries, of Bohemia, Rumania, Serbia, and Croatia, to form "an armed alliance against the boyars, estate-owners, and dynasties." Finally, it called upon the workers of the vanquished states, Germany and German-Austria, to follow the example of the Hungarian proletariat, to make a final break with Paris and to link up with Moscow.<sup>135</sup> The Soviet Hungarian regime appealed to the European proletariat not only to prevent an attack of their bourgeoisies upon Soviet Hungary, but also to extend the base of social revolution throughout Europe.

From its very birth the Soviet Hungarian government perceived the paramount importance of extending Bolshevism into neighboring countries, especially into Austria and Southern Germany—a shortlived Soviet government was to spring up in Munich in early April—and engaged in feverish propaganda to further its goals. The Austrian envoy in Budapest, Cnobloch, wrote thus to the Austrian foreign secretary: "Propa-

lutionen, Munich, 1924, *Memoirs of Michael Károlyi. Faith without illusion*, London, 1956, Károlyi, M., *Fighting the world* (transl. by Dickens, E. W.), New York, 1925, Jászi, O., *Revolution and counterrevolution in Hungary*, London, 1924, *Entstehung und Zusammenbruch der ungarischen Räterediktatur*, Vienna, 1919, Szántó, Béla, *Klassenkämpfe und die Diktatur des Proletariats in Ungarn*. Mit einem Vorwort von Radek, K., Vienna, 1920, *Kun Béla a magyar Tanácsköztársaságról*, Budapest, 1958, and Szelpal, Arpad, *Les 133 jours de Béla Kun*, Paris, 1959; see also several articles on the First Soviet Hungarian Republic in the leading Russian historical journal *Voprosy istorii* between 1955 and 1959 which are listed under footnote 358. About Soviet Hungary's foreign policy in particular, see Baron Kaas, A., and de Lazarovics, F., *Bolshevism in Hungary. The Béla Kun period*, especially pp. 170-199, London, 1931, Brown, Ph.M., Foreign relations of the Budapest Soviets in 1919: a personal narrative, *The Hungarian Quarterly*, III, Budapest, 1937, No. 1, pp. 59-69, and Deák, F., *Hungary at the Paris Peace Conference* (though a basic study, its focus is not on the Soviet period).

<sup>134</sup> Lenin, *Sochineniia*, 4th ed., 29: 202; also 174.

<sup>135</sup> *Soziale Revolution*, Vienna, March 26, 1919.

ganda abroad is [the Soviet government's] only activity in foreign policy."<sup>136</sup> True, Kun remarked once,

Our example is propaganda in itself; our mere existence is a danger to the capitalists of the world, a pattern which will be followed by the proletarians of the entire globe.<sup>137</sup>

Yet the Soviet government in its day-by-day activities went much beyond a propaganda which rests its case on its mere existence and patiently waits for the European proletariat to follow its example. Driven by its messianic faith, it worked feverishly to extend Bolshevism beyond its borders. The Hungarian Communist Party, even before the seizure of power, tried its best to spread communist propaganda among Rumanians, Czechs, Serbs, and Croats, as Béla Kun informed Lenin in a message of January 5, 1919.<sup>138</sup> It was such activism and not an attitude of immovable quietism which he had in mind for the Hungarian Communist Party when in a Letter to Comrades he exhorted them to be an example for Central Europe.<sup>139</sup> Yet not only Central Europe, but all of Europe, he prophesied, would soon follow the Hungarian example. "*The victory of communism will not stop at the borders of Hungary, it will be worldwide.*"<sup>140</sup> "*Our aim,*" Kun had written soon after the seizure of power, "*an aim in which we are in no small measure assisted by our geographical position,*" is "*to promote the internationalization of the world. We are doubly predestined to constitute ourselves a bridge for ideas coming from the East. It is conceivable that by reason of our central position, we may become a nucleus for Internationalism.*"<sup>141</sup>

Though pointing here to Soviet Hungary's predestination and staking out extensive claims as to her proletarian mission, her importance as a springboard for further expansion of the proletarian revolution, Kun and the Soviet government stressed as frequently that Soviet Hungary could be secured and saved only through international proletarian solidarity. As the Austrian envoy in Hungary put it, the Soviet government "considered the spreading of Bolshevism into neighboring countries the best means to attain its own salvation."<sup>142</sup> In looking upon the victory of communism in adjoining states as a guarantee for its own survival, the revolutionary government in Budapest followed merely the example of Russian Bolshevism at the time.

In 1919 both Moscow and Budapest tended to exaggerate the revolutionary potentialities of the rest of

Europe, the revolutionary inclinations especially of the proletariat in the victorious countries. Yet the Soviet Hungarian government was utterly unrealistic in assessing the opportunities of the spread of Bolshevism into neighboring countries and the rest of Europe. Soviet Russia's error at least was balanced by an underestimation of her own considerable resources which made it possible for her to survive in the struggle against a hostile world. The Soviet Hungarian government, in an incomparably more difficult position, tended to overlook also its smaller resources and greater geographic and military vulnerability.

#### "JACOBINISM" AND THE SOVIET HUNGARIAN REPUBLIC

The proletarian revolution in Hungary had peculiar characteristics. It was, as the Vienna social-democratic daily, the *Arbeiterzeitung*, quickly pointed out, not so much a revolution against her own bourgeoisie as one against the Entente bourgeoisie. The Hungarian bourgeoisie had made "the desperate decision to abdicate temporarily, to leave the state power to workers and peasants without a struggle," since this seemed the

only means to make the proletariat of the factory and of the soil fight a new war against the country's enemy. Thus the proletariat, without meeting resistance, can seize power. The social revolution serves here the defense of the country against the external enemy.<sup>143</sup>

This defense, the daily continued, was reminiscent of the struggle of the Jacobins during the French revolution against foreign invasion. *Izvestiia's* evaluation of the political turnover in Hungary and of the Soviet government as serving the purposes of national defense followed virtually the same lines.<sup>144</sup>

National despair had indeed given birth to the Hungarian "proletarian" revolution. The communist seizure of power had come as direct consequence of the Allied ultimatum, not as the result of victory in the internal class struggle. To many Hungarian communists the victory in the country was won too lightly:<sup>145</sup> Béla Kun had misgivings from the very beginning since the mantle of power had been dropped on his shoulders, instead of having been seized on the barricades.<sup>146</sup>

<sup>143</sup> Ungarn und wir, *Arbeiterzeitung*, March 23, 1919.

<sup>144</sup> *Izvestiia*, March 25, 1919, similarly *Pravda* of the same day. See also Aranyossi, M., Gyula Alpari, *Acta Historica*, 6: Nr. 1-2, 43-44, Budapest, 1959. Professor A. Siklós of the University of Budapest in a lecture delivered in October, 1958 on the Hungarian October Revolution of 1918 stressed that in the spring of 1919 "not only the working class, but also an immense majority of the Hungarian people" came out against the imperialist invaders in support of the Soviet government (*ibid.*, 208).

<sup>145</sup> *Arbeiterzeitung*, July 17, 1919; see also Kun Béla . . . , 183.

<sup>146</sup> See the article of Weltner, J., *Népszava*, April 2, 1919, against the "immature recklessness" of some "revolutionaries" who held that bloodshed was necessary in a genuine revolution.

<sup>136</sup> OS, ex 881, Liasse Ungarn I, 3; April 4, 1919. See also Low, *op. cit.*, 182-183.

<sup>137</sup> Kun's speech of June 19 is printed in full by Baron Kaas, A., and de Lazarovics, F., *op. cit.*, Appendix 16, 346-362.

<sup>138</sup> Kun Béla a magyar . . . , 137-138.

<sup>139</sup> *Népszava*, March 27, 1919, in Kun Béla . . . , 154-157.

<sup>140</sup> *Pravda*, April 12, 1919.

<sup>141</sup> Quoted by Kaas and Lazarovics, *op. cit.*, 196-197; italics by the author.

<sup>142</sup> Low, *op. cit.*, 183.

Many of his comrades long remained curiously concerned about the lack of resistance from the former ruling classes.

That the Entente was largely responsible for the radical turn of events in Hungary was the prevailing view both in Hungary and abroad, and shared both by communists and non-communists alike. It was voiced by Politikai Híradó when it asserted that Hungary and the Hungarian Social Democratic Party had been "pushed onto this new road by the Entente Imperialism."<sup>147</sup> Similarly, even Wilhelm Böhm, Social-Democratic Minister of War during the Soviet period, though he held that the fall of the Károlyi government had been due largely to internal causes, wrote later: "The responsibility for having brought about the downfall of the government must mainly be attributed to the behavior of the Entente and its representative Vyx."<sup>148</sup> Béla Kun himself, in a letter to Lenin on April 22, 1919, held that the communists' seizure of power would have taken place without the Vyx ultimatum; of course, if the Bolshevik victory was ascribed exclusively or primarily to a blunder on the part of the Entente, the Communist party and Béla Kun himself did not deserve much credit. Yet even he stressed that the Entente's ultimatum, a mistake on its part, had been of decisive importance. The Hungarian proletariat was in a way obliged to the Entente, since to a large measure its "robber-baron policy"<sup>149</sup> had created the conditions which enabled it to come to power. The Hungarian communists, according to Kun, had been quick to exploit the Allied blunder. It would have been "foolish to leave this opportunity which presented itself without using it."<sup>150</sup>

Charles T. Thompson, in his account *The Peace Conference Day by Day*, wrote that everyone traced the Hungarian explosion back to the Peace Conference. Yet while President Wilson told his friends that the excessive French claims were delaying progress, the French, especially since the Hungarian crisis, rather tended to blame the President's idealism and failure to get at practical details of the treaty as the chief causes

See also *Kun Béla* . . . , 179. The absence of resistance from the former ruling classes especially in the first weeks of the new regime seemed as startling as the phenomenal growth in the membership of the Communist Party. In the month of May every third adult in Hungary was a member of the Party!  
<sup>147</sup> Quoted by Cnobloch, *OS*, ex 887, folder: Politische Lage in Ungarn, March 22, 1919.

<sup>148</sup> Böhm, *op. cit.*, 124; he is repeatedly critical of Colonel Vyx.

<sup>149</sup> *Pester Lloyd*, Abendblatt, June 19, 1919. Also *Kun Béla* . . . , 259-260. It was apparently not in Béla Kun's interest to give either the Entente or Michael Károlyi "credit" for the communist seizure of power. Many years thereafter, in a chance meeting with Kun in the house of a Hungarian friend in Moscow, Count Michael Károlyi observed that Kun obviously did not like him: "He never forgave me the legend that I handed power over to him; it detracted from his merit in seizing it." (*Memoirs of M. Károlyi*, 266-267).

<sup>150</sup> *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, No. 2, 1919.

of delay and the English press too began to voice growing criticism of President Wilson. While, according to Thompson, the main shaft of criticism was directed at the error of the Conference in imposing such harsh policies on the Hungarian nation as to drive her into the arms of Bolshevism, others, especially the French, traced the setback to Allied, particularly American, softness of policy. Actually, Americans shared responsibility with the Allied Powers for the harsh policy adopted against Hungary on February 26 and thus for the Allied ultimatum which had been presented to the Hungarian government of Michael Károlyi on March 20. Colonel House, however, expressed the opinion that the Hungarian outbreak was not due to anything the Conference had done, but was rather the expression of the prevailing unrest;<sup>151</sup> this point of view, of course, freed the Allies from major responsibility for the political catastrophe in Hungary.

#### THE PEACE CONFERENCE AND HUNGARIAN EXPECTATIONS

While the Entente's responsibility for Hungarian developments could not be denied, all Hungarian political parties and the entire Hungarian people must share the blame for the singularly unjustified optimism they held in regard to the country's boundaries and peace terms. When in March, 1919, they were finally confronted with the harsh facts of life, their hopes came crushing down, their democratic government collapsed and national Bolshevism emerged.

The Austrian envoy in Budapest, Cnobloch, reported to Vienna on February 8:

Common to all political movements and classes is a Hungarian optimism in regard to the future which can be explained only on the basis of the Magyar national character. The greatest hopes are pinned by bourgeois groups as well as by the socialists on the decisions of the Peace Conference,

and by the latter also especially upon the congress of the Socialist International in Bern. In spite of "illusions about the alleged pro-Hungarian leanings of the Entente, which are belied by the facts," there reigned everywhere in Budapest "the highest hopes in regard to the ability of preserving Hungarian integrity, which appear to the objective observer nothing but utopian."

Earlier, in a message of December 27, Cnobloch had remarked in the same vein: "The naïveté with which the Károlyi cabinet believed to be able to turn a lost war into a political victory, had indeed always aroused puzzlement."<sup>152</sup> Károlyi, like most of his countrymen, and in spite of all indications to the contrary, believed it possible that a political shift in Hungary toward a Western-type democratic republic, which would also signify a pro-Allied change of heart and mind of the

<sup>151</sup> Thompson, Chs. T., *The peace conference day by day*, 261-263, New York, 1920.

<sup>152</sup> *OS*, ex 887, folder: Politische Lage . . . , Feb. 8, 1919; *ibid.*, Dec. 27, 1918.

country, might be all that would be needed to save the Hungarian nation and spare her territorial losses.

Soon after coming to power, the Károlyi government had entered into negotiations with the Slovaks, Rumanians, and South Slavs for the purpose of transforming Hungary into a democratic confederation, an "Eastern Switzerland."<sup>153</sup> Károlyi's ultimate goal was a Danubian confederation. Jászi, the new minister of nationalities, esteemed by the political leaders of the different nationalities and personally well acquainted with them, conducted the negotiations. Károlyi's project of a confederation was, as, glancing back, he later openly admitted, the only means to check irredentism and the only way of "maintaining Hungary's economic and territorial integrity, in view of the new spirit which had developed in the course of the war and of the shifting balance of actual power in the country." Though well aware of the Entente's commitments towards Hungary's neighbors, he knew that definite boundaries had not yet been determined. Under these circumstances, he apparently held that the *fait accompli* of an agreement between the Magyar nation and Rumanians, Slovaks, and South Slavs might impress the Great Powers and influence their decision. The negotiations with the two latter national groups made, according to Károlyi, satisfactory progress for a time; the negotiations, however, with the Transylvanian Rumanians from the beginning provided greater difficulties, since a Rumanian army, stiffening their attitude, was already in existence.

Károlyi maintained later that the major reason for the failure of these negotiations was their late start. The King had not made him Prime Minister until October 30. If he had been appointed earlier, he claimed, negotiations with the nationalities would have been undertaken sooner, and, since agreement with the nationalities was a prerequisite of the peace talks, an armistice with the Allies might have been concluded before the disintegration of the army had set in.

A few weeks prior to his assumption of leadership Károlyi had revealed his program as one aiming to preserve the inviolability of the Hungarian territory.<sup>154</sup> In early January, 1919, he had come out again for what he called vaguely "territorial integrity of our country in an economic sense. . . . The peoples of Hungary must unite upon an economic basis."<sup>155</sup> Two months later in a speech at Szatmár he went further, promising to reverse the situation created through the recent occupation of former Hungarian territory by Rumanians, Czechoslovaks, and Yugoslavs. "We want to liberate[!] the Hungarian citizens of Rumanian or Slovak tongues."<sup>156</sup> Territorial integrity preoccupied

by no means only Prime Minister Károlyi and his followers, but all other parties, from the chauvinist Rightists to the extreme Left. Commenting on Károlyi's speech of March 3, Cnobloch reported the following day that Károlyi, while having still set his hopes on the Paris Peace Conference, had, nevertheless, threatened armed self-help, if Hungarian faith should be disappointed. The speech had special significance, since "the same thoughts were supported by the socialists, namely by Minister for War, Böhm, and the very leftist member of the cabinet Josef Pogány." Cnobloch had already previously pointed to the circumstance that "the socialist party, on account of economic considerations, could be pushed easily into a more activist nationalist politics in behalf of the integrity of the country."<sup>157</sup> This prophetic statement was borne out on March 21.

Hungarian complaints about the French military, the generals D'Esperey, Colonel Vyx, and others, and their at times haughty attitude and contemptuous treatment of the Hungarian authorities were not unjustified. Likewise, the accusation that the Allies did not give sufficient encouragement to the new democratic Hungarian Republic cannot be lightly dismissed. Nevertheless, the question remains whether a more considerate treatment of Hungary by the Western Powers would not have emboldened the intensely burning Hungarian nationalism. An obviously stern Allied policy had not been able to whittle down the extreme territorial demands of the Magyars. Whatever the mistakes the Allies may have committed at the time of the armistice and thereafter and whatever its omissions and uncertainties, which contributed substantially to a feeling of insecurity on the part of Hungary and of her neighbors and caused tensions and hostilities, Magyar hopes after a lost war were rather extravagant and unrealistic with regard to the country's territorial integrity.

In view of the exaggerated expectations with regard to the Peace Conference, the Hungarian nation was bound to be thrown into the very depths of despair and to be carried to the heights of recklessness. Thus were created the conditions for ushering in the Soviet regime and national Bolshevism; clothed in Jacobin garb, it boastfully promised to save the nation. Virtually all Hungarian political leaders had been caught in a naïve optimism and had indulged in illusory hopes that the new democratic Republic, led by democratic pro-Western statesmen, would make the Western Powers forget Hungary's past hostility, her alliance with Germany, the oppression of her nationalities, and would help the country to escape the consequences of military defeat. The attempt, however, of Károlyi and of his Minister of Nationalities Jászi to reconcile the non-Magyar peo-

admirable frankness: "I blame myself . . . that because of my upbringing, I allowed myself to be influenced by chauvinistic prejudices about frontiers and demarcation lines which should have been irrelevant to one whose final aim was a Danubian Confederation. . . ."

<sup>157</sup> OS, ex 880, Ungarn I-1, March 4, 1919.

<sup>153</sup> For the following, see Károlyi, M., *Fighting the world*, 333-349, chap. xxix.

<sup>154</sup> *Pester Lloyd*, Morgenblatt, Oct. 3, 1918.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*, No. 1, Jan. 1 and 4, 1919.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*, Abendblatt, March 3, 1919. In his autobiography, *Memoirs of M. Károlyi*, 173-177, Károlyi wrote later with

ples through their promises to make of Hungary an "Eastern Switzerland"<sup>158</sup> had come too late.

#### THE IMPACT ON THE PEACE CONFERENCE

The first impact on the Paris Peace Conference of the news that a Soviet republic had been established in Budapest was a tremendous one. On March 22 the British delegate to the Paris Conference, Harold Nicolson, wrote in his diary:

In the afternoon news arrives of a Bolshevik revolution in Hungary. This was foreseen, but is none the less very serious. There is a real danger that we shall get no peace at all. But what is to be done? We have all demobilized so quickly that we cannot enforce our terms except by the blockade which is hell.<sup>159</sup>

In a private letter dated the same day he expressed his worry about the progress of the Conference and the next day he was depressed because the Conference was deteriorating rapidly. "The Hungarian revolution is nasty. . . ." <sup>160</sup> On March 25 General Tasker H. Bliss, a member of the American Delegation in Paris wrote in a similarly despondent mood to his wife:

Things here seem to grow blacker and blacker every day. . . . I don't wonder that the world is going Bolshevik. It is the last despairing cry of people who have lost all faith in their government.<sup>161</sup>

One day later, another American in Paris, the noted scholar James T. Shotwell, sounded the same trumpet: "Revolutions are in the air. The revolution in Hungary is just the beginning, most people here think." <sup>162</sup> On March 23 he had entrusted to his diary that a colleague of his and he himself

were feeling rather depressed with the news [from Hungary]. We had just learned of the outbreak of the troubles in Hungary, which, if they spread, may make waste paper of our conventions for a while to come. In short we felt almost as depressed as if our work were not going well.<sup>163</sup>

Yet on March 25 Shotwell had added these remarks which show that the Conference, while stunned, was not paralyzed into inaction, but rather resolved to clear the ground to cope with the new situation:

The news from Hungary of the new Soviet government makes the Peace Conference here sit up and get to work, and the first thing it does towards clearing up the situation is to stop the meetings of the Supreme Council [the Ten] and have Lloyd George, Orlando, Clémenceau, and Wilson take the whole matter in their own hands. . . .

He even found it to be "a distinct advantage in having the Magyar question get us back to realities." <sup>164</sup> That

the Hungarian turn of events was of concern to President Wilson is revealed by Herbert Hoover. At the President's special request Hoover submitted day-by-day accounts of Béla Kun's progress which he in turn received from Vienna.<sup>165</sup>

The Hungarian *coup* which shocked the West and the Paris Peace Conference, in turn delighted Soviet Russia and gave great encouragement to the Communist International, which at that very moment held its founding Congress in Moscow. Lenin, though soon warning that Hungary was only a small country, and that it could be easily strangled,<sup>166</sup> stressed on the other hand the great revolutionary significance of the Hungarian turn of events and extolled its stirring example.<sup>167</sup>

The proclamation of the dictatorship of the proletariat in Hungary was quickly followed by the withdrawal from Budapest of all Entente missions. The Western powers thus gave clear expression to their disapproval and mistrust. Official diplomatic relations between Soviet Hungary and the Entente were thus virtually nonexistent during the critical Soviet period. A few remaining contacts were provided by the presence of various individual Allied officials, though these were not authorized to act as Allied spokesmen and make any binding agreements. Among the most prominent agents of the Western powers in Hungary or nearby were the Italian Lieutenant-Colonel Romanelli and Prince Livio Borghese; the British Colonel Sir Thomas Cunningham and the American Professor A. C. Coolidge used neighboring Vienna as a base for their operation, visiting Budapest rather frequently. These men and their assistants served as eyes and ears of the Allied Powers, and their reports to Paris were given close and careful attention.

Though the new government was a challenge to the West, it never went so far as formally to cancel the armistice agreements. After the Soviet regime had been set up, Hungarian troops remained at the line of demarcation and did not attack the opposing troops of the neighboring states. Yet the army was quickly strengthened beyond the limits permitted in the armistice.

The *coup* in Hungary, which had startled the Peace Conference, had affected its business and very organization.<sup>168</sup> The Conference was now saddled with the problem of developing a policy toward the new Soviet republic. Since Soviet Hungary from its beginnings was evidently an outpost of Russian Bolshevism in the very heart of Europe and a definite challenge to the Western Powers and the Peace Conference, it was unlikely that the emerging Western policy *vis-à-vis* the

<sup>158</sup> Károlyi, *Fighting the world*, 333. Also Böhm, *op. cit.*, 352.

<sup>159</sup> Nicolson, H., *op. cit.*, 287.

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*, 287-288.

<sup>161</sup> Quoted by Palmer, *Bliss . . .*, 379.

<sup>162</sup> Shotwell, J. T., *At the Paris peace conference* 2: 227, New York, 1936.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*, 225.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*, 226.

<sup>165</sup> Hoover, H., *The ordeal of W. Wilson*, 137, New York, 1958.

<sup>166</sup> Lenin, *Sochin.*, 3rd ed., 24: 261, also 178.

<sup>167</sup> *Ibid.*, 178; also *ibid.*, 4th ed., 29: 245.

<sup>168</sup> Thompson, Chs. T., *The peace conference day by day*, 261-262.



new regime would be marked by a show of friendliness and toleration.

The very first days after the Soviet regime was set up in Budapest, the Paris Conference witnessed a debate on the principles of treating the vanquished nations, Hungary in particular. Lloyd George and Tardieu crossed swords and revealed a significant difference between the British and French point of view. In practice, however, in ignoring a belated appeal from elements of the Hungarian bourgeoisie and, more important, in opposing an ambitious military scheme devised by Foch and the French military—which aimed at crushing the Soviet Hungarian regime and simultaneously at organizing a major crusade against Bolshevik Russia—France and Britain linked their efforts, and were joined by the United States and Italy in forging a joint policy toward the new Soviet Hungarian government. This policy began to take shape only gradually. Neither initially nor later was it characterized by clarity of purpose, real unity, or firm resolve.

#### THE TREATMENT OF THE VANQUISHED AND BOLSHEVISM

The question of the peace treaties was in everybody's mind, both victors and vanquished as well as communists and anticommunists, indissolubly linked with Bolshevism. The communists in Russia hoped for the spread of Bolshevism westward to Central Europe where defeat had toppled dynasties, had already brought a political revolution, and had shaken the social order and added in depth to the revolutionary spirit. They seemed certain that the Entente imperialism would impose harsh and ruthless terms upon the defeated nations and equally confident that the bitter national disappointment combined with internal radicalism would turn the vanquished nations toward the path of social revolution and to alliance with the East.

The significance which the peace treaties would have for the internal political evolution of the defeated countries and their impact upon the direction of international politics was also perceived by the victorious nations. Some Western statesmen warned that only a considerate policy toward the vanquished nations would prevent the Bolshevik waves from flooding their countries. Stunned by the communist seizure of power in Hungary and apparently pondering about the Allied policies which had contributed to it, Lloyd George observed: "There will never be peace in South-East Europe if every little state now coming into being is to have a large Magyar Irredenta within its borders." Pointing toward Germany, he also warned that the German government would fall, if the terms were too severe. "And then look out for Bolshevism."<sup>169</sup> Lloyd George merely echoed numerous German and Austrian voices, which, in the attempt to make political capital out of the fall of the

Károlyi government in Hungary were quick to point out that only a generous treatment by the Allies, one, as they insisted, in accordance with President Wilson's solemn promises and in harmony with national self-determination, would be likely to save them from Bolshevism.

Real as the danger of Bolshevism was in many European countries in 1918–1919, as real was its abuse for obvious political reasons by numerous interested parties especially in the vanquished states. The Hungarian Archduke Joseph revealed privately: "With a little Bolshevism we shall pull ourselves out of the hole where the war has landed us."<sup>170</sup> In Belgrade, Wilhelm Böhm, a Social-Democratic member of the Hungarian delegation which had traveled there in early November to obtain more favorable armistice terms from General Franchet d'Esperey, warned that anarchy would seize Budapest,<sup>171</sup> if harsh terms were imposed upon the country. In the spring of 1919, Clémenceau was convinced that the Germans were using Bolshevism as "a bogey with which to frighten the Allies."<sup>172</sup>

This policy, in the opinion of Herbert Hoover, was also pursued by Michael Károlyi: "In February, 1919, Károlyi apparently got the notion that, if the country went Bolshevik, it would frighten the Peace Conference into supporting Hungary's claims more strongly."<sup>173</sup> Partly for this reason, Károlyi toyed virtually during his entire stewardship with the idea of resigning and having the country temporarily ruled by more radical, though not exclusively or predominantly Bolshevik, elements. Yet after the communist seizure of power, the argument that only a lenient treatment and moderate peace would save Hungary from social revolution had obviously lost some of the persuasiveness and power it had possessed earlier.

The Allied spokesmen for moderation toward Germany, Austria, and their vanquished allies, Hungary included, continued to justify this policy on the ground that the struggle against Bolshevism was the overriding issue to which all other considerations should be subordinated. Yet their opponents, the partisans of a sterner treatment of Germany, tried to bolster their case by pointing likewise to the need for combatting communism. The new states whose vital interests were

<sup>170</sup> Bonsal, Stephen, *Unfinished business*, 123, New York, 1944.

<sup>171</sup> Böhm, *Im Kreuzfeuer* . . . , 268.

<sup>172</sup> George, Lloyd D., *Memoirs of the peace conference* 1: 194, New Haven, 1939. Allizé, H., *Ma mission à Vienne (Mars 1919 août 1920)*, 78, Paris, 1933, pointed to Germany taking advantage of the Bolshevik menace to obtain better peace terms. See also the warnings of the German minister Gothein addressed to the Entente in an article in the *Vienna Neue Freie Presse*, *Abendblatt*, April 23, 1919, and that of the noted scholar Lujo Brentano in the same paper (*Morgenblatt*, April 20, 1919) as well as the interview in the same issue with Friedrich Ebert who said then: "Germany forms a dam against the flood approaching from the East."

<sup>173</sup> *The memoirs of Herbert Hoover*, 398, New York, 1952.

<sup>169</sup> Quoted by Tardieu, A., *The truth about the treaty*, 116, Indianapolis, 1924.

rather contrary to those of the Germans had to be courted and the wartime services of their peoples to be taken into consideration. Only by meeting the economic and strategic needs of the struggling new states, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and others, could the spread of Bolshevism to the eastern neighbors of Germany and other new states be prevented. Only thus could a first line of defense against Soviet Russia be erected, an anti-Bolshevik *cordon sanitaire* be established which could be relied upon to resist Russian and communist expansionism.

After the establishment of the Soviet regime in Hungary this argument gained in strength. Tardieu, Clémenceau's lieutenant at the Paris Peace Conference, attempting to refute the note of Lloyd George of March 26, 1919, wherein he had recommended a moderate policy in regard to Germany, drew up, at Clémenceau's instruction, a memorandum in which he wrote thus,

The Conference has decided to call to life a certain number of new States. Can it, without committing an injustice, sacrifice them out of regard for Germany by imposing upon them unacceptable frontiers? If these peoples—notably Poland and Bohemia—have so far resisted Bolshevism, they have done so by the development of national spirit. If we do violence to this sentiment, they will become the prey of Bolshevism and the only barrier now existing between Russian Bolshevism and German Bolshevism will be broken down.<sup>174</sup>

It was hardly accidental that both Lloyd George's appeal of March 26 for a more lenient policy toward a vanquished nation and Tardieu's reply for greater consideration toward the new states such as Poland and Czechoslovakia were made in the days directly following the startling communist victory in Budapest.

Fear of Bolshevism in 1918–1919 in vanquished and victorious countries was widespread and genuine. Virtually every party and country concerned used and abused it on the national and international scene. In his not always reliable account *The Inside Story of the Peace Conference* Dr. E. J. Dillon wrote most aptly:

During the Peace Conference Bolshevism played a large part in the world's affairs. By some of the eminent lawgivers there it was feared as a scourge; by others it was wielded as a weapon, and by a third set it was employed as a threat. Whenever a delegate of one of the lesser states felt that he was losing ground at the Peace Table, and that his country's demands were about to be whittled down as extravagant, he would point significantly to certain "foretokens" of an outbreak of Bolshevism in his country and class them as an inevitable consequence of the nation's disappointment. Thus the representative of nearly every state which had a territorial program declared that that program must be carried out if Bolshevism was to be averted there. "This or else Bolshevism" was the peroration of many a delegate's exposé.<sup>175</sup>

That fear of Bolshevism affected the peacemakers can hardly be denied, though by and large the delineation of Hungary's frontiers was little influenced by it.

Yet in justifying their respective positions, not only the vanquished nations but also the Great Powers and their smaller Central and East European friends tended to exaggerate the Bolshevik threat, which lent itself so well to propaganda in behalf of their national and territorial aspirations.

#### THE HUNGARIAN BOURGEOISIE, BÉLA KUN, AND THE WEST

The first news from Budapest had stunned the Conference and it took several days before the Hungarian situation was examined more closely and a few more days before a decision of limited support for Rumania was reached. Actually, even in the very first days a clear-cut policy on the part of the Allies toward the new Soviet regime seemed the more urgent, since some circles of the Hungarian "bourgeoisie," hard-pressed as they were, appealed for immediate action. It appears that a last-minute attempt was made by some leading spokesmen of the Hungarian middle class to prevent Kun's seizure of power, respectively to wrest it from his hands before he had firmly taken hold of the government. In a code telegram to Marshal Foch, dated March 22, General Franchet d'Esperey sent the following message:

Colonel Vyx has received from representatives of bourgeois parties declaration proposing either an alliance with the Entente against Russian Bolsheviks on condition that present lines of demarcation should be maintained and in that case the Allies should send 15,000 men to Budapest to allow government to maintain order, or in case of refusal from the Entente they would make an alliance with the Bolsheviks.<sup>176</sup>

The proposal which had all the earmarks of an ultimatum to the West was a well-aimed speculation at Allied fear of and hostility to Bolshevism. The threat, of course, to make an "alliance" with the Bolsheviks if the Entente left no alternative open to them was, in view of the fact that a Soviet government had already been set up and had excluded all bourgeois groups, rather an empty one. The spokesmen of the bourgeois parties concerned hoped that the Allies, face to face with the threat of Communism to Hungary, would be willing to reverse their unfavorable policy regarding Hungary and her lines of demarcation, specifically the policy adopted on February 26 which, when implemented, had brought about the resignation of the Károlyi government and the current crisis. That the Hungarian political leaders who had approached Colonel Vyx asked for 15,000 troops in addition, is indicative of their belief that more than a mere Allied turn-about was required to maintain, respectively to restore, order in Hungary.

It is difficult to ascertain whether the proposed suggestion of an alliance was given due attention by the Allies; they may well have considered the proposal as coming too late and the price as being too high. For

<sup>174</sup> Tardieu, *op. cit.*, 117.

<sup>175</sup> Dillon, *The inside story* . . . , 385.

<sup>176</sup> Miller, *My diary* . . . 17: 281.

several months they had shown little disposition of meeting the government of Michael Károlyi halfway, though they must have realized the peril of the Bolshevik alternative. It could not be expected that now they would not only change their course, but even send troops to Hungary—demands exceeding those of Károlyi while he had been at the helm. General Franchet D'Esperey received no reply from Paris.

#### FOCH'S ANTI-SOVIET SCHEME AND ITS REJECTION

The communist seizure of power in Hungary made the Hungarian question the first item on the agenda of the Paris Conference. According to a Havas report of March 25, the Supreme Council in Paris had immediately considered the military consequences of the Bolshevik Revolution in Hungary and the possible expansion of Bolshevism across Central Europe. It also raised at once the question of possible military support to Rumania which was geographically vulnerable and hard-pressed. When on March 25, 1919, the Council decided to have Marshal Foch make a report on aid to Rumania, the Allied Powers were by no means yet agreed as to the extent of such aid, the use it would be put to, or even committed to the concept of support of the Rumanian kingdom. Yet the military situation of Rumania, with the evacuation of Odessa impending, seemed perilous in those very days and Poland was even in worse military plight, since Lvov (Lemberg) was threatened at that time.

When on March 27 Marshal Foch made his report to the Council of Four, it soon became evident that he was bent on taking advantage of the latest turn of development, the Soviet Hungarian *coup* and its apparent threat to Rumania—which was already menaced from the east—to lay his grandiose anti-Bolshevik scheme before the Council. For some time he had been eager for a crusade against the Russian Bolsheviks. The plan which he submitted now was virtually the same he had offered to the Council of Ten on February 25.<sup>176a</sup> In presenting his new military plan concerning Soviet Hungary he took care to camouflage his ulterior purposes. Yet President Wilson, Lloyd George, and Clémenceau himself were alert to the wider implications of Foch's project and wary of being caught in the carefully laid out net.

<sup>176a</sup> Foch had then suggested the conclusion of "Preliminaries of Peace" with Germany in a fortnight's time and also with other enemy countries as soon as possible, which would enable the Allies to turn their full energies toward the solution of the Eastern questions. In order to subdue the Bolshevik forces in Russia and to occupy their territory, great numbers of troops were required, which could be obtained by mobilizing the Finns, Poles, Czechs, Roumanians and Greeks as well as the Russian pro-Allied elements. If these troops were placed under a single command, "1919 would see the end of Bolshevism, just as 1918 had seen the end of Prussianism" (*For. Rel. U. S., P. P. C. 4: 122*).

Foch pointed out that to halt the Bolshevik infiltration it was necessary to erect "a barrier in Poland and Rumania, closing the breach at Lemberg" and cleaning out "infected areas in the rear, such as Hungary, by assuring the maintenance of communications via Vienna."<sup>177</sup> Vienna ought to be occupied by Allied troops under an American commander. As far as Rumania was concerned, he recommended dispatch of supplies and equipment which the Rumanian army was lacking and also advised that the latter be placed under the command of a French general.

President Wilson immediately countered with the observation that though the Allies were "in accord about the aid to be given to the Rumanian army and about the evacuation of Odessa, which is linked to our action in Rumania," this document goes much further. What was proposed here was the beginning of a march eastward. The Allies had examined more than once the problem of military intervention against Soviet Russia, "and we always have arrived at the conclusion that we cannot consider military intervention." No clause in the Armistice gave the Allied Powers the right to occupy Vienna. Though the British general Sir Henry Wilson raised a question as to the President's interpretation of the Austro-Hungarian Armistice provisions, President Wilson insisted that the Powers limit themselves to the immediate object, namely to taking all necessary measures to strengthen Rumania without taking offensive action against anyone. He pointed to the phrase employed the other day by Marshal Foch himself, "It is necessary to reenforce the Rumanian fortress."

President Wilson's position and his interpretation of the position of the Council of Four toward the new Soviet Hungarian government and the Hungaro-Rumanian dispute was that the Great Powers should strengthen the Rumanian ally against Hungary without

<sup>177</sup> Mantoux, Paul, *Les délibérations du conseil des quatre*, 24 Mars–28 Juin, 1919, 2 vols., 1955 (Notes of the official interpreter); for the following see 1: 52–57. Foch's plan of March 27 which he presented to the Council of Four is virtually the same scheme that he had suggested to the Council of Ten on February 25 (*For. Rel. U. S., P. P. C. 4: 122*) and to the Supreme War Council on March 17, 1919 (*ibid.*, 379–384; see here Lloyd George's and Wilson's criticism of this plan, 380, 384). About Colonel House's opposition to Foch's scheme, see Thompson, *The peace conference . . .*, 273: "The President took issue with him [Foch] and finally disapproved. This practically ends the French project of a cordon against Bolshevism." See also Stein, *Die russische Frage auf der Pariser Friedenskonferenz 1919–1920*, Leipzig, 1953 (this is the German version of the Russian original, *Russkii vopros na parizhskoi mirnoi konferentsii, 1919–1920*, Moscow, 1949, which was not available to the author); on Foch's scheme, 162–163. Occupation of Austria-Hungary, of Vienna and Budapest in particular, was already seriously considered by Marshal Foch and General Diaz and Franchet d'Esperey in December, 1918 (*For. Rel. U. S., P. P. C.*, Dec. 22, 2: 215–216), prior to the establishment of the Soviet regime in Budapest, and the same scheme may then already have been linked with their anti-Soviet Russian plans.

taking any aggressive military action themselves. The major problem the future was to hold was whether a militarily bolstered Rumania would refrain from engaging in military action against Soviet Hungary, in view of the persistence of the Magyar Bolshevik menace from the west and of Hungary's territorial claims upon Transylvania.

Because of the general hostility to aggressive military plans against Soviet Russia and Soviet Hungary, Marshal Foch insisted that his taking precautions against an epidemic disease like Bolshevism, his desire to establish a *cordon sanitaire*, did not mean that he wished to prepare an offensive against Soviet Russia. Yet the leading Allied statesmen had little doubt as to Foch's ultimate goals. While Clémenceau was opposed to his military scheme, the Italian government sided with its military representatives in support of Foch's plan. In an official note to Clémenceau the Italian government had come out in favor of the occupation of Vienna, and at Paris Orlando quoted a telegram from Budapest which urged that the Powers save the situation through occupation of the Hungarian capital by Allied, though not Czech or Rumanian troops. General Diaz put forth claims to the occupation of the Austrian capital by Italian troops in case the Allies should decide to seize Vienna, yet Orlando favored the occupation of the city by an inter-Allied force.

In the eyes of Marshal Foch and other Allied military and political leaders the occupation of the Hungarian and Austrian capitals was necessary for the stabilization of Central Europe; beyond it, the occupation was part of a wider interventionist scheme against Soviet Russia. Though the British General Sir Henry Wilson conceded that the question of military action against Bolshevism was basically a political decision, he seemed to side with his French and Italian military colleagues. "The longer we procrastinate, the more difficult will the solution of the problem be," he warned. "The invasion of Bolshevism in Hungary has already strengthened the frontier which must be guarded by several hundreds of kilometers." Of all the military representatives, only the American General Bliss held out against militarily crushing Hungarian Bolshevism in its early days, in late March, 1919. It was necessary, he insisted, to distinguish between "revolutionary" and "Bolshevik." If one could be certain that the revolutionary movement originated in Russia, then obviously it was there that it ought to be killed. Yet the problem was actually more difficult. A *cordon sanitaire* might halt the Bolsheviks, but not Bolshevism.

#### PRESIDENT WILSON'S POSITION

This view, as the further debate in the Council of Four was to reveal, was then the very view of President Wilson himself. An intervention, according to the President, raised the question whether the Western Powers possessed the necessary troops and sufficient

material means for military action, and whether public sentiment supported such policy. Troops, at least the use of American troops, could not be depended upon, and public opinion in the West would definitely be opposed to any aggressive Allied move. The revolutionary movement in Europe and Bolshevism were not necessarily identical, "Bolshevism" covered many different things. There was doubt in the President's mind whether the revolutionary movement could be arrested with the help of the army. The latter might actually be infected, especially so since an element of sympathy existed toward the forces which one would oppose. Fighting Bolshevism was a formidable undertaking, made the more complicated by the circumstance that "we do not know fully what actually caused this movement." One of the causes was no doubt "the insecurity of the populations in regard to their future frontiers, in regard to the governments which they will have to obey and at the same time their misery, since they lack food, means of transport and work. . . . The only means to kill Bolshevism . . . is to fix the frontiers and to open all avenues to commerce," President Wilson concluded.

Once more the President reiterated his opposition to "the reconstitution of an eastern front, and this is what is proposed here once again." It was the much more limited question of provisioning Western troops in Odessa which had first been under examination.

To this question one replies with a plan which aims at the formation of a line stretching from the Baltic to the Black Sea. One talks about saving Hungary, which means crushing of Hungarian Bolshevism. *If this Bolshevism remains within its frontiers, it does not concern us.* The only problem which we had intended to solve today was that of aid to furnish to Rumania.<sup>177a</sup>

Clémenceau and Lloyd George strongly supported the position of President Wilson. While Clémenceau stressed the need for the Council to limit itself to aiding the Rumanian army with sufficient equipment to make it an effective fighting force, Lloyd George in particular echoed also President Wilson's view that a Hungarian revolution remaining within its frontiers ought not to be of concern to the Allies. He did not see why the Allies should suppress the revolution in Hungary. Referring to a recent account from a trusted source, there were, he asserted, few countries which have as much need of a revolution as Hungary.

Terminating the session of March 27, the Council decided to invite Marshal Foch to confine his proposals to such measures as were necessary to reinforce the Rumanian army and to bring about the evacuation of Odessa.

On April 1 the young British diplomat Harold Nicolson, a close observer of the fateful Allied moves and decisions at the time, entered in his diary: "It seems that the Supreme Council have given up the idea of sending

<sup>177a</sup> Italics by the author.

General Mangin to reduce Hungary with the help of the Rumanian army." <sup>178</sup>

In its first detailed consideration of the Soviet Hungarian *coup* and its implications for the international situation and the writing of the peace treaties, the Council of Four clearly rejected military intervention against Soviet Hungary as well as intervention on a grand scale against Soviet Russia, such as Marshal Foch planned under the guise of assisting Rumania against Soviet Hungary. The Allies, including the governments in Rome and Paris, though seemingly not the French military, were opposed to an intervention against Hungary either by their own forces or those of Hungary's neighbors, especially the Rumanians and Czechoslovaks; however, they made their position contingent on the nonaggressive character of Hungarian Bolshevism. Only the Italian government came out in support of the occupation both of Budapest and also of Vienna—since Austria in its view seemed to drift into the communist camp—yet in the end it endorsed the decision of the majority.

The final Allied decision was the resultant of numerous factors and considerations. Direct military intervention seemed then not feasible to the Entente. Demobilization had already proceeded at too fast a pace and public opinion was averse to intervention; for these reasons the Great Powers had already decided against a major military undertaking against the obviously greater Bolshevik menace of Soviet Russia. The Great Powers were then concealing the advanced stage of their demobilization even from their allies. People who had sympathized with the public demand for quick demobilization began, in view of recent events, to wonder whether the policy pursued had been a wise one. "We should have strengthened," wrote Harold Nicolson in his diary on March 27, 1919, "not weakened ourselves after its signature [that of the armistice]. In any case we cannot attack Bolshevism by force." <sup>179</sup>

There was also the belief among many in the West that a political and even a social revolution was needed in Hungary, and President Wilson himself expressed sympathy for the Hungarian people which, it was believed, was merely striving to improve its living conditions. Not only a noble humanitarianism but also ignorance of the true character, of the messianic revolutionary drive of Bolshevism and the naïve hope that Hungarian communism might stay within its frontiers shaped Allied policy. Finally, concern for public opinion, the concept of self-determination, and international law, influenced it too. If in the following weeks and months the Western Powers were to swerve from the charted course and at times seemed at the point of encouraging an intervention especially by Rumanian and Czechoslovakian troops, it was because of the accumulating evidence and their growing conviction that

Magyar Bolshevism was resolved to spread beyond the lines of demarcation, even beyond ethnic and historic lines, into the neighboring countries.

#### LIMITED ASSISTANCE TO RUMANIA

The session of the Council of Four on March 27 had clearly revealed that the Great Powers were willing to strengthen the defensive capacity of the Rumanian army. A strong independent Rumania could be depended upon to prevent Russian Bolshevism from flooding the Balkan. Yet Rumania's geographic position which made her a valuable ally also exposed her dangerously, especially after the Bolshevik seizure of power in neighboring Budapest. Support for the Rumanian army, which already was fighting Russian Bolshevism and might have to battle Russia's Hungarian ally in the very near future, seemed therefore justified to the Western Powers. The assistance, however, which the Allies had approved, was limited to extending financial help to Rumania, to dispatching material equipment, and to continuing the war blockade against Hungary. The Great Powers had rejected direct military intervention.

On March 31 the Rumanian government called upon the Allies to extend assistance to its hard-pressed army by accelerating the retreat of the Hungarian troops. Bratianu transmitted then to the General Secretary of the Paris Conference a telegram from Bucharest reporting a fresh powerful attack by Russia's Red Army. "It is absolutely indispensable," the telegram urged, "to hasten the retreat of the Hungarian troops beyond the neutral zone established by the Peace Conference to compel them to demobilize completely. It is only in this way that the Rumanian troops can successfully make resistance in the east." <sup>180</sup> The Rumanian government, skillfully linking the Russian and Hungarian issues and reminding the Allies of the continued service rendered by the Rumanian army in combatting Russian Bolshevism, urged Western help. The West should enforce its own demands which had been communicated to Hungary only a few days ago. Some of these Rumanian, i.e., Allied, demands were actually again presented to Budapest by General Smuts in the following days.

By the time Bratianu transmitted the foregoing telegram to the Allies, the latter, as was seen, had already reached the decision to supply Rumania with a certain quantity of material and equipment to enable her to take necessary military measures against threatening dangers as a result of the Bolshevik revolution in Hungary. <sup>181</sup> In these days the Allies were greatly concerned about extensive inroads of Bolshevism into many European countries. The very day the Kun government was set up, the Allies in Paris had agreed on sending General Haller's army from France to Poland to prevent the

<sup>178</sup> Nicolson, *op. cit.*, 292.

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.*, 290.

<sup>180</sup> Miller, *My diary* . . . 17: 374-375.

<sup>181</sup> OS, ex 146, Offizielle Berichte ueber die Friedenskonferenz bis 30. April, 1919.

spread of Bolshevism from Russia,<sup>182</sup> though Lloyd George had made it clear that these troops, once in Poland, were not to be used for aggressive purposes against Soviet Russia.

The British and French governments first "agreed with the Rumanian government to provide for the entire maintenance of the latter's army."<sup>183</sup> In the afternoon of March 27, 1919, Generals Foch, Wilson, Pershing, and other military representatives had participated in the session of the Council of the Four which had discussed the Hungarian situation. In the evening of the very same day, President Wilson summoned General Bliss to his residence. While the President raised in his conversation with him the question whether American law permitted him to furnish equipment to the Rumanian troops, he wanted him to provide him immediately with information as to whether any American surplus military stores were available in France.<sup>184</sup> According to General Bliss, the British and French expected "that the United States will not merely provide certain food, clothing, etc. for the Rumanian army, but will also share in all of the other expenses of its maintenance."<sup>185</sup>

Not only troops, but also food became a weapon in the Allied struggle against the expansion of Bolshevism. On March 27, a few days before Bavaria turned Bolshevik, the French foreign minister Pichon was willing to give Bavaria favored special treatment in regard to food, to prevent the developing of Bolshevism.<sup>186</sup> The following day Lord Robert Cecil revealed that on March 12 the Supreme Economic Council had resolved that all blockade and trade restrictions with German-Austria and Hungary should be abolished; yet in view of events that had lately taken place in Hungary<sup>187</sup> Cecil moved for adoption only of that part of the resolution relating to German-Austria, which was promptly passed. The Hungarian people were thus given to understand that political moderation, such as neighboring Austria displayed, was to be rewarded and political extremism, such as it itself had embraced, was to bring or to continue hardships and deprivations.

A few weeks later, on April 5, Herbert Hoover in a letter to President Wilson justified thus this policy:

If we put Hungary on precisely the same food basis as the other states, we shall lose our control of the situation in the surrounding states. We have ample indication that the restraining influence that we hold on these governments is effective, but, if the disturbing elements in Austria, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, etc. consider that they will be as secure as to food supplies after disturbance [Communist

revolutions] as before, our present potentiality to maintain the status quo of order is lost.<sup>188</sup>

President Wilson gave his express approval to this policy.

#### KUN'S FIRST MESSAGE TO PARIS

Only a few days after the Council of Four had first considered the new situation in Hungary, a communication of the new Hungarian government reached the Great Powers. Béla Kun, Commissar for Foreign Affairs, had transmitted an Aide-Memoire, dated March 24, to the Italian Prince Borghese in Budapest. The note had been brought to Orlando in Paris and was turned over by him to Lloyd George on March 29.<sup>189</sup> The first communication of the new Hungarian government to the Great Powers was significant and revealing both for its assertions and its denials. "The new Government of Hungary, the Council of Commissioners of the People," the note asserted, "recognize the validity of the Treaty of Armistice signed by the former government and do not think that the non-acceptance of the note presented by Colonel Vyx has infringed it." Though the recognition of the armistice by the Soviet government was of interest, the statement was highly ambiguous. It refrained from declaring positively that the Soviet government was willing to accept the Allied demand for withdrawal of the Red Army behind the new line of demarcation, a demand being, the Western Powers maintained, in accord with the armistice. When the new Hungarian government, the note asserted, had asked Russia to enter in an alliance with the Soviet Hungarian republic, it "has not thought that this might be interpreted as an expression of its desire to break all diplomatic intercourse with the Powers of the Entente." The alliance with Russia was not a formal diplomatic alliance, but was at the most an *entente cordiale*, a natural friendship justified by the identical construction of their respective constitutions, and had in no way any aggressive purpose. "The new Hungarian Republic, on the contrary, has a firm desire to live in peace with all the other Nations and to devote its activities to the peaceful social reorganization of its country." The social state to be constructed would not be hostile to other Nations. The Hungarian Socialist Party wished, on the contrary, to cooperate for the great human solidarity. The Soviet government was ready to "negotiate territorial questions on the basis of the principle of self-determination of the People and views territorial integrity solely as in conformity with that principle." These very same views were restated by members of the government to General Smuts in early April when he at the head of an Allied mission visited Budapest.

The purpose of the note of the Soviet Hungarian government was rather obvious. It was to soft-pedal Soviet

<sup>182</sup> *For. Rel. U. S., P. P. C. 4*: 424-427.

<sup>183</sup> Memorandum in the Bliss papers, quoted by Palmer, *Bliss . . .*, 377-378.

<sup>184</sup> *Papers of Tasker H. Bliss*, Library of Congress, box 65, letter to General Weygand, April 18, 1919.

<sup>185</sup> Memorandum, quoted by Palmer, *op. cit.*, 378.

<sup>186</sup> *For. Rel. U. S., P. P. C. 4*: 520.

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid.*, 522-523.

<sup>188</sup> Hoover, *The ordeal . . .*, 136.

<sup>189</sup> *For. Rel. U. S., P. P. C. 5*: 18.



Hungary's link-up with Soviet Russia—to the enemies of which the Allies then gave limited support—and to allay the fears of her neighbors and the Great Powers. While it assured them that the new government was not wedded to the idea of territorial integrity, it wished to negotiate territorial questions—a right not acceded to its predecessor; it wished to negotiate specifically on the basis of self-determination—a principle as important to President Wilson as to Lenin.<sup>190</sup> Negotiation on this basis might enable the Soviets to retain control of at least Magyar-inhabited disputed regions. The note was designed to open channels of communication to the West. Engaging in talks and negotiations with Budapest would make it more difficult for the Western Powers to undertake a military intervention against Soviet Hungary and might perhaps lead to a recognition of the Soviet regime, and to its strengthening. The communication ended with the assurance that the Soviet government would “gladly welcome a civil and diplomatic mission of the Entente in Budapest” and would “guarantee to it the right of extra-territoriality” and provide for its absolute safety. The latter remark may have been designed not only to give needed legal assurances, but also to wipe out the bad impression which the arrest of members of the Western diplomatic missions immediately after the Soviet coup in Budapest had made in Paris.

The major purpose of the Aide-Memoire transmitted by Budapest was to persuade the Allies of the moderate character of Hungarian Bolshevism in external and internal affairs. It found the Allies in a receptive mood and contributed to their early restraint in their dealings with Soviet Hungary. If Magyar Bolshevism was reasonable and moderate, Allied policy had to be similarly marked by reasonableness and moderation. The Allied attitude then found expression not only in the decision to strengthen the defensive capacity of the Rumanian army, without going so far as to encourage it to take the offensive, but also in the resolve, to be taken on March 31, after the receipt of Kun's note, to send a delegation headed by Field Marshal Smuts to Budapest. This mission, without recognizing the new government in behalf of the Allies, was to enter into discussions with it concerning matters of Allied concern.

#### THE QUESTION OF RECOGNITION

The question of recognition of the Soviet Hungarian government was broached in the session of the Council of Four on March 31 when Orlando referred to the foregoing letter from Prince Borghese brought by an Italian officer from Budapest. The new government expressed therein the wish for good relations with the Entente.<sup>191</sup> The Soviet Hungarian government evi-

dently hoped that the dispatch of an inter-allied mission to Budapest would signify Allied recognition and counted on thus strengthening its internal position as well as its relation *vis-à-vis* the hostile neighboring states. President Wilson, however, his mind always focused on the League of Nations, interpreted the suggestion of the Soviet Hungarian government to open talks with the Entente Powers as “its appeal to us not to be excluded from the League of Nations.”

The French Foreign Minister Pichon evaluated more realistically what seemed to him a feeler of the provisional government of Hungary and warned the Allies not to fall into the Soviet trap. The first act of the new Hungarian government had been to send word to Lenin and sign a pact of alliance with Soviet Russia, yet now the government denied the existence of such a treaty. It would be the worst possible mistake to enter with the Hungarian government into discussion, as it seemed to wish, of territorial questions which were of direct interest to the nationalities formerly oppressed by the Magyar nation. The Magyars had been the most bitter enemies of the Allied Powers.

It is an enemy who now offers us to negotiate, and to negotiate on matters of interest to nationalities which we have promised to liberate. . . . As far as Rumania in particular is concerned, we are bound more than ever to support her at a moment when we consider her a barrier against Bolshevism. . . . Are we entering against our allies in relations with a Soviet government? Would this be the beginning of negotiations with Russia?

This would be a new road which he, Pichon, could not travel.

Pichon's view that decisions on territorial questions lay only within the jurisdiction of the Peace Conference and could not be negotiated with the Soviet Hungarian government was the one which the Council was to adopt. President Wilson himself quickly agreed that the Allies “could not enter into diplomatic negotiations with Hungary to determine frontiers. . . . Other enemy states could ask for the same privilege.”

#### DISPUTE OVER A MISSION TO BUDAPEST

The Western Powers disapproved then both of direct and indirect military intervention in Hungary. On the other hand, they were determined to strengthen the Rumanian ally and neither ready to recognize the Soviet Hungarian government nor to enter with it into negotiation about vital territorial questions. Yet there was an undefined no-man's land between these positions, and it included the area of informal exchange of views between the Allies and the Soviet Hungarian government, especially for the purpose of ascertaining whether the Soviets would abide by the Armistice provisions and respect the new line of demarcation described in the ultimatum to their predecessor. The final decision to send a mission to Budapest was a kind of compromise between different points of view, a stop-gap measure rather than a policy itself.

<sup>190</sup> About national self-determination as a key concept in Lenin's thought on the nationality question, see A. D. Low, *Lenin on the question of nationality*, New York, 1958.

<sup>191</sup> See also for the following Mantoux, *op. cit.* 1: 98–99.



Lloyd George held that it might be advantageous to send a mission to Budapest to ascertain what was going on.<sup>192</sup> The same position was taken on other grounds by Secretary of State Lansing when he raised the question whether the last line of demarcation, the subject of the Allied ultimatum to the government of Michael Károlyi, had been just, and admitted a certain responsibility for what had happened in Hungary. This view, though quickly rejected by Pichon, was given support to some degree by Sonnino and President Wilson. The President endorsed the dispatch of a mission to Budapest with the foregoing limited purpose and warned of the great risk the Allies would run in taking too rigid an attitude and "pushing one country after the other into the arms of Bolshevism. The same danger," he asserted, "exists in Vienna. . . . If similar events repeat themselves, we won't have any peace, since we are not going to find anyone with whom to conclude it."

A feeling of guilt for having contributed by a faulty policy to the emergence of the Soviet Hungarian government lay heavily upon the Allied statesmen gathered in Paris. Error had been piled upon error. The Austro-Hungarian Armistice, the source of many Allied-Hungarian difficulties, had been drawn up, as Lloyd George admitted, somewhat hastily. The Allies had given little encouragement to the pro-Allied and democratic government of Michael Károlyi and their ultimatum of March, 1919, had finally triggered the chain of events climaxing in the establishment of a Soviet regime in Budapest. Discussing matters with the new government seemed to be a less risky course than refusing to talk with it; it was wise to have someone talk to the Magyars, as for instance Marshal Foch was speaking in the name of the Allies to the Germans. Besides, as President Wilson stressed, "the Budapest government had not yet been charged with crimes as we have reproached the Russian Bolsheviks," it was probably only a nationalistic government. All this spoke for the dispatch of an Allied mission to Budapest.

Yet the debate in the Council revealed, as Clémenceau was quick to note, contradictory views as to the task of the mission. President Wilson wanted to send someone to Budapest to make an inquiry, while Lloyd George wished to send there a military man to impose the Council's will. Yet both the President and Lloyd George were willing to make concessions to the other's tentatively taken position. When President Wilson admitted that it would indeed be advantageous if the head of the mission were a diplomat and a soldier, Lloyd George promptly suggested the name of Smuts. Thereupon Pichon remarked that his opposition had been confined to the Allies' entering into diplomatic relations with the Soviet Hungarian government.

Though the agreement on Marshal Smuts as head of

the mission to be sent to Budapest was unanimous, the exchange of views which followed did not fully clarify the position of the Council on the question of the neutral zone and the lines of demarcation. Thus the actual task of Smuts in Budapest was also not clearly delineated. While Sonnino held that the most important duty of the mission was to impose respect for the neutral zone—and thus for the Council and the Peace Conference—President Wilson indicated the possibility that, after due examination, the Allies might modify the neutral zone and that their representative could make recommendations along these lines. Sonnino, however, held this to be a dangerous precedent: "We would appear to yield." Yet President Wilson voiced his doubt "whether the delineation of this zone had been wise. It is possible that the lines are not what they should have been." However, he conceded to the other members of the Council who were aroused at the arrest of the members of the Allied Missions in Budapest and the violation of their rights that Marshal Smuts would have to ascertain exactly what has happened to them.<sup>192a</sup>

The apparent deadlock between Orlando and President Wilson in regard to the tasks of the mission to Budapest was for the moment ingeniously solved by Orlando when he pointed out that in its foregoing declaration the new Hungarian government had recognized the armistice. This reminder served the purpose of reestablishing superficial unison among the Allies by suppressing their apparent differences as to the future of the new line of demarcation. As a matter of fact, not only the Western Powers and Hungary's neighbors, but also all Hungarian parties, including Michael Károlyi and Béla Kun, acknowledged the Armistice. Where they differed, was in the interpretation of its clauses, in their view as to the legality especially of the last line of demarcation and of the ultimatum of March 20, 1919, and as to its conformity with the Armistice provisions. The recognition of the Armistice by the Soviet Hungarian government meant little as long as it remained uncertain whether the Soviet government would recognize the new line of demarcation as laid down in the ultimatum to the Károlyi government. To ascertain this matter was actually one of the tasks of the mission to Budapest.

Clémenceau aptly summed up that the Allies were agreed on sending General Smuts to Hungary for the purpose of investigating how the Allied missions had been treated and "examining[!] the question of the neutral zone." This rather vague wording left the question wide open as to whether the Council of Four would be willing to revise the zone's boundaries, as President Wilson was inclined to, or insist on their

<sup>192</sup> *Ibid.*, 100–104. When the name of Smuts was first suggested, Clémenceau opposed him (*For. Rel. U. S., P. P. C. 5: 16–17; March 29–30*).

<sup>192a</sup> Secretary Lansing was willing to soft-pedal this issue when he added to these remarks of the President: "One tells us that the provisional Hungarian government has only had them [the missions] arrested to assure their security," thus adopting the Soviet Hungarian apology to the Allies.

acceptance by the new Hungarian government, as the French and Italian representatives were resolved to. Because of the haze and ambiguity of the phraseology employed, the interpretation of the true task of the mission lay thus in the hands of General Smuts.

Harold Nicolson who was assigned to leaving with General Smuts has recorded that the objectives of the mission were far from clear even to the very participants themselves. On April 2 Nicolson remarked that Smuts' terms of reference were very vague, and later, when summing up, he still felt that the Allied whole purpose was obscure and illogical. Smuts, he held first, "is to see whether Béla Kun will accept the peace"; soon thereafter, however, he rather limited the ostensible purpose of the Allied mission to "fixing an armistice line between the Hungarians and the Rumanians." Then again he held that "the real idea at the back of the mission is to see whether B. Kun is worth using as a vehicle for getting into touch with Moscow."<sup>193</sup> And though Smuts talked a great deal with the other members of the mission, he said very little: "Smuts is very reserved, I cannot make out what his own view is."<sup>194</sup>

The dispatch of General Smuts to Budapest by the Paris Peace Conference clearly revealed the hesitation, the unwillingness of the Great Powers to react with firm resolve to the establishment of a Bolshevik government in the very heart of Central Europe, meeting it head-on with military intervention. General Bliss put it thus in his letter to his wife: "They [the Allies] must treat with them [Hungarian Bolsheviks] in some way or else fight them."<sup>195</sup> At the moment the Western Powers had reached the decision to treat with them through General Smuts.

## V. THE SMUTS MISSION—AMERICAN POSITION AND VIEWS

### GENERAL SMUTS AT BUDAPEST

Military intervention to crush Bolshevik Hungary by sending Rumanian troops into the country had been, as was seen, considered for a short moment, but was quickly abandoned. When later the Bolshevik danger increased and Hungary's neighbors felt threatened, the Allies were to consider again, and at greater length, the possibility of crushing Soviet Hungary. But their unwillingness to use forces of their own soon became apparent. President Wilson had already pointed out to Clémenceau and Lloyd George that, if troops were necessary to police any area which was either disputed or stirred up by social and political agitation, the United States would not be able to assist them.<sup>196</sup> The

British people and government hardly displayed more eagerness for military intervention, and the French government was soon to make it clear that it was not contemplating any military move against Soviet Hungary without the active military support of the Anglo-Saxon Powers. Commenting about the Entente's policy toward the new Soviet Hungarian Republic, the Austrian envoy in Budapest von Cnobloch called it disunited and unresolved.<sup>197</sup>

The next Allied step had been the dispatch of a peaceful mission to Budapest headed by General Smuts. It could be argued that the Allies' accord on sending the mission signified not an agreement on policy but rather postponement of a decision. In any case, much stock was set on Smuts' knowledge of men and his ability of appraising the Hungarian situation and the stability of the new regime. Yet by sending Smuts to Budapest and having him talk and possibly negotiate with Béla Kun and his government, the Allies had risked lending prestige to a shaky regime, strengthening it, and prolonging its life. Smuts, to avert this peril, carefully tried to avoid giving Kun and the Soviet government even the semblance of Allied recognition, approval, or of mere acquiescence toward it. During his stay in Budapest, Smuts did not even leave the railway station!

Nicolson writes thus:

Kun had requisitioned the *Hungaria* for us, the *Ritz* of Budapest. He has, it seems, hoisted a huge Union Jack and huge Tricolor on it, hoping to parade our presence as an advertisement that Paris had recognized him and come as suppliants to his capital. Smuts refuses to budge from the train. . . . He does not want us to enter the town or leave the station.<sup>198</sup>

Smuts and Kun met several times, though always in the train. General Smuts made it a point to let the head of the Hungarian government come to him and declined all invitations of the Soviet government, even a banquet in his honor.

Béla Kun, nevertheless, made the most of General Smut's visit to Budapest. The Hungarian press maintained silence about the odd circumstances surrounding his stay in Budapest and later also about his abrupt departure. Kun even told the Austrian envoy that Smuts had promised to return to Budapest within a few days in order to continue negotiations!<sup>199</sup> In an earlier statement to representatives of the press concerning his talks with General Smuts, Kun had stressed that the latter, staying in Budapest, had treated with them not in his capacity as soldier, but as a diplomat, and that negotiations were conducted in the most cordial spirit.<sup>200</sup> And *Népszava*, commenting on these talks, observed that until recently the Entente had refused

<sup>193</sup> Nicolson, *op. cit.*, 293.

<sup>194</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>195</sup> Memorandum, quoted by Palmer, *op. cit.*, 389, April 17, 1919.

<sup>196</sup> House and Seymour, eds., *What really happened at Paris*, 453.

<sup>197</sup> OS, Fasz. 262, Präsidialakte, folder: Sowietregierung in Ungarn. Die Position Österreich-Ungarns, May 24, 1919.

<sup>198</sup> Nicolson, *op. cit.*, 302, had the impression that Béla Kun wanted recognition "passionately"; also 300.

<sup>199</sup> OS, ex 913, Ungarn, Antwort auf Telegram No. 37.

<sup>200</sup> Quoted by Kaas and Lazarovics, *op. cit.*, 175.

to engage in any negotiations and had merely sent ultimatums; now, however, "the same Entente which had not deigned to have any dealings with the half-bourgeois Government of the People's Republic except through the medium of ultimatums," had entered into negotiations with the Soviet Republic.

No doubt a Hungary governed by a bourgeois administration would have pleased the bourgeois Entente better than a Soviet government. But Imperialism had no use for sentiment in politics. . . . Bourgeois Hungary had been feeble, therefore she had been made to feel the whip. The Soviet Republic was powerful, therefore it was being negotiated with.<sup>201</sup>

The new Soviet regime had indeed forced the Entente to give immediate attention to Hungarian problems and had thus succeeded where the Károlyi government had failed. While Michael Károlyi, in spite of his persistent attempts, had neither been invited to the Peace Conference, nor secured the visit of a high-placed Allied spokesman for exploratory talks or negotiations, now such a distinguished spokesman had been sent to Soviet-dominated Budapest. Much later, Michael Károlyi wrote similarly in his memoirs (1956), still in a bitter vein:

Indeed, under the shock of Bolshevism's first encroachment upon Europe, the Western powers started those negotiations with B. Kun which they had refused to take up with me. At last, Versailles took cognizance of Hungary's existence—General Smuts arrived in Budapest in April.<sup>202</sup>

Not only had no similar mission been sent to Budapest while the democratic and pro-Allied government headed by Michael Károlyi had held the uneasy reins, the very idea of a diplomatic mission had actually originated with the government of Béla Kun. It was broached in the Soviet government's Aide-Memoire of March 24 to Prince Borghese, which was transmitted to the Council of Four on March 29. The overconfidence which the Soviet Hungarian government displayed in the early April days in its dealings with Marshall Smuts rested no doubt on what it considered to be a significant Western concession to the Soviet point of view: the very dispatch of Smuts' diplomatic mission to Budapest.

#### SMUTS REPORTS TO PARIS

In two telegrams to Balfour dated April 4 and 6, 1919, General Smuts reported about his meeting with Béla Kun and two important members of the government, President Garbai and Commissar for Education Kunfi. In a long conversation with Kun on his arrival, he had explained that the line of demarcation of which Colonel Vyx had notified the Hungarian government was not intended to be a permanent political frontier and that the withdrawal of the Hungarian troops behind it

and the creation of a neutral zone occupied by Allied troops was necessary for the maintenance of peace and order and would in no way prejudice the Hungarian case. Béla Kun had replied that there were two chief reasons why the withdrawal was impossible. First, compliance with Colonel Vyx's orders

would involve the immediate fall of the Government, because large sections of the population attach great importance to territorial boundaries although the Government itself did not.<sup>202a</sup> He observed that the mere demand to withdraw had sealed the fate of the Government of Count Károlyi.

Secondly, if the Government ordered such a withdrawal it would not be obeyed and it was not willing to undertake an obligation which it knew that it could not fulfill. The reason of this was that the hold of the Government over the troops who were defending the territory in question was very slight. Those troops were local forces, mostly Szeklers. This plea is probably valid, since information from many trustworthy sources has reached me to the effect that the Government has but slight authority over the Provinces and that it is in the main effective only in the capital.<sup>203</sup>

If the West insisted on the withdrawal of the Hungarian troops, the Government would resign and, since there was no party capable of assuming power, chaos would ensue and the Entente would have to be prepared to run Hungary on its own responsibility, occupy Budapest and other districts as well as the neutral zone.

Kun remained adamant on the question of the military withdrawal, and even the hope held out that the removal of the blockade would bring great advantages to Hungary and that prosperity would be recovered by establishing friendly relations with the Entente did not make him change his stand. While the Hungarian government recognized the principles of nationality laid down by Mr. Wilson, accepted self-determination, and "renounced the ideals of territorial integrity formerly prevalent," it made clear that the definite settlement of the boundary questions ought not to be reached by the Great Powers at the Paris Peace Conference. Rather it should be agreed upon at meetings between representatives of the Hungarian, German, Austrian, Bohemian, Serbian, and Rumanian Governments, when the Entente Powers were not represented. (In his second telegram to Balfour two days later Smuts referred to a plan of the Hungarian Government relating to a conference of states bordering on Hungary, presided over by the Great Powers.) Béla Kun shrewdly suggested that Smuts himself might preside at these meetings "to which the Hungarian government would bring an accommodating spirit and willingness to make concessions from the

<sup>202a</sup> Later, according to Smuts, Kun observed again "that the question of food and others of a similar nature were more important to the Hungarian government than that of frontiers." The same point was also made by Kun the following days; see Smuts' second telegram to Balfour dated April 6. *For. Rel. U. S., P. P. C.* 5: 62.

<sup>203</sup> *Ibid.*, 41-43.

<sup>201</sup> *Népszava*, April 5, 1919, quoted by Kaas, *op. cit.*, 176.

<sup>202</sup> *Memoirs of M. Károlyi*, 152; the same view is expressed by Böhm, *op. cit.*, 312.

territorial point of view." Strangely condescending words coming from the government of a defeated nation. Equally overweening was the suggestion to make Vienna or Prague the meeting place for this conference.

#### SMUTS' RECOMMENDATIONS

Smuts recommended, somewhat naïvely, that Béla Kun's suggestion for a conference might be adopted at once, though he thought that it should be held in Paris. Germans, Austrians, and Hungarians should be invited to send representatives to Paris. The idea of an invitation to be extended to a Soviet Hungarian delegation, which was to crop up later and to cause confusion and dispute, if it did not originate with Smuts, was given early endorsement by him. All interested parties "could be called together in order to settle at least principles on which definite boundaries could be ultimately drawn, if not to decide the boundaries themselves." This recommendation seemed to ignore the extensive work done by the area experts of the Great Powers in the several territorial commissions which had been set up by the Peace Conference since its inception and which was then largely completed.

Smuts' account of his meeting with Béla Kun reveals the extent of the Allies' willingness to meet the Soviet Hungarian government. The Allies, as the Marshal's first message to Balfour shows, were unwilling to go back on their earlier ultimatum to Michael Károlyi and insisted on Magyar compliance with Colonel Vyx's line of demarcation, though assuring Kun that the latter would not be the permanent political frontier. From its conversations with General Smuts the Soviet Hungarian government must have had the impression that the Allies were willing to establish peaceful relations with it; in return for Hungarian withdrawal behind the Vyx line, they would lift the blockade and make it possible for the Soviet regime to restore prosperity and thus to perpetuate itself. That the first reaction of the Great Powers to the establishment of the Soviet Hungarian government was to plan its overthrow, appears thus to be a pure myth.

Béla Kun's recital of the reasons for the rejection of a Hungarian withdrawal seemed on the whole accurate. Béla Kun and his government were probably less keenly interested than other Magyar political groups in preserving territorial integrity, in view of the balance of power a rather hopeless goal in any case, but feared nationalist reaction if they would yield to the Entente after having posed first as defender of Magyar national interests. Yet given his adamant stand in the urgent question of an immediate military withdrawal, Kun wished to appear to the powerful Allies reasonable and conciliatory in other matters, especially in those which did not require immediate concessions on his part. If the Allies found Kun's self-portrait as a moderate, one less nationalistic than

other Magyar political leaders, convincing, they might perhaps be disposed to grant him favorable terms.

In his second telegram to Balfour dated April 6, 1919, Smuts revealed that he had made further concessions to the Soviet government. He had proposed to the Soviets a "new armistice line, running further east than Colonel Vyx's line, but nevertheless well to the west of the territory which the Rumanian Committee of the Conference assigned to Rumania in their report."<sup>204</sup> According to Smuts, the Hungarian Ministers, apparently Garbai and Kunfi, had been ready to sign the draft of an agreement which had already been drawn up, when, after consultation with their colleagues, they refused to do so, "saying that if they did so, civil war would break out in the neutral zone and the Government would fall at once." In their counterproposal they suggested that the Rumanians withdraw their forces behind the Maros River, the line laid down by General Franchet d'Esperey on November 13 when the Allies had signed a military convention with Hungary at Belgrade. Smuts, realizing that this would cause trouble with Rumania, at once rejected this proposal.

In conclusion Smuts expressed his conviction that the Soviets were not hostile to the Great Powers, that they were weak, and were rent by internal divisions likely to lead to their fall at an early date; he believed that they were too frightened to accept Colonel Vyx's line of demarcation. The Hungarian government wished that the blockade be lifted and that commodities most urgently needed such as fats and coal be imported; the latter he himself had already recommended. Though he did not suggest that the blockade be raised for the present, the Great Powers should, "as an earnest of their benevolent intentions, at once allow the trainload of fats . . . now held up by the Allied authorities at Agram, to proceed to Budapest." Hungary ought to be handled wisely and need not be considered by any means lost to the Allies. "The wisest course for us to take" would be "not to provoke a conflict over the armistice" but, "after hearing the Hungarians' statement in Paris or some other place, to settle the final political frontiers." The recommendation on writing an early peace, which was echoed soon at Paris, was as such a sound one. The Allies, however, proved in the end unwilling to invite Hungarian communists to Paris; nor did they seriously consider the ambiguous Soviet suggestion for a conference at some place other than Paris, which would have given the Soviet Hungarian delegation a status of equality with the other representatives and likely turned out to be an ideal propaganda tribune for the Soviets.

<sup>204</sup> *Ibid.*, 61-62. Report No. 1 of the Committee for the Study of Territorial Questions Relating to Rumania and Yugoslavia was not issued before April 6, the date Smuts sent the above telegram, but the proposed frontier between Rumania and Hungary had earlier been discussed in the meetings of the Committee and was, as the telegram indicates, known to Smuts.

To the degree that Smuts apparently believed that Soviet Hungary was not necessarily hostile and not yet lost to the West, Béla Kun and his colleagues, parading their reasonableness and moderation before their guest, had scored the hoped-for success, limited as it was. If subsequently President Wilson and Premier Lloyd George voiced the opinion that Béla Kun was one of the moderates in Budapest and implied that his foreign-policy course was also markedly more temperate and less intransigent than that of other politicians, it was a view which had received first authoritative expression by General Smuts.

#### SOVIET HUNGARY REJECTS THE ALLIED PROPOSALS

What General Smuts asked for was basically the acceptance by the Soviet government of the occupation of all of Transylvania by the Rumanian army and of the establishment of a neutral zone between Hungarian and Rumanian troops.<sup>205</sup> Yet Smuts' offer constituted an unquestionable improvement over the terms of the Vyx ultimatum.<sup>206</sup> The eastern line of demarcation was everywhere to be shifted in Hungary's favor to an extent of between 8 and 10 kilometers, at some places 20 kilometers, and it was asserted that the new line would have no influence upon the final peace terms. The new line left Debrecen in Hungary, and the cities of Arad, Nagy-Várad, and Szatmár which according to the Vyx ultimatum were to be occupied by Rumania were now placed inside the neutral zone.<sup>206a</sup> The latter was to be established immediately. Smuts also promised to propose to the Great Powers in Paris to raise the blockade at once. Hungary, on the other hand, had to observe the Armistice agreement and cease rearming.

In the Council of Ministers Béla Kun came out squarely against Smuts' peace offer. According to him, Smuts had placed the Hungarian Soviet Republic in a quandary, which was similar to the predicament of Soviet Russia at the time of the negotiations at Brest Litovsk. Yet, Kun pointed out, the new Soviet Hungarian Republic could not dare to accept another "Brest Litovsk," since nationalism, which had helped the Bolsheviks' seizure of power, would gain from such a peace sufficient counterrevolutionary strength to sweep away the new government and strangle the revolution.<sup>207</sup> He also warned that the acceptance of Smuts' proposals would mean a break with Russia. Yet he

<sup>205</sup> *Népszava*, April 17, 1919.

<sup>206</sup> Károlyi, *op. cit.*, called it later a "marked" improvement; he never had dreamt, he wrote somewhat exaggeratedly, that such "amazingly favorable conditions" would be offered to Béla Kun: "Had they been made to us, they would have prevented communism."

<sup>206a</sup> In the final treaty of Trianon these Magyar cities in the Magyar-inhabited territorial strip extending in a southwest-northeasterly direction were given to Rumania.

<sup>207</sup> Böhm, *op. cit.*, 316; also Nicolson, *op. cit.*, 299.

seemed to be confident that Smuts would be prepared to continue negotiations.

The Hungarian cabinet apparently held that many of the concessions made by Smuts represented merely personal promises and would not be binding on the Paris Peace Conference. More important perhaps, the attitude of the majority of the cabinet, as Böhm reveals, was influenced both by the international and internal Hungarian situation. News from Bavaria and the strike in the Ruhr buoyed the hope of the Soviet Hungarian government that Bolshevism would spread to other parts of Europe. Differences between Italy and Yugoslavia about Fiume strengthened its belief that the ring of hostile forces which then encircled Hungary was growing weaker. Last but not least, the overthrow of the social-democratic commissar Pogány in the wake of a communist-inspired armed demonstration of workers and soldiers in Budapest on the very day of General Smuts' arrival underlined the driving power of the radical and dominant communist wing in the coalition government.

Béla Kun's counterproposals, approved by the entire cabinet, were presented to General Smuts on the evening of the same day the latter had made his demands. Kun asked, as stated before, that the Rumanian army withdraw behind the Maros River. This had been the line of demarcation specified in the Belgrade Military Convention of November 13, 1918, a line which Rumanian troops had long crossed since. While Smuts had offered territorial concessions, Béla Kun and the Soviet government, interpreting this position as a sign of weakness of the Allied powers, insisted that the Rumanian army relinquish all territorial gains made since the November armistice, and that the Hungarian troops reoccupy a large portion of Transylvania proper, a province in which the Rumanians formed the majority of the population.

While assuring Smuts that the new Hungary was not insisting on territorial integrity, Béla Kun virtually nullified this apparent concession by opposing what he vaguely called imperialist conquest at Hungary's expense. His demand for guarantees that the workers' movement in the occupied areas was not to be persecuted, left the door wide open for revolutionary and nationalist agitation by the Hungarians and for a reconquest of the occupied regions at a later time. He, in turn, was willing to guarantee the protection of alien citizens in Hungary and their property. In his reply to Kun, Smuts was very frank and left little doubt that the Conference would not issue any order to the Rumanians to withdraw behind the Maros River.

While Kun and the Hungarian cabinet seem to have believed that this matter was still negotiable, Smuts, to the obvious surprise of his Hungarian guests, was determined to break off negotiations that very night. With exquisite courtesy Smuts conducted the Hungarian delegation, including Kun, out of the coach to

the platform and shook hands with them. "As they stand, the train gradually begins to move. Smuts brings his hand to the salute." Nicolson saw a "picture of four bewildered faces looking up in bland amazement."<sup>208</sup> The Hungarian communist leaders clearly were taken by surprise at this rupture in the negotiations and Smuts' sudden departure. In a mood compounded of revolutionary overconfidence, underestimation of Western determination and nationalist intransigence, they had turned down Smuts' proposals.

#### BOLSHEVIK OVERCONFIDENCE

In these early April days the Bolshevik government, emboldened by its still fresh and easy success, was riding high. Kun had wanted to prolong the talks with Smuts in the hope of spreading, in the meantime, Bolshevik propaganda into neighboring countries. He had pressed beyond the promised invitation of Soviet Hungary to the Paris Conference for a conference of Hungary with her neighbors to be held in Vienna or Prague, either of which seemed to hold out great propagandistic advantages. It was apparently also for this reason that Kun in his talks with Smuts had insisted on Hungary's right to send economic representatives to foreign countries. The self-assurance, the ebullience, of the Soviet government expressed itself in the mounting demands and in the delaying tactics of the communist leaders. Victory seemed to be in their grasp.

An article in *Vörös Ujsag* entitled "We are Strong" had this to say: "Our magnificent example will prove contagious, it will rouse the sleepers, encourage the irresolute, and spur the courageous to action."<sup>209</sup> The Bolshevik overconfidence was strengthened by the belief that the Powers of the Entente were rent by antagonism and would be unable to come to any agreement among themselves. At the moment Kun did not fear armed interference.<sup>210</sup> News from Paris of differences among the Allied Powers in regard to their policy toward Soviet Hungary appears to have reached Budapest and seems to have fortified Kun's and the Soviets' bold stand at the time of the Smuts visit. On April 9 *Vörös Ujsag* for instance discussed approvingly

<sup>208</sup> In his talks with Béla Kun, General Smuts had reached the "conclusion" "that Kun is of no importance or seriousness and that he is not capable of giving effect to any treaty (*ibid.*, 303). This was the view of some of the foreign consular officials in Budapest with whom Smuts had then spoken. They held, according to Nicolson, that "Kun is just an incident and not worth treating seriously" (302). See also Bonsal, *Unfinished business*, 78. There are several brief accounts of Smuts' trip to Budapest, for instance by his son, Smuts, J. C., *Jan Christian Smuts*, 209-211, New York, 1952, Kraus René, *Old Master. Life of Jan Christian Smuts*, 275-281, New York, 1944, and Crawford, F. S., *Jan Smuts*, 158-159, New York, 1953, but they are all based on Nicolson's story.

<sup>209</sup> Quoted by Kaas, *op. cit.*, 178.

<sup>210</sup> *Ibid.*, 183.

the report that England would not hear of an expedition against Bolshevism.<sup>211</sup>

An acceptance of the Smuts proposals furthermore would have cut Soviet Hungary's ties with Russia and precluded any help from the Soviet Union, a help which Soviet Hungary still expected in those days. It would have terminated Soviet Hungary's hopes of becoming the new center from which revolutionary propaganda and activities were to radiate. About three weeks after Smuts had departed from Budapest, Béla Kun pledged that "every one of our actions will be guided by the interests of the world revolution." It had also been on these grounds that Kun and the Soviet government had turned down Smuts' proposals.<sup>212</sup> Yet at the same time Béla Kun had given assurances to the Entente and to his own people, that Soviet Hungary did not consider herself at war with the Entente.<sup>213</sup>

An acceptance of the proposals of General Smuts would have signified abandonment of Transylvania—a heavy political liability—since the promise that the line of demarcation would have no bearing upon the final determination of the political boundaries was by its very nature a doubtful one. But a neutral zone would have offered a measure of guarantee to Soviet Hungary against further Rumanian encroachments and would have given international recognition and prestige to the new regime. On the other hand, it would have imposed upon Soviet Hungary the obligation of carrying on peaceful relations with her neighbors, of refraining from spreading revolutionary propaganda abroad, from engaging in nationalist activities in the disputed regions, and from offering, through her troop movements, indirect assistance to the struggling Soviet Russian regime. It may perhaps be argued that in early April, 1919, the Hungarian government and nation, owing partly to revolutionary desires and partly territorial ambitions, were unable to make a rational choice. The new government had been swept to power on a tremendous wave of national resentment, and continued to be supported by Hungarian nationalists, critical though they were of the economic and social program of the Bolsheviks. Under these circumstances, the Kun government, whose very formation had been a challenge of Hungarian nationalism to the Western powers, was, as it indeed asserted, in no position to accept Smuts' proposals and had to reject territorial losses not markedly less grievous than those imposed by the Vyx ultimatum which had proved unacceptable to its predecessor. The Soviet government might not have survived the acceptance of the Smuts proposals.

From his visit to Budapest, Smuts, as Harold Nicolson reported, had gained the conviction that Béla Kun and Hungarian Bolshevism were not a serious

<sup>211</sup> Quoted *ibid.*, 184.

<sup>212</sup> *Kun Béla . . .*, 180.

<sup>213</sup> *Ibid.*, 169-170.

menace and could not last.<sup>214</sup> The very same words were ascribed to Smuts by another witness of the General's journey to Hungary, Stephen Bonsal: "It is clear that Béla Kun will not last long and I am advising Paris to assume a waiting attitude."<sup>215</sup> Since the Soviet government had rejected Smuts' propositions, the latter held that his mission had failed. However, in view of the uncertain future of this government, Smuts did not seem overly concerned. His recommendations to the Council in Paris were in accordance with his view that the Soviet regime was a transitory phenomenon.<sup>216</sup> And though public opinion in the Western countries and their lack of military and psychological preparedness were largely responsible for the Allied Hungarian policy which was adopted, Smuts' low opinion of the Soviet government's chances of longevity helped to shape it. He seemed to offer a rationalization of the then prevailing attitude toward the Soviet government—an attitude which was rooted in hostility and mistrust of Bolshevism, but also based on reluctance of becoming involved in a new war. Smuts' conclusions lent themselves to a justification of a policy short of direct military intervention on the part of the Great Powers.

The rejection of Smuts' proposals turned out to be a blow for the young Soviet Republic which ultimately was to lead to its destruction. Yet under the given circumstances, the existing internal and external balance of power, defeat of the Soviet Hungarian regime in 1919 was probably inevitable. In any case, the break with the Entente was now complete.

Only a few days after General Smuts' propositions had been turned down, the military offensive of the Rumanian troops, to whom the Allies had just promised new material support, began in earnest and was soon in full swing. There is no evidence, however, that the Big Four in Paris gave any direct order or indirect encouragement to the Rumanian army to take the offensive against the Hungarian lines, though there were widespread rumors that French army leaders favored the Rumanian move. Rumania, anxious to occupy all of Transylvania and even areas beyond it, needed little encouragement from the West.

#### THE AMERICAN DELEGATION OPPOSES MILITARY INTERVENTION

The delegations of the Great Powers had unanimously rejected direct military intervention against the new Soviet Hungarian Republic in late March, 1919. Many among the American delegation suspected, however, the French military, as distinguished from the French government, of pulling the wires for inter-

vention behind the scenes.<sup>217</sup> Some members of the American delegation, including Secretary of State Lansing and General Bliss, not only opposed, as did also President Wilson, the idea of a crusade against Soviet Hungary, but were even prepared to disavow the recent joint Allied decision regarding Transylvania; it was this decision, reached on February 26, 1919, which had led to the ultimatum to Hungary and thus to the overthrow of the pro-Allied government of Michael Károlyi.

If confusion and lack of policy seemed to characterize the Allies' first response to the Hungarian events, the American delegation was equally bewildered. Its first reaction showed a strong inclination toward a hands-off policy, at least as far as the involvement of American troops was concerned; this in spite of the advice to the contrary of American and other observers on the spot.

On March 27 Professor A. C. Coolidge, head of the American Mission in Vienna, and Captain Nicholas Roosevelt were invited to Paris to the meeting of the American Commissioners Plenipotentiary. Present were Secretary of State Robert Lansing, General Bliss, Henry White, and Christian Herter. At Lansing's request, Captain Roosevelt who had left Budapest the day after the Soviet government had been set up in the Hungarian capital explained the reasons for the resignation of the Károlyi government, pointing out that successive steps taken by the Allied and Associated governments had aroused a very strong national feeling of resentment among the Hungarians and had thus brought about the recent *coup d'état*.

When Secretary Lansing inquired "what action Professor Coolidge and Captain Roosevelt now believed to be proper under the circumstances," Captain Roosevelt explained,

that before they left Budapest the officer representing Great Britain on the Inter-Allied Mission there had told him that 10,000 Allied troops would be enough. If it were possible to send these, Captain Roosevelt felt that the problem could be solved. If, however, these could not be sent, it would be possible to allow the Czechs and Rumanians to declare war on the Hungarians, in which case a very cruel and bloody war would undoubtedly ensue. Mr. Lansing felt that the first alternative would be undesirable since we have had disastrous results in each case where we had sent a small body of troops to settle conditions in some restless locality. The second alternative, however, appears even worse since it would merely mean the beginning of a series of wars in Central Europe which would antagonize the peoples to a greater extent than they were antagonized already.<sup>218</sup>

#### GENERAL BLISS CRITICIZES THE NEW LINE OF DEMARCATION

The two alternatives mentioned, either direct Allied military intervention or intervention by proxy through Czech and Rumanian troops, were then both clearly

<sup>214</sup> Nicolson, *op. cit.*, 307.

<sup>215</sup> Bonsal, *op. cit.*; see part iv: With General Smuts to Southeastern Europe.

<sup>216</sup> Mantoux, *op. cit.* 1: 166-167.

<sup>217</sup> *Papers of T. H. Bliss*, Lib. of Congress, box 65, Diary I, April 11, 1919.

<sup>218</sup> *For. Rel. U. S., P. P. C.* 11: 134-135.



rejected by Secretary Lansing, as they were rejected at that very moment by President Wilson in the Council of Four. This left the way open either for a complete hands-off policy or for trying to obtain either the observance of the new lines of demarcation or the overthrow of the Soviet government by other than military means, by diplomatic and economic pressure.

General Bliss states that he felt very strongly that we had no reason to change our attitude towards Hungary merely because a change of government had occurred there which did not suit us very well. He stated that if the present government maintained order, there is no reason why we should not deal with it just as we had with the previous government. Moreover, if the present government refused to obey the injunction of the Peace Conference and retired its troops behind the designated neutral zone, but preferred to fight with the Rumanians, we should then refuse to give any assistance to the Rumanians. . . . The line of the neutral zone which had been drawn was absolutely unjust, and we should not make matters worse by enforcing an extremely unjust decision in regard to the boundaries of Hungary. Furthermore, if we sent troops to assist the Rumanians against the Hungarians we would have made the first step toward involving the American army into a series of European wars which would rapidly stretch from the Atlantic to the Ural mountains.

The Commissioners realized how difficult it would be to revoke a decision which had formerly been reached by the Peace Conference but felt that whereas we had once been fooled into agreeing to a rotten decision, we should no longer have the injustice of backing it up by force of arms. They felt that the whole situation should be put up to the President immediately. General Bliss agreed to draft a memorandum for the President on the whole subject, but assured the other Commissioners that if he drafted the memorandum it would be red hot. Mr. White and Mr. Lansing assured him that they would back him up on everything that he wrote, as it could not exaggerate their feelings in the matter. Mr. Lansing also agreed to telephone immediately to the President to request that no decision be arrived at the Quai d'Orsay until the President had received General Bliss' memorandum.<sup>219</sup>

The following day General Bliss had penned this memorandum to President Wilson:

I think that it [the Hungarian development] brings you face to face with the greatest decision yet called for at the Peace Conference. If carried into execution, it means the resumption of general war and the probable dissolution of the Peace Conference.<sup>220</sup>

The position of General Bliss and of Secretary Lansing was then based on the conviction that the recent decision of the Peace Conference ought to be repudiated not only because of its inherent injustice, but also because of the likelihood that it would involve

<sup>219</sup> *Ibid.*, 135. There appears to be a personal reason why Bliss so sharply criticized the Allied decision of February 26. He himself had then committed an error. While Professors Seymour and Day had urged him to oppose the Allied decision of February 26, he had signed it in the Supreme Council, "unaware" that he thus sanctioned an action which he actually opposed (see N. Roosevelt, *A front row seat*, 104-105, Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 1953).

<sup>220</sup> Baker, R. St., *Woodrow Wilson and world settlement* 3: 239-241, New York, 1922.

the United States in a series of wars in Central Europe. It was also based upon the assumption that the change of government such as the one that had occurred in Hungary did not necessitate a change of attitude towards Hungary, since it was held not likely to affect adversely United States' interests. Some of these assumptions, while accepted by the American Ministers Plenipotentiary, including Lansing, were, however, questioned by others, including many Americans, frequently repudiated in the following weeks and months, and finally abandoned by Lansing himself.

The criticism of the Allied decision taken on February 26, as expressed by Bliss, Secretary Lansing and other Americans, did relate to the new line of demarcation and to the neutral zone, and not directly to the already widely anticipated transfer of Transylvania proper to Rumania. By this time it must have been known to these American spokesmen that already in January—exactly on January 21—the United States experts working on the Transylvania problem had made the recommendation that all of Transylvania was to be given to Rumania, a recommendation which was reached on the basis of ethnic and other considerations. The foregoing criticism by some influential Americans was, on the whole, rather limited to the particular decision of the Supreme Council in late February, 1919, which had brought about the Vyx ultimatum and was considered responsible for the Hungarian crisis. It was confined to the demand for the further withdrawal of Hungarian troops, for the creation out of the vacated area of a neutral zone, and for a line of demarcation that disregarded completely ethnic considerations and was interpreted by the Hungarians, as Bliss had put it, as a "recognition by the Supreme Council of the Treaty of 1916." American criticism was also prompted by the determined opposition to any American intervention which it was feared might result from the earlier joint Allied decision. "We shall be committing ourselves," Bliss had written in the Memorandum of March 27, in implementing the Allied decision of late February, 1919 "to a war of enormous magnitude and indefinite duration," to a war "which will have to be financed entirely by us and one in which, because of the war-weariness of the peoples of our allies, we may find ourselves standing alone."<sup>221</sup>

There seems little doubt that the Supreme Council in its decision of February 25, 1919, had made an ethnically unjust decision, and one which was fraught with serious consequences to the peoples of Central Europe and to the Entente itself.

Secretary Lansing's and General Bliss' criticism of the particular line in question was well founded. What was not brought out by the critics in this context, however, was the far-reaching moral, perhaps not legal, American obligation toward Rumania, since the United States in the early November days of 1918

<sup>221</sup> *Ibid.*

had urged Rumania to reenter the war and had held out territorial promises to her. Yet both Secretary Lansing and General Bliss, while criticizing the particular decision of the Supreme Council of February 25, 1919, remained silent about Rumania's claims and rights to Transylvania itself.

The significance of the memorandum of General Bliss lies in that it represents the immediate American reaction to the events in Budapest to which, it was believed, a misguided Allied policy had substantially contributed, if it had not primarily caused it. It also gave expression to the strong American opposition to intervention against Soviet Hungary which in the session of the Council of Four had found then also an eloquent spokesman in President Wilson.

#### THE AMERICAN COMMISSIONERS AND PRESIDENT WILSON

On the same day, March 27, that Secretary Lansing and General Bliss in the meeting of the American Commissioners Plenipotentiary voiced their criticism of the joint Allied decision of February 25, 1919, concerning the new line of demarcation and the neutral zone, President Wilson in the Council of Four vetoed Foch's scheme for a grandiose campaign against both Soviet Russia and Soviet Hungary.

When on March 28 General Bliss in the name of the American Commissioners had written to President Wilson warning him that in determining Allied policy toward Soviet Hungary he was facing the greatest decision yet called for at the Peace Conference, he was apparently unaware that on the previous day the President had turned down the idea of direct and indirect intervention against Soviet Hungary, not to mention the ambitious project of a major all-European crusade against Soviet Russia.

A comparison of the position by Secretary of State Lansing and General Bliss *vis-à-vis* Soviet Hungary in the session of the American Commissioners Plenipotentiary with that of President Wilson in the Council of Four appears rather instructive. They were agreed in their opposition to any kind of intervention against Soviet Hungary and were hopeful that Magyar Bolshevism would stay within its frontiers; they also were ready to concede past mistakes. Lansing and Bliss however wanted the decision of the Supreme Council of February 25, 1919, revoked, while President Wilson did not make any suggestion of this kind. The Council's decision after all had been a unanimous one and, besides, its cancellation would have given a tremendous boost to the Soviet Hungarian regime. Ignoring it, as the American Commissioners seemed to recommend, would also have been fraught with danger in regard to Allied unity and world respect for the Allies and their reputation for wisdom and firmness. The Council of Four, with the President taking a leading role, was soon to dispatch General

Smuts to Budapest and to make it clear to him that, while the neutral zone and the new line of demarcation might possibly be modified in details, the order of the Supreme Council of February 25, 1919, could be neither annulled nor ignored, but would rather have to be the starting point for all discussions. In this important matter the American Commissioners and General Bliss' letter to President Wilson in particular had apparently not influenced the President's decision.

#### OTHER AMERICAN AND NON-AMERICAN VIEWS

The meeting of the American Commissioners Plenipotentiary in Paris on March 27 had sharply criticized Allied policy toward Hungary. Yet other voices which, while not exculpating the West and past policies, pointed to the potential, even acute, menace of Soviet Hungary as the major problem of the Allies, made themselves heard too. Many people feared less American and Allied involvement in Hungarian affairs and more the consequences of Allied passivity and inactivity in face of the real Magyar threat to the political and social stability of Central Europe and to the work of the Peace Conference. Hungary's challenge of the orders emanating from Paris augured ill in regard to Budapest's willingness to accept the final boundaries agreed on by the peacemakers in Paris. A good number of American and Allied observers, while not in favor of Allied military action, did not on the other hand hold the Hungarian Bolsheviks politically innocent, spurning force and violence. They rather feared, as did Herbert Hoover, that they would "undertake large military crusades in an attempt to impose their doctrines on other defenseless people." Hoover favored, therefore, a policy of nonrecognition of this "murderous tyranny"<sup>222</sup> and the use also of economic weapons against it, but like President Wilson and the American Delegation rejected the concept of military intervention of the Great Powers against Hungary.<sup>223</sup> What was to come about was a military intervention by Hungary's neighbors, states associated with and kindly disposed to the Allies, an intervention partly abetted by some of them, though not consistently pressed and often even stopped, a struggle in which the Allies were more vigorously to intervene only with their ultimatum of June 13.

#### THE AMERICAN DELEGATION AND THE FRENCH MILITARY

General Bliss and the American Delegation suspected Marshal Foch and the French military of ulterior purposes and of pursuing unwarranted and risky pet military projects. During the months of February and March, 1919, the latter were interested in the dispatch of Allied, especially Polish and Rumanian

<sup>222</sup> Hoover, *Ordeal* . . . , 118-119.

<sup>223</sup> *Ibid.*; also 137.

troops to Poland to save not only Lemberg and bolster a faltering government against the threat from the East, but apparently also for the purpose of staging subsequently from the thus fortified Polish base an invasion of Soviet Russia.<sup>224</sup> These troops were to be sent through Danzig, and the French military was bent on presenting an ultimatum to the German government, if it should refuse the landing of Allied troops in this port. Yet this scheme was blocked in Paris on March 17. The American Delegation and especially General Bliss suspected that the steady Rumanian advance into Hungary was closely tied up with this military plan and that it had been encouraged by the French military.

Bliss now voiced the suspicion that there was a connection between the two dates, March 17, when Foch's scheme to come to Poland's assistance at Lemberg had been defeated, and March 20, when suddenly the Allied decision of February 26 regarding new lines of demarcation for Rumania and Hungary and a neutral zone between them, dormant since, was suddenly presented at Budapest, "although it must have been known that it would cause an explosion."<sup>225</sup>

General Bliss even went so far as to express the following view:

Every evidence in these secret documents goes to prove clearly that the French military and diplomatic authorities not only welcomed but stimulated this outcome [Soviet revolution in Hungary] with the idea of forcing military action and military settlements.

It looks, he concluded,

as though, either through the action in respect to the port of Danzig, or through both of these means, it was determined to break off the general armistice, both with Germany and with the Austro-Hungarian States. The United States is being dragged into a resumption of the war through the fact that all negotiations or dealings with the enemy are in the hands of the French.

General Bliss held it probable that these militarist intrigues took place behind Clémenceau's back and by elements more or less hostile to him.<sup>226</sup> He ended by charging that the Bolshevik seizure of power in Hungary was the direct result of action by the Supreme Council on February 26, 1919, an action politically unwise and one that could not be justified morally before

<sup>224</sup> In a letter of February 26 to the American Commission, General Bliss had already expressed the opinion that Foch planned preparations "for waging war on Russia" (Palmer, F., *Bliss, peacemaker*, 378). About the French military's anti-communist and anti-Hungarian plans and moves, see also *The memoirs of Hoover*, 399.

<sup>225</sup> Bliss' statement is quoted in Baker, *op. cit.*, 29.

<sup>226</sup> *Ibid.*, 30-31. In *Grandeur and misery*, 149, New York, 1932, Clémenceau, G., referred to "our excellent General Bliss, an independent mind who had well-anchored personal opinions and never budged from them." Not all French military men seemed to have been in favor of intervention against Hungary, as General Bliss claimed (Baker, R. St., *Wilson and world settlement* 3: 244).

the people of the United States. General Bliss also urged that the United States not only refuse participation in any armed intervention for the purpose of enforcing the decision of the Supreme Council of February 26, but also that it insist on reversal of this decision.

The very day, March 27, General Bliss voiced the foregoing views, in particular his suspicion of Marshal Foch and the French military, Foch, as was seen earlier, addressing the Council of Four concerning the Hungarian developments, revealed again his interest in undertaking a general European crusade against Soviet Russia, the erection of a barrier, a *cordon sanitaire* against Soviet Russia comprising Poland and Rumania, and pointed to the need of disinfecting the rear of these countries, primarily Hungary. Yet the Council quickly accepted President Wilson's suggestion to limit itself to strengthening the Rumanian army against the new Magyar Bolshevik threat and rejected Foch's ambitious and far-reaching scheme.

Yet General Bliss seemed to go farther than the evidence pointed when he accused the French military of having planned and correctly anticipated the Hungarian reaction to the Vyx ultimatum, their embrace thereupon of Bolshevik radicalism. By the same token, and perhaps with more justification, he might have accused all the Big Four of the very same crime, since it was of course this body which, though knowing all pertinent facts, had made the fateful decision on February 25, 1919, regarding the new line of demarcation.

#### AMERICAN EXPERTS ON TRANSYLVANIA

The views advanced by General Bliss and many other Americans in late March, 1919, were highly critical of the recent joint Allied decision regarding the new line of demarcation in Transylvania which was based upon the wartime pledge. The criticism was no doubt sharpened since it was believed that the Allied ultimatum, based on the earlier decision, was largely responsible for the communist *coup* in Hungary.<sup>227</sup> Bliss' criticism was basically confined to the specific line of demarcation, though, admittedly, an odd silence was maintained in regard to Rumania's claims to Transylvania proper. It was a fact, however, and no doubt known to the American critics, that the United States had already virtually endorsed the principle of the cession of Transylvania proper to Rumania early in

<sup>227</sup> Yet some of the best-informed students, and at the same time participants, of the crucial events in Hungary in 1918-1919, Károlyi and Böhm in their above works and Jászi, O., *Revolution and counterrevolution in Hungary*, London, 1924, stressed that the Bolshevik interlude in the spring of 1919 was primarily the result of the internal political and social struggle, though none of them minimized what he considered Allied miscalculations and mistakes in bringing matters in Hungary to the Bolshevik climax.

1919 and thus approximated in this point the position of the Entente.<sup>228</sup>

"The first concrete and recorded plan for the new frontiers of Hungary seems to have been formulated by members of the American Peace Delegation," writes Francis Déák in his study *Hungary at the Paris Peace Conference, 1942*.<sup>229</sup> The American report had been completed on January 21, 1919. The American recommendations, the result of a thorough study and careful deliberations which had extended over a year, had been worked out by the Intelligence Section of which Dr. Isaiah Bowman was the executive officer. The report had recommended the inclusion of more than half a million Hungarians in the Czechoslovakian state and had assigned all of Transylvania to Rumania. According to the American proposals, Hungary was to retain only half of her pre-war area and population.<sup>230</sup> The American experts were keenly aware that their recommendation was based upon a departure from the ethnic principle, but justified it on the ground that the landlocked new Czechoslovakian Republic had to be given a commercial outlet to the Danube and, in the case of Transylvania, that large masses of the Magyar population (Szeklers) were geographically separated from the bulk of the Magyar people in Hungary proper; the inclusion of Hungarian minorities in neighboring states was held to be unavoidable. A major consideration of the American delegation in making its recommendation regarding Hungary's boundaries was to satisfy the

vital economic needs of the new states.<sup>231</sup> In drawing the boundaries for Rumania and Czechoslovakia, the Great Powers were intent on assuring them adequate railway transportation, linking also both states with each other.<sup>232</sup>

Yet the American line of demarcation, virtually identical with the one ultimately accepted, was much more favorable to Hungary than the decision of the Supreme Council of February 25, 1919, though it too did not coincide with the ethnic line, and, besides, left about half a million Hungarian-speaking Szeklers in eastern Transylvania with Rumania.

It is somewhat puzzling that in their meeting on Hungary on March 27 the American Commissioners made no reference whatsoever to the recommendations of the American experts regarding the Hungaro-Rumanian frontier. Somewhere along the line there must have been a lack of correlation between them. This appears to be evident also in the following incident occurring several weeks later at which time American policy regarding Hungary and Rumania reached the critical point of final decision.

#### SECRETARY LANSING WITHDRAWS HIS CRITICISM

For a brief moment in early May, Secretary Lansing, seemingly inadequately informed of the position of the American experts on the territorial Committee, came out against what he still considered an unjust decision in regard to Transylvania. Yet when confronted with the views and considerations of the other foreign ministers, he quickly abandoned his opposition. In a meeting of the foreign ministers on May 8, Pichon asked Tardieu as chairman of the Commission on Rumanian and Yugoslav Affairs, which had just completed its work on the Hungarian frontiers with Rumania and Yugoslavia, to explain the findings of the committee. Tardieu pointed out that the final recommendations of the committee differed substantially from the demands of the Rumanian delegation. When in reply to further questions he explained that "some 600,000 Hungarians would remain under Rumanian rule, while some 25,000 Rumanians would remain within Hungary," Lansing expressed the view that "this distribution did not appear very just: in every case the decision seemed to have been given against the Hungarians." Yet Tardieu assured him that the question had been discussed with the greatest care and the solution had been adopted unanimously, and furthermore pointed out that in view of the "way in which the Hungarians were grouped in Transylvania it was absolutely impossible to avoid attributing large numbers of them to the future Rumanian state." Then Lansing, after further consideration, "withdrew his criticisms and made no objection to the recommendations of the Committee. Balfour and Son-

<sup>228</sup> Whether the Allies were bound by the secret treaty of August, 1916, with Rumania (Miller, *Diary* . . . 14: 178), was questioned during the negotiations in Paris in 1919. It was pointed out that the conclusion of Rumania's separate peace with the Central Powers had invalidated it. Yet in the end the treaty was largely honored. The simple fact that Hungary was considered an "enemy," Rumania an "ally," influenced, of course, also the final delimitation of the frontiers (*Memoirs of H. Hoover*, 396-397; see also Seymour's article in House and Seymour, eds., *What really happened* . . . , 98).

<sup>229</sup> Déák, *op. cit.*, 27; also Miller, *Diary* 4: doc. 246 (see furthermore, Outline of tentative report and recommendation prepared by the intelligence section, espec. 233-235, relating to Rumania, 230-232 to Czechoslovakia, 235-239 to Yugoslavia, and 245-246). See also Mezes, S. E., Director of the Division of Territorial, Economic and Political Intelligence, *American Delegation. Correspondence and papers, 1918-1919*. Special Collections, Columbia University Library.

<sup>230</sup> Déák stressed in his monograph that the Americans on the whole were more "generous" (*op. cit.*, 55) toward the Hungarians and more sympathetic toward their claims than the French and English and also the Italians. The same view is expressed by Seymour in House and Seymour, eds., *op. cit.*, ch. 5, 97. According to Lloyd George, however (*Memoirs of the peace conference* 1: 598) the Americans, in view of the alleged Slavic vote in the states, were "not altogether unbiased toward the defeated nations." Yet the British representatives were "free from any antipathies or apprehensions." A comparison, however, of the American with the English and French position on boundaries between Hungary and her neighbors, Rumania, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia, reveals only relatively minor differences. Déák conceded that the frontiers proposed by the Americans were substantially the same as those finally laid down in the peace treaty (28).

<sup>231</sup> Miller, *Diary* 4: 245.

<sup>232</sup> House and Seymour, eds., *op. cit.*, 98.

nino likewise expressed their agreement.”<sup>233</sup> Whatever reservations some in the American delegation may still have entertained about the wisdom of the transfer of Transylvania to Rumania, the United States’ agreement with the other Powers in the Transylvanian question and her responsibility for this joint policy could thereafter not very well be questioned.

## VI. SOVIET HUNGARY’S MILITARY AND PROPAGANDISTIC OFFENSIVE AND CLÉMENTEAU’S ULTIMATUM

### RUMANIA’S AND CZECHOSLOVAKIA’S MILITARY OFFENSIVES AND THE HUNGARIAN CRISIS OF MAY 1

A week after the departure of General Smuts from Budapest, the Rumanian troops had opened hostilities all along the line. The Rumanian forces advanced not merely to the new line of demarcation, but pushed on further to the Tisza and at Szolnok some Rumanian units even crossed the river. During the next critical months until the opening of the Soviet Hungarian offensive in late July, Rumanian troops were deployed along the Tisza River and in actual control thus of more Hungarian territory and population than the Allies wished Rumania to hold permanently. When the Rumanian troops readied themselves to move toward Budapest, the Supreme Council ordered them to halt at the Tisza River. Czechoslovak troops had also advanced at that time and had occupied the vital coal area of Salgó-Tarján and Miskolcz.

The Tisza River line was west of the line specified in the Allied-Rumanian treaty of August 17, 1916, and claimed by the Rumanians. Rumania did not ask for the Tisza as boundary, but she was to insist that her troops were to continue occupying the region east of it for strategic reasons, temporarily, in view of Hungary’s nationalistic and revolutionary ambitions and patent aggressive military intentions.

While in late March, 1919, the Western Powers had decided to furnish Rumania with military equipment and supplies, available evidence does not support the thesis that the West gave encouragement to Rumania’s aggressive move against communist Hungary. Neither President Wilson nor the Premiers Lloyd George, Clémenceau, and Orlando favored either direct or indirect military intervention against Soviet Hungary. Actually, by stopping the Rumanian troops at the Tisza, they were to prolong the existence of the Soviet Hungarian regime. The belief, however, that the French military, spokesmen of which only a few days earlier in the sessions of the Council of Four in Paris had supported the concept of a *cordon sanitaire*, of separating Soviet Russia from Soviet Hungary, had encouraged the Rumanian military offensive in early April, was, as has been indicated already, widespread.

<sup>233</sup> *For. Rel. U. S., P. P. C. 4: 673.*

Late April and early May were days of crisis for the Soviet Hungarian government. By May 1 the left wing of the Czechoslovak troops had established liaison with the right wing of the Rumanian troops near Csap. The Hungarian front virtually collapsed and troops streamed westward in disorder. “We had to take care,” Böhm, Minister of War, wrote later, “to disarm the armed bands before they reached Budapest to avoid the danger of anarchy in the capital.”<sup>234</sup>

In the night session of the Council of Ministers on May 1 Béla Kun admitted that the situation was desperate, that the government did not dispose of military forces, and that he personally had made an offer of armistice to the belligerents. According to one plan, the cabinet would step down and transfer power to a directory consisting of twelve persons.<sup>235</sup> That momentarily the government had virtually abandoned all hopes, is also revealed by the former Premier Michael Károlyi. In his autobiography he reported that on May 1, while the communists indulged in lavish and extravagant celebrations of the first of May in the capital, he had visited the headquarters of the Communist Party in the Hotel Hungaria where he found Béla Kun broken down and in a state of complete moral collapse. Kun had then talked of giving up the fight.<sup>236</sup> On the second of May, however, Kun entertained again the most fantastic plans; he was prepared to surrender Budapest and to retreat for a last-ditch fight into the Bakonyi forest.<sup>237</sup> Then again in a mood of despair Kun seems to have thought of seeking personal safety in flight and political asylum abroad. Professor Brown of the American Mission in negotiations carried on in Budapest asked then for the resignation of Béla Kun personally.<sup>238</sup> Whatever his reasons, however, Kun did not reveal Brown’s demand even to his colleagues in the cabinet.

In these days when the fortunes of the Soviet government reached their lowest point, Béla Kun sent what Professor Brown called an appeal of desperation to President Wilson.<sup>239</sup> The appeal, signed by Garbai and Kun, accused the Allies of resorting to force and violence to destroy a regime which, it boasted, has taken “thoroughgoing and far-reaching measures of social reconstruction, both in the political and economic sphere . . . in a manner unprecedented in the history of mankind.” The Soviet note, designed to drive a wedge between the United States and her allies, climaxed in the appeal

<sup>234</sup> Böhm, *op. cit.*, 350.

<sup>235</sup> *Ibid.*, 354.

<sup>236</sup> Károlyi, *op. cit.*, 159-160; this desolate picture of Kun in the depth of crisis is confirmed by other witnesses.

<sup>237</sup> Böhm, *op. cit.*, 351-352.

<sup>238</sup> *Ibid.*, also *For. Rel. U. S., P. P. C. 12: 444-446* and 451-452.

<sup>239</sup> The appeal was sent on April 28 or 29; a copy of it was forwarded to Professor A. C. Coolidge in Vienna, *For. Rel. U. S., P. P. C. 12: 453-454.*

to take steps to arrest immediately all war-like action against us, the more so as we believe that the settlement of our own internal affairs could be left to ourselves in accordance with the principles proclaimed by you. . . . The Governing Council declares that it has no desire to interfere in the internal affairs of any other country.<sup>240</sup>

#### THE RED ARMY'S CONQUESTS IN SLOVAKIA

Yet the situation was saved once more. The tide was turned when thousands of Trade Unionists volunteered for military service at the front. Simultaneously, a reorganization of the Red Army infused new life into a weakened body. After desperate hours and a hurried mobilization, the Soviet government, having enlisted both patriotism as well as loyalty to the socialist idea, opened up a major offensive against Czechoslovakian rather than against Rumanian troops. The purpose of this offensive was to regain the important coal-mining area of Salgó Tarján and Miskolcz, a region which happened to be ethnically Hungarian. The prospect of separating Czechoslovakian troops from the Rumanians and, at the same time, of cutting a way across the Carpathians toward a possible link-up with Soviet Russian forces was a major consideration in this Hungarian attack. Besides, the Czechoslovakian front was considered the weakest link in the enemy's chain.<sup>241</sup> And hope for Soviet Russian help had been a mainstay of Soviet Hungary's confidence from the very beginning and had often been encouraged by the Russians. In mid-June Rakovsky, Commissar of Foreign Affairs for the Soviet Ukraine, had voiced his hope for establishing a common front of Ukrainian and Hungarian forces.<sup>242</sup>

The thrust into Czechoslovakia proved successful beyond all expectations. A large portion of Slovakia was conquered with relative ease. The victory buoyed tremendously the hopes of the Party and of the government. But, as a leading Hungarian communist put it later, "with this victory began the tragedy of the Hungarian army." The government was unable to utilize this victory fully in view of the "workers' bataillons' refusal to resume the pursuit of the defeated enemy."<sup>243</sup> In spite of the victories in Slovakia, the morale of the Hungarian troops remained at a low ebb. It was partly on account of the low morale that the Soviet government, when it was presented in June with Clémenceau's ultimatum, ordered the Red Army to withdraw from Slovakia without further struggle.

#### NATIONALISM AND COMMUNISM

In the critical days of early May, Hungarian patriotism proved a powerful support for the Soviet govern-

ment. In the following letter, written on May 7 from Budapest to Professor A. C. Coolidge in Vienna, the American lieutenant W. H. Osborn revealed the aid which Hungarian nationalism and nationalists gave then to the Soviet regime.

The state of mind of the average Hungarian seems to be about as follows: "Shall I oppose the government when Hungary is being overrun, and so weaken it further in the face of a hopeless situation, or shall I help the government hold what territory it can and, if finally the Entente declares a definite policy and reasonable boundaries for Hungary, then work for the overthrow of the Communistic regime?" This seems to be the very general dilemma among a great many conservative people with whom we have talked. . . . The peasants are outspokenly opposed to the present regime. So are the majority of the more stable classes of workmen, and of course all the former bourgeois elements. But all these elements are at a loss as to what they should turn to, and the result is that there seems to be a general passive acquiescence in the action of the Bolshevik government.<sup>244</sup>

Nationalism and patriotism were strangely intertwined with the Bolshevik revolution in Hungary.<sup>245</sup> Nationalism had prompted Count Károlyi to relinquish the premiership when Lieutenant Colonel Vyx had presented him with the ultimatum which pushed the line of demarcation farther into Hungarian territory. National and patriotic feelings, the hope to maintain the historic integrity of Hungary, had first induced many members even of the intelligentsia, the bourgeoisie, and the peasantry to give a measure of support to Bolshevism when it played upon popular chauvinism. The desire for revenge, the hope for reconquest of the lost areas which were either inhabited by Hungarians or part of historic Hungary, the taste of victory when Slovakia was won—all this had made Hungarians of almost all classes tolerate a regime for which they would otherwise have had little liking. The hope had been widespread that a communist-led Hungary would win new powerful friends who would loyally support it, whereas the Entente had coolly turned its back to the pleas of the Hungarian people. "The intelligentsia saw in Lenin the only hope for the future. This feeling spread to the higher officers of the army."<sup>246</sup> In a memorandum Lieutenant Colonel Zombor held up the patriotism of the Russian Bolsheviks as a shining example to his people.

#### AN INVITATION TO PARIS?

In Paris the Committee on Czechoslovakian Affairs had finished its work on the Czechoslovakian-Hungarian boundary in March, before the communist *coup* in Hungary had taken place. In early May the Commission on Rumanian and Yugoslav Affairs completed its recommendations on Hungary's boundaries with Rumania and Yugoslavia. It was at that very moment that seemingly

<sup>240</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>241</sup> Böhm, *op. cit.*, 364.

<sup>242</sup> *Pester Lloyd*, June 17, 1919.

<sup>243</sup> Gabór, M., Bericht über den Sturz der Rätcmacht in Ungarn, *Die kommunistische Internationale*, 1919, 240-241. See also Thomas, P. A., The Slovak Soviet Republic, *The American Slavic and East European Review* 17: 203-215, April, 1958.

<sup>244</sup> *For. Rel. U. S., P. P. C.* 12: 457-458.

<sup>245</sup> *Izvestiia* and *Pravda*, both of March 25, 1919.

<sup>246</sup> Jászai, O., *Revolution . . . in Hungary*, 87.

more by blunder than by deliberate intention the Allies came close to having delegates of the Soviet Hungarian Republic attend the Paris Peace Conference.

When Field Marshal Smuts and Béla Kun had met in early April in Budapest, the possibility of holding an exploratory conference between Hungary and her neighbors and the Great Powers either in Vienna, Prague, or in some Swiss city had been mentioned. This matter, in spite of the adverse reports of Smuts on Kun and the Soviet government, was apparently not entirely dropped. On May 1 Clémenceau telegraphed to General Haller, chief of the French Military Mission in Vienna, to invite the Hungarian government to send delegates to St. Germain on May 15.<sup>247</sup> Allizé, French envoy in Vienna, likewise received instructions from Paris to invite the Hungarian government to send representatives to Versailles.<sup>248</sup> Allizé, confounded, as he readily admitted, and fearing that this invitation was likely to seal the definitive triumph of Bolshevism in Hungary and to enable it even to extend its base,<sup>249</sup> immediately asked the French Foreign Minister Pichon for a confirmation of the order. He warned that such an invitation would immeasurably strengthen the government of Béla Kun. Finally Paris sent new instructions which canceled the previous order only half an hour before it was to go into effect,<sup>250</sup> before the courier with the invitation in his pouch was to leave for Budapest.

Allizé subsequently claimed credit for having thwarted a dangerous design or blunder. In his report to the American Commission to Negotiate Peace, Professor A. C. Coolidge wrote in a similar vein: "I believe that the invitation to send representatives to Paris, if de-

livered, would have greatly helped its [the Soviet regime's] prestige and strengthened its position."<sup>251</sup> As it was, the news that Hungary had been invited to the Peace Conference had leaked to the Viennese newspapers and had also been transmitted to Budapest. While this news was not believed in Vienna, it was immediately seized upon with great elation by the Soviet government.

Though the idea of an invitation to Hungary to send delegates to Paris was shelved for the moment, it was not entirely abandoned by the West. It cropped up repeatedly. The Allies apparently felt keenly the need of having a Hungarian delegation in Paris, not to negotiate the terms of the Peace treaty, but formally to accept the document. As late as June 7, the Secretariat General of the Peace Conference indicated to the Soviet Hungarian government that it had considered summoning its representatives to Paris to inform them of Hungary's new frontiers.<sup>252</sup> The phraseology employed makes it clear that no genuine negotiations were planned with the Hungarian delegation.

Under these circumstances it was hardly surprising that Béla Kun never did quite lose hope that the Western Powers might some day extend recognition to the Soviet government. Late in June he asked Paris once more for recognition of his government. Lloyd George, though not supporting it at that moment, indicated in the Council that a recognition at a later date might be possible: "As defective as this kind of government may be, it is altogether more representative than that of the Tsar." Clémenceau, however, immediately warned that recognition would present real dangers.<sup>253</sup> Once more the Soviet Hungarian Government's hopes for recognition were shattered.

#### THE ALLIES HALT RUMANIAN TROOPS AT THE TISZA

When by the end of April the Rumanian forces had reached the Tisza River and prepared to march on Budapest, Allied policy toward Soviet Hungary and Rumania became most puzzling. At this critical juncture the Allies abruptly interposed the authority of the Peace Conference and vetoed any further Rumanian advance toward the Hungarian capital. In a personal meeting with Bratianu in Paris, Clémenceau peremptorily prohibited Rumanian troops from crossing the Tisza.<sup>254</sup> Had the Allies not intervened, Budapest might have fallen and the Bolshevik experiment might have ended right then owing to Rumania's intervention. It was to last until August 1; when it finally succumbed, it was under the blows again of a Rumanian attack!

In view of the basic hostility of the Allied Powers

<sup>247</sup> Miller, *Diary* 18: 175-176; not only Clémenceau but also President Wilson and French foreign minister Pichon were responsible for the invitation to Budapest (*For Rel. U. S., P. P. C.* 5: 392-393). Later in the month of May, however, President Wilson had changed his mind. On May 19 he held that the Soviet government "does not represent Hungary and it would be unjustifiable to invite it" (Mantoux, *op. cit.* 2: 109-110). American and non-American observers in Vienna and Budapest had apparently persuaded the Council of Four to withdraw the invitation. "Error" may possibly also have played a rôle in the withdrawal of the invitation in May; see footnote 250.

<sup>248</sup> *For. Rel. U. S., P. P. C.* 12: 455.

<sup>249</sup> Allizé, *Ma mission* . . . , 82-83.

<sup>250</sup> *For. Rel. U. S., P. P. C.* 12: 455. While Allizé takes credit for reversing the decision of the Allies to invite the Kun government, an entry of the British delegate to the Conference, Harold Nicolson, *op. cit.*, 327, May 7, 1919, would indicate first a difference of opinion regarding the invitation to Budapest between France and Great Britain and secondly that the withdrawal of the invitation was rather accidental—a "fault"—and the result of the rumor that the Soviet Hungarian government in consequence of the military debacle in early May had been overthrown: "There is a row about our not having invited the Hungarians to Paris at the same time as the Austrians. The French say that the Conseil des Trois had decided that such an invitation should be sent and that the British cancelled this decision. It was rather my fault as we had heard that Béla Kun had fallen."

<sup>251</sup> *For. Rel. U. S., P. P. C.* 12: 456.

<sup>252</sup> *Ibid.* 6: 246-247.

<sup>253</sup> Mantoux, *op. cit.*, 525, June 6, 1919.

<sup>254</sup> Clark, *op. cit.*, 324.



and of the Peace Conference to Hungarian Bolshevism and their desire to eliminate this advanced base of Russian Bolshevism in Central Europe, the Allied order to Rumanian troops and Allied policy in general appear enigmatic. Most likely, the Allies preferred an overthrow of the Soviet regime by the Hungarian people itself to one from the outside by foreign troops. They may have feared that world public opinion would have held them responsible for the Rumanian intervention in Hungary and for the ouster of the Kun government by foreign troops. The aggressiveness of the Soviet Hungarian regime was to reach its climax later and had not yet become fully apparent at that moment. The rise and quick fall of another Soviet regime in Munich in early April may have unjustifiedly strengthened the West's belief in the basic stability of all of Central Europe.

Most important, however, the peacemakers, while opposed to Bolshevism in Hungary and elsewhere, felt only less concern about the excessive territorial demands of some of the succession states, particularly Rumania. Intent on whittling down her extensive claims—in which they ultimately succeeded to a moderate degree—they were evidently fearful of whetting Rumania's appetite by permitting her troops to occupy Budapest. Such occupation was likely to aggravate their difficulties in drafting a peace treaty acceptable to both Hungary and Rumania. This task seemed difficult enough while the Rumanian troops were entrenched along the Tisza River—west of the line promised to them in August, 1916, and still claimed by them—and while the Hungarians were still bent on the historic integrity of their country.

When during the month of May, Hungarian troops invaded Slovakia, the Czechs anxiously looked out for Rumanian relief. Owing, however, to the continuing Allied prohibition concerning the crossing of the Tisza, Rumanian help did not come forth at that critical moment. It was Allied diplomatic assistance to Czechoslovakia, aside of French military leadership for Czechoslovakian troops, which finally turned the table. The Allied ultimatum of June 13 demanded categorically Hungarian withdrawal from the occupied areas of Slovakia, promising in return Rumanian withdrawal from the Tisza to the new border. This promise, however, was made without prior consultation either with the Rumanian government in Bucharest or its chief Bratianu who was still in Paris. The Rumanian government, which had respected the Allied prohibition relating to the crossing of the Tisza and had not raised arms while Hungarian troops were battling the Czechs, was enraged over the new Allied demand, and aroused in particular over the manner in which the decision had been reached and had been communicated to Bucharest. Though Bratianu had often asserted that Rumanian troops were at the Tisza only for strategic reasons and did not claim it as Rumania's

boundary, he now branded the behavior of the Conference toward Rumania and himself as malicious and dangerous.<sup>255</sup> Another Rumanian politician in Paris referred in angry terms to the Great Three who had made this decision as unconscious Bolsheviks.<sup>256</sup> Dillon testified that many other Rumanians "went so far as to believe that the Supreme Council either had Bolshevik leanings or underwent secret influences."<sup>257</sup>

#### DUAL FUNCTIONS OF THE PEACE CONFERENCE

Actually, the Allied statesmen in Paris were most concerned with the restoration of the social, economic, and political order in Central Europe and bent on the elimination of Bolshevism. Yet imperative as this matter appeared to them, the main objective of the Peace Conference was the making of peace, delineating the new frontiers and having them accepted by the opposing states, their own friends and allies whose appetites had been whetted by victory as well as by Soviet Hungary whose endurance and patience were not without limits. If the Allies disregarded their pledges to their allies in Central and Southeastern Europe, they would weaken their bonds with them and only strengthen Soviet Hungary, without necessarily winning her friendship. If, on the other hand, they permitted their opposition to Bolshevism to dictate or greatly influence the tracing of Hungary's frontiers, they ran the risk of consolidating social radicalism in Hungary, strengthening her alliance with Soviet Russia and of alienating the Magyars permanently.

When the Allies had called upon the Hungarian Bolshevik regime to withdraw from all of Slovakia—which in December, 1918, already had definitely been assigned to the new Czechoslovakian state—it was both the desire to assist their hard-pressed Czech ally and the wish to have the new frontiers recognized and respected and peace secured which had moved them. The latter consideration had also prompted the Allies when, simultaneously, they called upon the Rumanians to withdraw to the new frontier.

The Allies were torn between the need for curbing and eliminating Bolshevism in Central Europe and the necessity of writing a reasonable and mutually acceptable peace, one which would not cause trouble in the foreseeable future. The dual functions of the Peace Conference, however, its daily executive tasks relating to and involving the restoration of order in Europe and the drafting of permanent new frontiers, seemed to work at times at cross purposes. Had the Allies merely faced the task of extirpating Bolshevism or teaching a "lesson" to a recalcitrant enemy nation which was seething with chauvinism and unwilling to accept the verdict of the war, the continuing prohibition to the

<sup>255</sup> *The Daily Mail*, Paris ed., Sept. 5, 1919, quoted by Dillon, *op. cit.*, 218.

<sup>256</sup> An utterance heard by Dillon, *ibid.*, 219.

<sup>257</sup> *Ibid.*, 215.

Rumanians to cross the Tisza River would clearly have been illogical and inconsistent. Yet the Peace Conference was, after all, concerned with writing what was hoped would be an enduring peace. It was therefore unwilling to pursue a course likely to lead to the imposition of intolerable losses on Hungary—more severe ones than the latter was ultimately to accept. This concern for what the Allies held to be a reasonable and acceptable peace repeatedly ran counter to and prevented the adoption of a vigorous and determined Allied policy of crushing Hungarian Bolshevism with Rumania's help.

Yet what may serve partly as an explanation of Allied policy, does not necessarily amount to its justification. The risks which the Allies ran were rather considerable. Allied policy was based upon several unproven assumptions: namely that Hungarian Bolshevism would surely fail because of its internal contradictions; that revolutionary forces elsewhere in Central Europe would be easily defeated and order everywhere restored; and finally that Russia would prove unable to assist Soviet Hungary.

The Allied demand for Rumanian withdrawal from the Tisza met with resolute opposition. The Rumanian government pointed to its precarious geographic situation between Bolshevik Russia and Bolshevik Hungary and to the greater defensibility of the Tisza River as compared with the new frontier.<sup>258</sup> Nevertheless, it indicated willingness to comply with the order provided the Supreme Council would guarantee Rumania against future attacks by the Hungarians; it specifically asked for a contingent of Allied troops. Since the Western Powers were unwilling or unable to meet this demand, the Rumanians despite promises and exhortations as well as threats remained adamant and did not withdraw from the Tisza River. And the Great Powers suffered an embarrassing defeat. They had earlier succeeded in halting the Rumanian troops at the Tisza. Now, however, they failed in making them withdraw from this line.

Hungary's boundaries and Soviet Hungary's fate were determined not merely on the battlefields in Slovakia, Transylvania, and along the Tisza, but also in the closed rooms of the Paris Peace Conference. Budapest as well as Bucharest, Prague, Belgrade, and also the French and Italian military leaders or advisers of the Czechoslovak, Rumanian, and Serb armies turned frequently to Paris. At times they halted and also withdrew their troops; at other times, however, they disregarded and challenged outright Allied orders. The armies of the new succession states surrounding Hungary were driven by fervent nationalism and the newly won confidence as well as by fear of the traditional Magyar enemy and previous overlord. They were militantly aggressive, while Paris stood by, often

helpless, attempting to restrain them. It lectured them on international morality, national moderation, and orderly procedure. Yet the latter were not always disposed to listen.

Paris complained that the lines of communication with the various capitals on one hand and the military headquarters of the Hungarian, Rumanian, Czechoslovak, and Serbian armies on the other were unsatisfactory and that the Peace Conference had insufficient information about happenings in Central and Southeastern Europe and Hungary in particular. In the session of the Council of Four on May 19 President Wilson referred to the lack of reliable reports about Hungary, to the "uncertainty" surrounding her.

#### WILSON AND CLÉMENTEAU ON "OCCUPATION" OF BUDAPEST

The Soviet Hungarian government, President Wilson developed then, obviously does not represent the Hungarian people. He reported the conclusion of his representative in the area that the only means of solving the Hungarian question was military intervention, that resistance to it would be unlikely, and that Béla Kun himself would be ready to obey the orders of the Entente, if they would be imposed upon him. President Wilson went farther than at any previous or later time in considering the advice tended to him by this observer on the spot, namely to have French troops from Belgrade proceed toward the occupation. Yet Clémenceau was then less in favor of an occupation of Budapest than the President: "What will one ask of us to occupy then?" he asked. As previously and also later on, he did not commit France to military intervention; to the contrary, he pointed out that in spite of the urgings for a long time by General Franchet d'Esperey for the occupation of Budapest, he had always refused. He stressed the need, if military action was decided upon, of having Rumanian units, in addition to French troops, move toward the Hungarian capital—an idea which President Wilson, however, opposed. Whereupon Clémenceau, ignoring the President's complimentary remarks about his confidence in the French troops, pointed, as he was to do frequently in the sessions of the Council of Four, to the absence of British and American help in such projected undertakings.<sup>259</sup>

Actually Clémenceau himself was not enthusiastic about a Rumanian move against Budapest, though the Rumanian army was then already anxious to march on the Hungarian capital. After the meeting of the Council of Four on May 30, at the initiative of M. Clémenceau, it was agreed that the Rumanian proposal that their army march on Budapest must not be carried out. Both the Rumanian delegates in Paris as well as General Franchet d'Esperey were immediately

<sup>258</sup> *For. Rel. U. S., P. P. C. 7: 24* (July 5).

<sup>259</sup> Mantoux, *op. cit.*, 109-110 (May 19, 1919).

informed of this decision of the Council.<sup>260</sup> This time Bucharest bowed to Paris.

While the Western Powers were unable to persuade Rumania to withdraw her troops from the Tisza, they were again successful in pinning them down at the river line and in dissuading Rumania from marching against Budapest and crushing the Soviet Hungarian regime. Paris also succeeded in stopping the Serbian armies on the southern Hungarian front.

#### THE FIRST ALLIED ULTIMATUM TO BUDAPEST (JUNE 7)

Though the Allied Powers had terminated their work relating to Hungary's frontiers in early May, it was not before early June when the fighting in Slovakia had assumed threatening scope that the Paris Peace Conference was to inform the Central and Southeast European states concerned, including Soviet Hungary, of the new frontiers as laid down in the peace treaties.

By early June the military situation of Czechoslovakia had worsened. More than one third of Slovakia had been lost to the Magyar troops and the Czechs were still retreating along the entire front. As Beneš later revealed, Kun's success "affected our prestige and position in Paris for a while very considerably."<sup>261</sup> The Czechoslovak troops were led by French generals, Pellé, Mittelhauser, and Hennoque. But it was Allied diplomacy which saved Czechoslovakia. In response to three desperate appeals of Beneš for help, Clémenceau on June 8 and 13 sent two sharply worded ultimatums to Béla Kun. In the second note he informed the Soviet government of the new Hungarian frontiers and demanded, under threat of penalties, the immediate withdrawal of the Red Army to the new lines.

In a telegram dated June 7, but apparently dispatched to the Hungarian government at Budapest the following day, the Secretariat of the Conference of the Allied and Associated Governments informed the Hungarian cabinet that the Western Powers had been at the point of summoning representatives of the Hungarian Government before the Peace Conference at Paris to communicate to them the new frontiers of Hungary, when the Soviet government had chosen this very moment to launch violent and unjustified attacks against the Czechoslovaks and to invade Slovakia. While this accusation was hurled against the Hungarian government, it was, at the same time, reminded that the Allies had already shown their

firm determination to put an end to all useless hostilities by twice [!] stopping the Rumanian armies which had crossed the armistice lines and then those of the neutral zone, and by preventing them from continuing their march on Budapest; and also by stopping the Serbian and French armies on the Southern Hungarian front.

In these circumstances the Government of Budapest is

<sup>260</sup> *For. Rel. U. S., P. P. C. 6*: 133.

<sup>261</sup> Quoted by Clark, *op. cit.*, 110.

formally requested to put an end without delay to its attacks on the Czecho-Slovaks, otherwise the Allied and Associated Governments are absolutely decided to have immediate recourse to extreme measures to oblige Hungary to cease hostilities and to bow to the unshakeable will of the Allies to make their injunctions respected.—A reply to the present telegram should be made within 48 hours.<sup>262</sup>

This sharply worded ultimatum left little doubt of the Entente's new determination, its unshakeable will, which in the past, admittedly, had not always been evident. It reminded Soviet Hungary that it owed its very existence to the interposition of the Great Powers against an intervention by Hungary's neighbors and French troops against Budapest. The note did not specifically ask for the withdrawal of the Hungarian troops from Slovakia, but merely for putting an end to attacks on the Czechoslovaks—which, however, most likely was understood by the Allies to mean withdrawal to the Danube. The reminder that in the past the Council had stopped Hungary's enemies contained the implied warning that in case of further violations of the armistice by Hungary it might not do so in the future. This in combination with the direct threat to have immediate resort to extreme measures could leave little doubt in Budapest that the Entente had come to a definite and irrevocable decision, and the note was meant to be a last warning to the Soviet Hungarian government to take better cognizance of the new situation. This sharp communication was merely the fore-runner, by less than a week, of the Allied ultimatum of June 13th.

#### THE COUNCIL'S IMPATIENCE WITH THE SUCCESSION STATES

Though Paris spoke with increasingly harsh tone to Budapest, it was in those very days rather annoyed at her friends and allies in Central and Eastern Europe, Hungary's neighbors, and showed its irritation at their militancy and their excessive demands which threatened to aggravate the situation and complicate its task. The Council sessions of June 9 and 10 revealed the growing impatience of the Western Powers especially with Rumania, but also with Czechoslovakia. Lloyd George on occasion of renewed clashes between Rumanians and Hungarians asserted that the Hungarians were only defending their country and that the "greatest part of the difficulties comes from states which are our friends, refusing to follow our instructions."<sup>263</sup> When Clémenceau, however, pointed out that Allied military experts were now suggesting that they [the Rumanians] advance to relieve the Czechs, Lloyd George quickly broadened his charge to include also the Magyars: "These all are little robber nations seeking nothing but steal territories."

<sup>262</sup> *For. Rel. U. S., P. P. C. 6*: 246-247.

<sup>263</sup> Mantoux, *op. cit.*, 350-351 and 368-375. The following is translated from Mantoux, *op. cit.* For a slightly different English version, see *For. Rel. U. S., P. P. C. 6*: 281-289.

The Allies were, as President Wilson conceded, very preoccupied with the military situation in Hungary and around Hungary. Both the President and Lloyd George were then inclined to think that the excessive demands and nationalist intransigency of Hungary's neighbors, their own allies, had produced Magyar Bolshevism and continued to hold it in power. Woodrow Wilson asserted that Kun had "come to power in consequence of the Rumanian offensive and was entrenched through the Czech offensive." And Lloyd George reminded Bratianu that Rumanian troops, standing along the Tisza, were "in purely Magyar territory, midway to Pest. This is what creates Bolshevism."

Though there was some truth in the observation that extreme nationalism of the peoples surrounding Hungary tended to push the Magyars to radical extremes, Magyar Bolshevism had actually come to power *before* Rumanian troops had reached the Tisza River. The President himself and others traced the Bolshevik seizure of power at other times rather to the Western ultimatum, unanimously agreed upon by the Powers in the Council in late February and presented to Michael Károlyi on March 20. Though outside pressure, partly of Hungary's neighbors, partly of the Great Powers themselves, had triggered the revolution in Hungary, its victory was primarily the result of internal struggles growing out of complex and unsolved internal problems.

The occupation of purely Magyar territory gave no doubt continued support to the Soviet Hungarian government and made the Magyar nationalists rally to it. Yet most Magyars whatever their political persuasions, did not confine their territorial ambitions to saving purely Magyar districts, but wanted to preserve Hungary's historic integrity. The clash between the Magyars and their Czech and Rumanian neighbors was not one between Magyar nationalism limiting itself to reasonable ethnic claims and a new avid and aggressive Rumanian, Czech, and Yugoslav imperialism, but rather a clash between two kinds of imperialism, the Magyar one aiming to maintain, i.e. restore, under the red banner of communism historic Hungary, and Rumanian and Czechoslovak nationalism, anxious to preserve the recently established links with Transylvania and Slovakia respectively, and for the sake of strategic defense and economic necessity insisting on severing Magyar-inhabited strips of territory from the living body of Hungary.

#### CZECHS AND RUMANIANS COUNTER ALLIED ACCUSATIONS

The President's and Lloyd George's foregoing critical remarks aimed at Hungary's hostile neighbors were not made with the aim of historic accuracy in mind, but rather to put the Rumanian and Czechoslovak leaders in a more tractable frame of mind and make

them mitigate their intransigent attitude. Both were promptly contradicted by the Rumanian and Czech spokesmen, Bratianu, and Kramář and Beneš. Bratianu pointed to the Allied failure at the time the armistice with Austria-Hungary was concluded, to take cognizance of earlier promises made to Rumania. The Allies had later given their approval to Rumania's advance west of the Maros and it was only after the Rumanian army had been attacked that it had marched on to the Tisza River, a more defensible line than the one delineated by the West. Bratianu stressed the need for combatting both Hungarian chauvinism and Bolshevism; the Allies must impress upon the Magyar nation that it had been vanquished. He accused not only Béla Kun but also the former government of Michael Károlyi of spreading Bolshevik propaganda—the latter charge being met with outright disbelief by Lloyd George.

Kramář, in a vein similar to Bratianu's, denied any Czech provocation of Hungary; democrats and socialists who dominated the new Czechoslovakian state were opposed to any conflict with Hungary and had refrained from moving against the Magyar Bolsheviks when in early April the Rumanians had first advanced against Hungary, though "the entire Hungarian bourgeoisie had asked us to come to its aid."<sup>263a</sup> The Hungarian army was very well organized, not just

improvised for defense. . . . We are the weaker ones. . . . What we expect of the Entente is to stop them [the Magyars] and if they don't obey their injunctions, to come to our aid.

Czechoslovakia had no desire to transgress the line of demarcation, "But we do not know whether the danger will not grow." Bolshevism, he claimed, threatened Czechoslovakia not only from Budapest, but also from Vienna, and there were also German troop concentrations along the Czech-Bavarian border. "Our geographic position isolates us." Allied arms were badly needed, and he promised to employ them against Bolshevism which was closely linked with Magyar chauvinism, only for defensive purposes. As long as Hungarian troops were advancing in Slovakia and committing atrocities, any compromise with Hungary would be a "political mistake and crying injustice."

Beneš who followed Kramář pointed out that the advance of Czechoslovakian troops had had the approval of the Allies. Since the armistice, Czechoslovakia three or four times had asked for a direct link-up with Slovakia. The modified line of demarcation had finally been occupied by Czech troops under the command of the Italian General Piccioni and the French Generals Mittelhauser and Hennocque. This temporary line fell still short of the final boundary; the latter, Beneš informed the Council, Czechoslovakia accepted that very day.

<sup>263a</sup> Bratianu too pointed to the pro-Rumanian and anti-Bolshevik attitude of even purely Magyar regions, as for instance the city of Debreczen.

Clémenceau reminded his Anglo-Saxon colleagues of Allied dependence on Hungary's neighbors in Central and Southeastern Europe. He had revealed before that Allied military experts valued the Rumanian army as a bulwark against Magyar Bolshevism; now he underlined that at this moment General Pellé, French commander of the Czechoslovakian troops, "asks us to send troops into Bohemia; we can't do it." He assured the Rumanian and Czech spokesmen that the Allies were determined to stop the Magyars, but they too had to stop.

#### THE ALLIES' DECISION: "HERE IS YOUR FRONTIER"

After long and fateful delays the Allies had finally decided to make Hungary's new boundaries known to the Magyars and their neighbors. Speaking for the Big Four, President Wilson summed up once again: the Rumanians must evacuate Hungary proper. Yet he was fully aware that

the danger of this evacuation is that it has the appearance of a retreat. But when, as we are told today, the territorial commission has determined the frontier, it is easy for us to tell the Hungarians: "Here is your frontier. . . . If you transgress it, we shall no longer negotiate with you. . . ." At the same time we shall say to our allies of Bohemia and Rumania: "We shall not send you anything of what you ask if you violate the frontier as traced."

The sanctions with which the Hungarians were threatened in case they violated the new frontiers were cessation of further negotiations and diplomatic dealings and, by implication, the use of force. Czechoslovaks and Rumanians were warned that violation of the new frontiers with Hungary would result in withholding from them military equipment and other supplies. On the preceding day, June 9, Lloyd George had raised the very same threat against Rumanians and Czechs in case they would press their attacks. Neither of the two Western statesmen, however, was disposed to threaten use of force against the Central and East European allies, realizing that public opinion at home would not back them.

When informed of the new frontiers and the Western position as stated by President Wilson, both Beneš and Bratianu expressed their approval, though the latter couched it in a rather conditional manner. The means at the disposal of the Great Powers to persuade their smaller allies of a more reasonable course of policy were rather limited, the more so since Allied military leaders, as Clémenceau disclosed, had in the hour of need to rely on such help as Rumanian and Czech troops were able to provide.

#### CLÉMENCEAU'S ULTIMATUM OF JUNE 13

After the final meeting of the Council of Four on Hungary's borders had been held in Paris on June 11, the British delegate Harold Nicolson had made the following entry in his diary:

Object of the meeting was to break to Bratiano and Kramář the nature of the frontiers which had been decided against Hungary. If they agree, we are going to telegraph to Béla Kun ordering him, on pain of dismissal, to retire behind the frontiers thus established.<sup>264</sup>

As was seen, they had agreed. The Conference had of course aimed at the removal of Béla Kun for some time, but it had lacked the power to accomplish this objective, and still lacked it. On June 12 Nicolson seemed to realize the limitations of the actual authority of the Conference:

I have no idea what the IV [Council of the Four] propose doing with Béla Kun. I fear they will give way to him, and I agree that one cannot suppress Bolshevism by force of arms. The French mutiny in the Black Sea is evidence enough of this. The whole Bolshevik business is spreading.<sup>265</sup>

While the Council was not resolved to suppress Bolshevism by the forces of the Great Powers, it did not think that the only alternative was giving way to Kun. Other alternatives, some of them tried partially and halfheartedly before, seemed to hold out the hope for an overthrow of the Bolshevik government: a decisive military victory over the Soviet regime was still a possibility; so was an economic blockade the effects of which were likely to become more severe with its duration; and a revolution from within became more likely in view of the mounting internal opposition arising from different directions.

In the telegram to Budapest of June 8, Clémenceau warned the Hungarian government to end hostilities immediately against Czechoslovakia and threatened it with extreme measures, should it refuse obedience to the orders of the Conference.<sup>266</sup>

On the thirteenth of June, Clémenceau sent another telegram to Hungary, addressed to Béla Kun, Budapest, in which the latter was informed of the new permanent Hungarian boundaries, and he and his government were called upon immediately to withdraw the Hungarian army now fighting in Czechoslovakia behind

the assigned frontier of Hungary, within which all other Hungarian troops are required to remain. If the Allies and Associated Governments are not informed by their representatives on the spot within four days from midday on June 14th, 1919, that this operation is being effectively carried out, they will hold themselves free to advance on Budapest and to take such other steps as may seem desirable to secure a just and speedy peace. The Rumanian troops will be withdrawn from Hungarian territory as soon as the Hungarian troops have evacuated Czechoslovakia.<sup>267</sup>

In a special communication to the Rumanian government the latter was informed of the order issued to the

<sup>264</sup> Nicolson, *op. cit.*, 360, June 11, 1919.

<sup>265</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>266</sup> Telegram of Clémenceau of June 8, *Matin*, June 9, 1919; see also *For. Pol. U. S., P. P. C. 6*: 246-247.

<sup>267</sup> *Népszava*, June 19, 1919; it was not published in Hungary before this date; see also *For. Rel. U. S., P. P. C. 6*: 412.

Hungarian cabinet and of the promise made to it concerning the withdrawal of the Rumanian troops to the new Rumanian borders.<sup>268</sup>

The Allies may have anticipated some resistance both on the part of Hungary and Rumania. While the telegram sent by the Allies to Hungary, Rumania and Czechoslovakia was in its first part identical, the second part of the telegram contained a specific admonition for each of them. It appealed to them to cease senseless bloodshed and warned them that the future boundaries of the new states would not be modified by the temporary accidents of military occupation.<sup>269</sup>

#### THE RED ARMY WITHDRAWS FROM SLOVAKIA

In spite of the warnings by Hungarian military leaders and against the urgings of die-hard communists, the Soviet Hungarian government, recognizing the superiority of Allied power and its own weakness, ordered withdrawal from the occupied regions of Slovakia.<sup>270</sup> Actually, as Böhm admitted, the resolution of the Party leadership, supported by its overwhelming majority, had at the moment only theoretical significance; the Army Chief of Command was instructed to cease hostilities only at a suitable moment and not to order immediate withdrawal, since the government wanted to gain time and obtain additional concessions.<sup>271</sup> Limited success recently of the Czechoslovakian troops, the desire perhaps to shorten the Hungarian-Czechoslovakian frontier and the conviction that the Allies would carry out their threat to advance on Budapest may all have contributed to Soviet acquiescence to the Allied command. Nevertheless, nothing revealed more clearly Soviet Hungary's utter weakness than the ready abandonment of the territories which she had just regained under heavy sacrifices.

On the nineteenth of June, the Hungarian papers revealed that Kun had sent a telegram to Clémenceau informing him that hostilities continued due to alleged attacks by Czechoslovakian troops. "This telegram," Böhm again conceded, "was based on previous agreement. We still hesitated to order withdrawal."<sup>272</sup> Finally, however, the withdrawal of Hungarian troops began in earnest and was completed by the end of June. The publication of the foregoing diplomatic notes, especially the disclosure that the frontiers had been definitely drawn, speeded the process of disintegration, since further bloodshed seemed now in vain. The masses of the Hungarian people saw no further purpose in prolonging the war except the questionable one of

keeping in power a harsh, unrepresentative and now discredited regime.

Kun and the Soviet government felt the need for justifying their readiness to accept the peace of "Brest Litovsk," the Entente's offer which they had rejected in March. "Many may ask why we did not accept the terms offered us by Smuts?" asked Kun. Yet he replied that what then would have been a mistake, was now the right thing.<sup>273</sup> As Karl Liebknecht had once said, "we communists must be prepared, if necessary, to change our tactics 24 times in 24 hours (Assent)." Kun voiced now the hope that the proletariat of Czechoslovakia, Rumania and Yugoslavia would seize power and annul the peace terms dictated to Hungary.<sup>274</sup> Actually, the revolutionary situation had been more promising in late March and early April than it was in June, as Béla Kun must have been aware. Yet the argument evidently served as a rationalization for his retreat.

#### THE ENTENTE AND KUN'S "MALA FIDES"

The Soviet Hungarian government which acceded to the ultimatum of the Entente, merely followed Lenin's recommendations to accept a temporary armistice or peace. In a telegram to Kun, Lenin gave the following advice:

It is necessary to make the fullest possible use of every opportunity to obtain a temporary armistice or peace, in order to give the people a breathing space. But do not trust the Entente powers for a moment. They are deceiving you, and are only attempting to gain time in order to be able to crush you and us.

Two days later, on June 21, Kun replied to Lenin's message:

I thank you very much for your telegram in which you approve of my foreign policy. I am very proud of being one of your best pupils, but I think in one point I am superior to you, namely in the question of "mala fides." I think I know the Entente very well. I know that they will fight us to the end. In this war only a state of armistice can occur, but never peace.<sup>275</sup>

Kun wanted a mere armistice, a pause to consolidate his power in order to resume the struggle at the next opportune moment.

The views of Béla Kun and of the Soviet Hungarian government about its situation, goals and prospects, were more fully developed in Béla Kun's speech on foreign policy before the Congress of Soviets in mid-June. The Congress convened only a few days after

<sup>268</sup> *Ibid.*, 143.

<sup>269</sup> *Ibid.*, 412-413; the frontiers between Hungary and Yugoslavia, though likewise delimited at that time, were not yet communicated to their governments.

<sup>270</sup> The government actually feared that the troops, if not ordered back, would leave on their own, and, in the words of a close observer, "everything would then be lost" (Gabór, *Die kommunistische Internationale*, 245-246, 1919).

<sup>271</sup> Böhm, *op. cit.*, 472.

<sup>272</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>273</sup> Kun Béla . . . , 270.

<sup>274</sup> Böhm, *op. cit.*, 473.

<sup>275</sup> Herbert Hoover, submitting these exchanges between Lenin and Kun in Paris in 1919, stressed their authenticity (*For. Rel. U. S., P. P. C. 7*: 22). The latter is confirmed also by the inclusion of these telegrams in the publication in Budapest of a volume containing Kun's speeches, articles and official statements of the years 1918 and 1919, *Kun Béla a magyar Tanácsköztársaságról*, 1958.

the dispatch of Clémenceau's ultimatum. The Western Powers, Kun asserted, were as guilty of imperialist rapacity as formerly German and Austro-Hungarian imperialism. This was proven by the peace treaties which they at present were trying to force on Germany and German-Austria and on the Hungarian Soviet Republic. Though Kun emphasized that the Soviet government did not stand on the basis of historic rights and also urged the Congress to repudiate the principle of territorial integrity, he nevertheless made it clear that the government had no intention of suffering the consequences of the War which the imperialist Austro-Hungarian government had precipitated "upon us." "We cannot be forced by the Entente to take upon us the burden left by this imperialistic-capitalist war." The new Hungary had nothing in common with that Hungary which was responsible for the war. While the Soviet government on the one hand seemed to reject the extremist policies of an unyielding nationalism and to relinquish the claim for Hungary's integrity and her historic boundaries, on the other hand it vigorously opposed the Entente imperialism in its attempt to punish proletarian Hungary for the sins of her feudal-capitalistic predecessor. This position left the door wide open for any interpretation of the policy of the Soviet government.

The victory of the Entente, Kun developed further, had divided the states of Europe into three groups. There were first the five big victorious states, secondly the vanquished states, and thirdly "those states which have been formed in the territories of the former Austro-Hungarian Monarchy by armed force, through revolutions, and chiefly with the assistance and by the grace of the Entente powers: Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, and Rumania and especially the Transylvanian part of the latter." After sharply attacking the alleged peace policy of the big five imperialist powers, which was clearly designed to crush all revolutions, and also criticizing the so-called pacifist policy of their vassal states—these so-called national republics whose imperialism was "the most rapacious of all"<sup>276</sup>—Kun tried further to disillusion those who might still pin any hopes on the Entente.

The Western powers did not really wish peace without annexation and without indemnity. If the Entente Powers preached disarmament, they meant it only "to a minimum sufficient for obstructing the world progress of Bolshevism and hindering its universal expansion [!]"—a revealing admission, incidentally, that the Entente was defensive rather than aggressive, more fearful of, and likely to oppose, the further expansion of Bolshevism rather than the perpetuation of the Bolshevik regime in Hungary itself. The Allied phrases about self-determination of peoples, Kun continued, merely meant the right of self-determination of the ruling bourgeois classes, arbitrary distribution of

disputed territories, and occupation of Hungarian territories, even of those not under dispute.

#### KUN ON INTERNATIONAL REVOLUTION AND ON ALLIED DIFFERENCES

In March, 1919, Hungarian Bolsheviks firmly believed that Soviet Russia would come to their help. But by June, 1919, it had become sufficiently clear even to the most sanguine and gullible among them that Russia was in no position to extend military assistance to the Soviet sister republic. Though Kun dashed the hopes of some of his comrades that help from the Soviet Union was near, he seemed to raise other hopes. If Austria and Germany would sign the peace dictated to them by the Allied powers, it would mean revolution in both countries.<sup>277</sup> Czechoslovakia was already on the brink of revolution, and Italy and France were torn by strikes. By this time the light no longer emanated exclusively from the East. The international proletarian revolution might be successful anywhere and it would immediately extend her assistance to Soviet Hungary.

Yet in June, 1919, the Soviet Hungarian government appeared to place its hopes neither on Soviet Russia alone, nor solely on the international proletarian revolution. It was rather the dissensions among the Entente powers and the clashing interests of the "vassal states" which figured large in Béla Kun's speech in mid-June.

Though the Entente powers were united in their desire to crush Bolshevism, they were, Kun held, separated by marked divergencies, by differences which Soviet Hungarian foreign policy must exploit for its own purposes. In addition to such an issue as freedom of the seas, problems relating to the League of Nations and the internationalization of colonies, all of which divided the Powers of the Entente, there were such specific differences as the Italo-Yugoslav dispute over the Adriatic, dissensions of the Great Powers over the Balkan peninsula, and disputes among the "vassal states" over spheres of interest. Various states, Kun alleged—most likely thinking of France and Italy—wished to attach Hungary to their sphere of interest. Hungary was thus a "morsel concerning which the imperialism of the Entente is finding it difficult to come to an agreement." All this "renders impossible any concerted action on the part of the Entente here in Hungary."

#### FOR ARMISTICE OR PEACE WITH PARIS AND HUNGARY'S NEIGHBORS

Referring to Clémenceau's note of June 13 which established new frontiers for Hungary, it deserved, Kun emphasized, deep and earnest consideration. He could not take a rigidly uncompromising attitude. The minutes at this point recorded assent on the part of the

<sup>276</sup> *Ibid.*, 255-259.

<sup>277</sup> *Ibid.*, 267; for the following, see 260-264.



Congress. Though Soviet Hungary's armies were "beating the armies of the little greedy imperialistic states opposing us, . . . we must be ready to make peace." Kun pleaded that Soviet Hungary enter into peace negotiations not only with the Entente, but also with the hostile states surrounding them. Hungary and her immediate neighbors were economically mutually dependent. "We must try and make the proletarians of these [surrounding] states understand that we intend no national oppression of any sort."<sup>278</sup>

Kun urged the Soviet government to address itself not only to the governments of Hungary's neighbors, but also to the working class of the surrounding states. The peace offer to Hungary's neighbors was thus tied to Soviet insistence on the freedom of directing communist propaganda at her neighbors. Béla Kun, recalling no doubt the extent of Russian Bolshevik propaganda during the negotiations at Brest Litovsk, wished to repeat the Russian performance. "The guiding idea of the foreign policy of class war has always been to hold common conferences." He had previously proposed such a conference to General Smuts. "I have no fear but that at such a conference the ultimate victory will be ours," since it will become clear to everyone that "we are enemies of all oppression and advocate the right of self-determination of all workers [!]" The purpose of this "Peace" Conference was less to conclude a peace treaty with the neighbors, but rather to use the gathering as a tribune from which to spread the gospel of revolution.

#### "EVERY PEACE—A PEACE OF BREST-LITOVSK"

Yet propaganda aside, Kun favored coming to an agreement with the Entente and the neighboring states, provided only that more reasonable terms in regard to the frontiers were offered. He did not spell out the extent of the improvements which he contemplated; he apparently believed, just as at the time of Smuts' visit, that the terms of the Entente were not yet definite, but still negotiable. In addition, with characteristic revolutionary self-assurance, he wished to have the Entente understand from the first that the peace agreed upon would not be more enduring than that of Brest Litovsk.<sup>279</sup> It would not be Hungary, but the Czech, Rumanian, and Yugoslav proletariat which would upset it. "Every peace is for us but a Peace of Brest Litovsk."<sup>280</sup>

While he and the Soviet government stressed the peace theme, he was evidently on the defensive *vis-à-vis* his own diehards.<sup>281</sup> Attempting to mollify them, he assured them that the peace would be only provisional, a "peace of Brest Litovsk or of Bucharest, which the

Revolution is certain to upset and obliterate."<sup>282</sup> While on the one hand he expressed continued confidence in the victory of the international revolution, on the other hand he assessed realistically Hungary's grim internal and external situation. Kun's exposé may have been designed to prepare Hungary's working class for the worst.

While the extremists opposed the acceptance of the Allied ultimatum, many socialists, as for instance Kunfi, warned Kun not to look at the arrangement with the Allies and Hungary's neighbors as a merely temporary one. Kunfi criticized the conception of a socialist messianism, deprecated the notion that it was justifiable to continue war or resume it at the first opportunity "until all the oppressed of the world will be liberated by force of arms," views ascribed to Béla Kun and his followers.<sup>283</sup>

The decision of the Kun government to accept Clémenceau's ultimatum was prompted not only by its consideration of the military balance of power in Central and Southeast Europe, but also by the increasingly desperate internal situation of Hungary. The Hungarian people, as Lenin put it, needed a breathing space. In the background there was the hope that, owing to the impending revolution in Hungary's neighboring states and the rest of Europe, any territorial arrangement would prove to be merely a provisional one. As a former comrade of Béla Kun and recently Hungarian Premier, Münnich, pointed out not long ago, Béla Kun wanted peace in June, 1919, since it would enable him to turn against the Hungarian counterrevolution and also to wait for an improvement of the military situation in Russia.<sup>284</sup> His social-democratic Minister of War, Wilhelm Böhm, wrote later: "Kun wanted the peace in order to stir up a new war."<sup>285</sup>

The grim internal and external situation of Hungary forced indeed the hand of the Kun government. Cnobloch reported on June 22 of Böhm's speech in

yesterday's session of the Soviets in which he gave a very gloomy picture of the situation of the army . . . which, in spite of successes on the front, was approaching dissolution on account of defeatist agitation. He furthermore discussed the counterrevolutionary mood in the hinterland, which was fostered especially by women and which had distinctly antisemitic character, and raised heavy accusations against the new bureaucracy which was worse than the old one.

Kun had spoken in the same vein.<sup>286</sup>

The general dissatisfaction found expression in the counterrevolutionary *coup* of June 25. Though it was suppressed, it revealed how shaky the foundation was on which the Soviet Hungarian government rested. According to Cnobloch, a "not inconsiderable part of

<sup>278</sup> *Ibid.*, 271; for the following, 271–272.

<sup>279</sup> *Ibid.*, 273.

<sup>280</sup> *Ibid.*, 265.

<sup>281</sup> *Ibid.*, 267.

<sup>282</sup> *Ibid.*, 265.

<sup>283</sup> Böhm, *op. cit.*, 473.

<sup>284</sup> F. Münnich, *The October Revolution and the Hungarian Red Army*, *Voprosy istorii*, March, 1959, p. 46 f.

<sup>285</sup> Böhm, *op. cit.*, 274.

<sup>286</sup> *OS*, ex 887, *Innere Lage* in Ungarn, June 22, 1919.

the socialist-oriented workers of the capital had sympathized" with the insurrectionists.<sup>287</sup>

In accepting Clémenceau's ultimatum, the Soviet government had consented also to the new frontiers. While the boundaries laid down at the Paris Peace Conference were far from favorable, Hungary's recent military efforts had not been quite in vain. In accordance with Clémenceau's telegram, an area of 1,251 square kilometers had to be vacated by the Hungarian troops. Since, however, the Red Army from the beginning of the offensive on May 19 had conquered an area of 2,835 square kilometers, it was to keep 1,584 square kilometers. In addition, Rumanian troops were supposed to withdraw from an area amounting to 2,655 square kilometers. In spite of the hostility of the Western powers to the aggressive Kun government, they were prepared to leave the Soviet government in control of territories which were wrested from their northern neighbor during the Soviet military offensive and also to insist that their Rumanian ally turn over to Budapest control over some occupied territories of indisputably Magyar character east of the Tisza.

Hungary's new frontiers, definitely confirmed when the Peace Treaty of Trianon was signed in 1920, gave, among other territories, Transylvania and the Magyar-inhabited Arad-Szatmár strip with its strategic railway to Rumania. Hungary, on the other hand, was to retain Debreczen and Szeged and much of the land out of which the Allies, according to their ultimatum of March, 1919, to the Károlyi government, had intended to create a neutral zone.

Altogether, the Allied territorial policy toward Hungary in March, 1919, appears excessively severe. It went even beyond the territorial demands made upon Hungary in June, 1919, and later at Trianon. And it immediately turned out to be a disastrous failure, since it helped to establish the Soviet Hungarian regime which was to become a menace to Hungary's neighbors and a source of anxiety to the Allies themselves.

## VII. THE ALLIES WEIGH DIRECT INTERVENTION

### THE SOVIET HUNGARIAN REPUBLIC—AN "ECONOMIC DANGER" TO EUROPE

The acceptance of Clémenceau's ultimatum of June 13 by the Soviet Hungarian government and the retreat of the Red Army from the conquered regions of Slovakia did not remove the Hungarian problem from the agenda of the Paris Peace Conference. Soviet Hungary was ideologically expansive, nationally and territorially dissatisfied, and economically and socially stirred up. The threat which it continued to represent to her neighbors was felt to be most serious.

<sup>287</sup> *Ibid.*; this was also the view of the *Arbeiterzeitung*, June 26 and 27, 1919.

It reached its climax in the resumption of hostilities against Rumania on July 21. Rumania's determination to prevent Hungarian reconquest of Transylvania as well as the Allies' mounting interest in the definite removal of the Soviet Hungarian menace made the Hungarian question the focus of attention of the Peace Conference in the month of July and led to a rather frank discussion of Allied policies among the Great Powers.

It was the need for economic recovery of Central and Southeastern Europe to which Herbert Hoover, Director-General of Relief, had drawn attention in a letter of July 1, 1919, addressed to Secretary of State Robert Lansing, then also in Paris.<sup>288</sup> In the session of the Heads of Delegations of the Five Powers on July 5 Hoover likewise pointed out that the situation in Hungary was by no means merely an internal Hungarian question, but was tied up with the economic rehabilitation of Central Europe. The Danube and the railways across Hungary had to be reopened for traffic. To speed up Central European economic recovery, it was also necessary to have control of the rolling stock and of the river craft in Hungary which the German armies had left behind when they had withdrawn from Southeastern Europe. Another aspect of the Hungarian question was admittedly

largely political. Bolshevik ideas were impregnating the working classes throughout the area. Unless some means could be devised of abating the infection, the economic regeneration of Central and South-Eastern Europe would be difficult.<sup>289</sup>

Since the military power of the Hungarian government was growing, terrorism increasing, and Hungarian Bolshevism threatened to overflow its frontiers, it had to be considered as an economic danger to the rest of Europe.

Tying politics and economics together and stressing the need for the economic regeneration of Central and Southeastern Europe, Hoover in his earlier letter to Secretary Lansing had declared Hungarian politics the obstacle to the economic and also political survival of Central Europe. Hoover thus offered a justification for Allied moves against the also economically disruptive Soviet Hungarian regime.

### BALFOUR FAVORS MILITARY APPROACH (JULY 5)

Balfour, complimenting Hoover for his extremely lucid statement, pointed out that the latter had approached a very complex question from the economic side alone. Yet an equitable distribution of the means of subsistence in southeastern Europe could not be brought about without a radical change of the Hungarian situation. He held therefore that the case must be approached from the military side.<sup>290</sup>

<sup>288</sup> *For. Rel. U. S., P. P. C.*, 7: 29-30.

<sup>289</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.

<sup>290</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.

Balfour admitted that Rumania's refusal to withdraw her troops from Hungary and thus to honor the Allied pledge was causing embarrassment. Simultaneously with the ultimatum presented to Hungary on June 13, which had demanded the withdrawal of the Red Army from the occupied areas of Slovakia, the Allies had appealed to Rumania to withdraw her troops and "carry out her share of this common policy, thus maintaining unimpaired the solidarity of the alliance."<sup>291</sup> Yet the appeal had fallen on deaf ears. The Rumanian government had pointed out that, in view of the Hungarian rearmament in violation of the permitted limits of six infantry and two cavalry divisions, the Rumanian army could not, without effective guarantees, withdraw from the Tisza River, an easily defensible line, to a new, strategically indefensible one. Skirmishes along the Tisza River had become a common occurrence in the following days. On July 1 some Rumanian units had even crossed the Tisza and had attacked the Hungarian troops. Béla Kun had then dispatched a note of protest to Clémenceau and on July 11 he had followed it up with another telegram of which Clémenceau informed the Supreme Council on July 12.

While conceding that Rumania had balked at the Allied order, Balfour pointed out that Soviet Hungary too had violated the armistice agreement when it had actually doubled her army and stressed the importance of making Hungary observe the armistice. Military threats must be employed either to make the Soviets comply with the Belgrade convention or to overthrow them. Should the threats not accomplish their purpose, Rumanian, Czechoslovak, Serbian, and French troops at hand must be used to enforce the armistice. He made no mention either of the need for or the availability of British, American, or Italian troops. "Prompt military action . . . would be justified by Hungary's flagrant breach of the armistice."<sup>292</sup>

#### CLÉMENCEAU'S DOUBTS AND TEMPORIZING

It was then Clémenceau's turn. He seemed to pour cold water on Balfour's recommendations:

France was demobilizing and could not stop the process. . . . At the end of October the French army . . . would be on a peace footing. The French Chamber was resolutely opposed to intervention in Russia. He thought the Chamber was right, seeing the results hitherto obtained; a milliard or so was being thrown away on the expedition in Siberia. . . . If Parliament, therefore, declines to fight Bolshevism in Russia, it would equally refuse to fight it in Hungary.

Balfour had mentioned Czech, Rumanian, Serb, and French troops. Yet this would require money, and he for one could not supply any. Clémenceau ruled out the blockade as an effective means of unseating the Kun government, doubted the military capacity of the Czechs as compared with the Hungarians and the willingness

of the Rumanians to fight, and noted pointedly the unavailability of British and American troops. He felt obligated to state

clearly that, for his part, he could not undertake it [the intervention]. He had consulted Marshal Foch and General Franchet d'Esperey who had often wished to march on Budapest. He had asked for plans, and had been supplied with a plan more ambitious than that of Napoleon's march on Moscow.

It was a fact that the peoples and the parliaments of the countries of the Entente were anxious to settle the crisis more quickly than was really possible, but

after the upheaval of the war and the pulverization of military forces, and on top of it, the universal inclination towards social revolution, it was hardly possible to produce order in a short time.

The evil of Bolshevism had spread.

Italy, though an old and wise community, had been shaken up. Great Britain and France had their troubles. There had been disaffection in the French Navy and even in the Army. The world was sick of fighting.

All intervention in Russia to assist the Russian people

to establish a reasonable government had been in vain. Now the evil had attacked Hungary which had not been anticipated, as it was a country of peasants and relatively rich. The policy he had to offer was not one of which he was proud. It was simply this—to hold the issues and to wait. He said this after taking into consideration the feelings of the Entente peoples, and of their Parliaments. All were in a hurry to cease fighting, and to resume normal life. They were probably wrong, but that feeling could not be gainsaid. This might be said to look like impotence. He would not deny it. But, after losing hundreds of thousands of lives and spending the national treasure, he thought no other policy was possible.

He would

follow Mr. Balfour's policy so far as to threaten Hungary with intervention should they not observe the armistice. Then he would consult the military experts. If military action had to be undertaken, all would have to help and much money would have to be spent.<sup>293</sup>

Clémenceau had made his points which, with slight variation only, he was to repeat until the Soviet Hungarian regime succumbed. At the moment he was only willing to threaten Hungary with intervention. He wanted to wait, to temporize, hoping that "Providence might furnish some means of escape." He was fully aware that this was not a noble policy and also aware of the danger of the Soviet Hungarian challenge being followed by a German one. Germany so far had behaved well, but might change her attitude. Though critical, almost derisive, of the Napoleonic ambitions of Generals Foch and Franchet d'Esperey, he did not definitely abandon the notion of applying military force against Soviet Hungary, yet made it clear that military intervention would have to be a truly cooperative effort.

<sup>291</sup> Deák, *op. cit.*, doc. 463.

<sup>292</sup> *For. Rel. U. S., P. P. C. 7: 24* .

<sup>293</sup> *Ibid.*, 24-26.

For the moment Hungary might be surrounded by a *cordon sanitaire*. Hoping for the best, he voiced his conviction that communism would not last long in that country.<sup>294</sup>

#### LANSING WANTS SMALLER STATES TO HELP

While now Great Britain and also the United States, neither of which had any troops in Central Europe as Clémenceau was quick to point out, seemed eager to have Hungary's neighbors, in combination with two French divisions in the area, militarily intervene in Hungary, the French government was clearly reluctant to engage in any military adventure, mainly because the Anglo-Saxon powers seemed unwilling to go beyond giving moral and diplomatic support to such a project.

In the debate of the Council on Allied policy toward Soviet Hungary on July 5, 1919, the American Secretary of State Robert Lansing took the side of Balfour rather than of Clémenceau. He seemed more determined to accept the use of military means against Hungary, once the decision was reached that the Soviet regime could not be trusted and that peace could not be concluded with it.<sup>295</sup> On July 9 Lansing again supported Balfour's seemingly strong stand. "He [Lansing] thought Allied prestige should be maintained. Bolshevism would spread to Austria if it appeared successful in Hungary." He "suggested that the Military Representatives should get into touch with the authorities of Czechoslovakia, Serbia, and Rumania, in order to find out what these states could do to help." Yet he did not promise possible help by American troops. Each of the Great Powers more than once came close to approving intervention against Soviet Hungary, though none reached the critical point of offering its own troops for this purpose. The French did make an offer, though one contingent on direct assistance by the Anglo-Saxon Powers; the latter made none.

#### MILITARY FORCE NOT DEFINITELY EXCLUDED

The possibility, however, of applying military force against Soviet Hungary at some future time, if necessary, had by no means been excluded, and by the very nature and urgency of the problems under consideration could not be discarded. Should Soviet Hungary succeed in spreading social revolution throughout Europe, Western policy would have to be revised. Aside from the danger of Bolshevism, the Allied and Associated Powers in Paris, immersed in the task of writing the peace treaties, could not afford to confess publicly their impotence to enforce peace and order on a small nation.<sup>296</sup> Balfour was actually afraid to reveal the state of demobilization of the Great Powers to the smaller, though friendly, states.<sup>297</sup> It seemed absurd

that the Western Powers, as he put it, "which eight months ago were the conquerors of the world, could not impose their will on an army of 120,000 men." And to many there seemed to be a serious danger that the Conference, should it refuse to meet the Hungarian challenge, would have to leave unfinished its work of writing the peace treaties and having them ratified. Hungary was not the only country revolting against harsh peace terms. "An unpleasant treaty would have to be imposed on the Bulgarians, and a still more unpleasant one on the Turks," Balfour warned.<sup>298</sup> German statesmen, looking gloatingly to Hungary, made ominous threats toward Paris.<sup>299</sup> It was because the Western Powers perceived the broad significance of the Hungarian challenge that they, while at the moment refraining from an intervention, were in no position to reject the possible need for it in the future.

#### EVALUATION OF THE MILITARY SITUATION IN CENTRAL EUROPE

It was, therefore, not surprising that the military, Generals Bliss, Sackville-West, Thwaites, Belin, and Cavallero were invited to the Conference table. In reply to a question by Clémenceau as to the forces and methods which were necessary to compel Kun's government to respect the armistice, if other means failed, and what hope of success might be entertained, General Bliss pointed out that about six weeks ago in response to a request of the Council of Four the Military Representatives at Versailles had reported on means that might be taken to prevent a Hungarian attack on Czechoslovakia. The report had stressed that, if military measures were required, the troops must be those on the spot, namely Rumanian, Serbian, and French units. That the troops locally available would suffice, had then also been the opinion of the French General Staff.

Yet since that time the Hungarian troops had been increased from 150,000 to 200,000, and the situation had also changed in other respects. For these and other reasons General Bliss held that the question of coping with the Hungarian threat required renewed study. He was supported herein by General Cavallero. Though Clémenceau had shown restraint so far, he now pointed out that "he did not wish the Military Advisers to restrict their recommendations to the employment of forces at present on the spot. If more were required, he expected them to say so"<sup>300</sup> A resolution was then adopted to the effect

<sup>298</sup> *Ibid.*, 319. Earlier, on July 9, Balfour had pointed to the Bulgarians who were "summoned" to Paris to hear the peace terms; they who were "only half-disarmed" might "defy" the Conference which could "not even coerce a fragment of the late Austro-Hungarian monarchy," Hungary, a small and defeated nation (60).

<sup>299</sup> Brentano, Lujo, in *Neue Freie Presse*, *Morgenblatt*, Vienna, April 20, 1919, and Minister Gothein, *ibid.*, *Abendblatt*, April 23, 1919 (see footnote 172).

<sup>300</sup> *For. Rel. U. S., P. P. C. 7: 27-28.*

<sup>294</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.

<sup>295</sup> *Ibid.*, 26, July 5, 1919; for the following, *ibid.*, 60.

<sup>296</sup> *Ibid.*, 319.

<sup>297</sup> *Ibid.*, 322.

that the Military Representatives at Versailles in consultation with Marshal Foch should examine the military possibilities of enforcing on Hungary respect for the Armistice conditions and make a report to the Council in 48 hours.

At the next meeting, held on July 9, General Bliss referred to the "Report on the Measures to be Taken Regarding Hungary," dated the previous day and signed by himself and Generals Belin, Cavallero, and Sackville-West.<sup>301</sup> This report asserted that the Entente would have "at its disposal for the proposed operation only a total force, including the Czecho-Slovaks, of 100,000 to 110,000 men with which to oppose 100,000 to 120,000 Hungarians." The Military Representatives voiced the "opinion that the proposed operation is possible, but represents a great element of risk if measures are not taken to ensure the reinforcement of the Allied forces in time." It was further stressed that "the possibility of undertaking this action depends absolutely on the consent of the Serbian, Rumanian, and Czecho-Slovak Governments" and that, "if the operation is contemplated, it is of importance to postpone[!] the retirement of the Rumanian troops from the region east of the Theiss [Tisza]";<sup>302</sup> a single military command was also held to be imperative.

The brief debate which followed the reading of the foregoing report revealed again a wide difference between the points of view of Balfour and Clémenceau. Both were agreed as to the danger of Soviet Hungary's revolutionary expansionism to her neighbors and Europe as a whole.<sup>303</sup> Balfour held that the Soviet Hungarian government had turned the country into a military stronghold of revolution and was carrying on propaganda in the most dangerous fashion in the neighboring countries. Both Balfour and Clémenceau were also convinced of the peril that, Bolshevism aside, the challenge of a just vanquished nation represented to the structure of the new peace settlement which the Great Powers at that very moment were laboriously trying to erect. Balfour warned,

If the Armistice was broken before the Allies' eyes, they were bound to lose prestige. Central Europe was likely to lose more than prestige. . . . He did not favor wild military adventures, but he did not like a confession of impotence.

Yet the delegates of Britain and France were not agreed as to who ought to quench the flames which were spreading from Soviet Hungary. Though Balfour perceived the danger of Soviet Hungary's disruptive agitation, he was not prepared to offer British military assistance in the removal of what clearly was a threat both to the work of the Peace Conference and to the democratic and social order of Central Europe. Clémenceau, pointing to two French divisions in the area, voiced again his belief that other help would be required; at present neither British nor American troops

were at hand.<sup>304</sup> Yet no reply came forth either from the British or American delegation.

#### FOCH'S PREREQUISITES FOR POSSIBLE MILITARY ACTION

In the end it was agreed that the Heads of the Czecho-slovak, Yugoslav, and Rumanian delegations as well as Marshall Foch and Sir Henry Wilson be invited to attend the next Council session on Friday, July 11, to discuss the possibility of military action against Hungary.<sup>305</sup> Yet Clémenceau had already shown his hand when he had indicated that Marshal Foch, meaning the French government, would ask for British and American troops in any undertaking against Soviet Hungary.<sup>306</sup>

At the meeting on July 11 Marshal Foch emphasized that the report of the Military Representatives at Versailles contained no projected operation, but merely stated what forces were available for action. The Hungarian forces had recently been increased from six to nine divisions, and their success over the Czechs had strengthened their morale. Hungary must reduce these troops to six divisions and also withdraw from certain territories. This would signify her respect for the armistice.

84,000 were said to be available for use to this effect [to secure respect for the Armistice]. This number was small for the purpose. The main contributor to this number was Rumania.

There was currently also no cohesion between the various elements, the Rumanian, Serbian, and French troops, at present each under their own command, and the Czech Army which was under a French general.

Before making a plan, it must be known what these states would do, how much they would contribute, and whether they would agree to act under one Command. The desired results were: first to defeat the Hungarian army, and second to occupy Budapest. The first alone was difficult with the forces locally available, the second was still more difficult as Budapest was the central fortress of the Hungarian plain. It was a considerable city, and if taken would require a large occupying force. Before embarking on the adventure, there must first be a political understanding between the States taking part in it. Secondly a military understanding. Thirdly, a plan of operations.<sup>307</sup>

Foch had stated the case with great lucidity. A definite plan of operations against Soviet Hungary, however, was never adopted; the Great Powers never reached a political and military understanding on intervention against Hungary.

#### CZECHOSLOVAKIA AND YUGOSLAVIA UNWILLING TO FIGHT

Yet not only the distant Great Powers, but also the smaller states and immediate neighbors of Hungary

<sup>301</sup> *Ibid.*, 67-71.

<sup>302</sup> *Ibid.*, 70.

<sup>303</sup> *Ibid.*, 60.

<sup>304</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>305</sup> *Ibid.*, 61.

<sup>306</sup> *Ibid.*, 60.

<sup>307</sup> *Ibid.*, 103-104.

were, with the exception of Rumania, reluctant to take up arms against Soviet Hungary. The Rumanian delegate Misu pointed out that Rumania "was maintaining 7 divisions in Hungary; 4 divisions were maintained on the Russian front and two were being mobilized." The replies of the Serbian and Czech delegates, however, were clearly disappointing to the partisans of intervention. The Serbian delegate Vesnitch voiced the hope that the Allied powers might produce a moral effect upon Budapest, an effect which perhaps would be even greater than a possible military one. He also pointed out that Serbia herself was "threatened at certain points and he would ask that, during the campaign, Serbia be guaranteed by the Powers against threats from without." He mentioned, for example, that the Bulgarians had not yet been disarmed. Clémenceau, thereupon, bluntly declared that Serbia, when asking a guarantee against Bulgaria, seemed to withdraw with one hand what she offered with the other; she offered a single division!<sup>308</sup> When Vesnitch, in reply to a direct question by Clémenceau, was forced to make this embarrassing disclosure, the French Foreign Minister Pichon nevertheless voiced the hope that Serbia might be able to furnish a larger contingent, no doubt to spur the Serbs on to greater efforts.

The Czechoslovak reply to Clémenceau's question was hardly more encouraging. The Czechoslovak delegate Kramař admitted that the Hungarian situation was undoubtedly a threat to his country; yet the present moment was not propitious for Czechoslovakia to act against Hungary. The situation had been different when his country had been attacked; it had then mobilized 150,000 men. The Hungarians, however, had evacuated Czechoslovakian territory and had then observed the armistice. "What pretext was there for the Czechs to attack the Hungarians?"<sup>309</sup> In any case, he added evasively, he could not say whether the government in Prague would consent to act. Clémenceau, later summing up, referred to the availability of only a doubtful quantity of Czechoslovaks for the planned military move against Budapest. General Bliss' observation on July 11 that it was perfectly evident that Hungary's neighbors were not enthusiastic about fighting in Hungary was certainly borne out by the declarations of the Czech and Yugoslav spokesmen in the session of the Paris Peace Conference on July 5, but not by those of the Rumanian delegates or by the actions then or after this date of the Rumanian army.<sup>310</sup>

#### FRENCH GENERALS FOR INTERVENTION

The French Generals, Marshal Foch and General Franchet d'Esperey, however, were, as Clémenceau had

already observed, eager for military intervention against Soviet Hungary. So also were Italian military leaders.<sup>311</sup> Though the Czechs were most reluctant to fight the Hungarians again, the French General Pellé, since February, 1919, Commander-in-chief of the Czechoslovakian Army, considered military intervention not only to be in the interest of France, but also in that of Czechoslovakia. After Kramař had spoken, Marshall Foch introduced a letter from General Pellé, dated July 8, in which he informed the President of the Council that the Hungarian troops had withdrawn from Czechoslovak territory "to the frontier designated by the radiogram of June 13 from the President of the Peace Conference." Pellé, however, held that there was reason to believe the truce would be only momentary.<sup>312</sup> There was evidence to support the assumption that the Hungarians were determined to fight to the end in order to restore their

country within its former frontiers, or at least to reconquer Slovakia. . . . If Bolshevism takes root and grows in Hungary with the aid of the tolerance which it has enjoyed up to the present from the Entente, it would not delay much in seizing Vienna, whence it will threaten Italy and Switzerland or rejoin Bavaria.—If the Bolshevism of Budapest yields its place to a government less inimical to the social order, but equally dominated by a nationalist opinion, war will come again to Central Europe in another form, but always against our vital interests.—Today, as yesterday, military intervention against Hungary by the Entente appears to me as an inevitable necessity.<sup>313</sup>

General Pellé was not only opposed to Bolshevism in Hungary, but also, being convinced of the aggressive nationalism of the Hungarians, to Hungary as such. He therefore considered intervention a necessity, irrespective of the government the Hungarian nation might give itself. Foch, in full agreement with the conclusions which General Pellé had drawn, believed likewise that Hungary "would seize her opportunity when the Allied nations had demobilized and disarmament had set in."<sup>314</sup> Both generals apparently held that a temporary occupation of all of Hungary offered long-range protection to her neighbors. Both were clearly critical of the tolerance shown so far by the Western Powers to the Soviet government.

The debate up to this moment revealed the keen, though so far largely theoretical, interest of all Great Powers as well as of Hungary's immediate neighbors in an overthrow of the Soviet Hungarian government. Yet of the Great Powers only the French had limited forces,

<sup>311</sup> Clémenceau pointed to the Italians seemingly "disposed to go there [Budapest], and he heard that General Segro had gone to Rome to advocate the policy" (*For. Rel. U. S., P. P. C. 7: 25*); whereupon Tittoni, attempting to deflate Clémenceau's expectations or to diminish his fears, stated that "the Italian parliament was of the same mind as the French," namely opposed to any military undertaking.

<sup>312</sup> *Ibid.*, 114.

<sup>313</sup> *Ibid.*, 115.

<sup>314</sup> *Ibid.*, 106.

<sup>308</sup> *Ibid.*, 104-105.

<sup>309</sup> *Ibid.*, 106.

<sup>310</sup> *Ibid.*, 107. *Papers . . . Bliss*, Library of Congress, box 65, Diary-I, July 11, 1919.

two divisions, ready for possible action, and they seemed to make their use dependent on military contributions by the other Great Powers, especially of Britain, of the United States and also of Italy. Of the immediate neighbors of Hungary, only Rumania, in spite of her military preoccupation already along the exposed and uncertain frontier with Russia, appeared interested in and determined to engage in action against Soviet Hungary; she believed she would be able to put six divisions into the field. Czechoslovakia, satisfied with the Hungarian evacuation of Slovakia, which had been carried out at the order of the Entente, had already received assurances from the Powers in Paris regarding the frontiers of their new state; she seemed thus to have little to gain and only to lose from a resumption of the war against Hungary. Yugoslavia finally, fearful of Bulgaria and also of Italy, though for obvious reasons the latter was not directly mentioned in the Council sessions, was unwilling to offer more than a token participation.

In spite of the fact that the supporters of the case for military intervention against Hungary faced at the moment overwhelming obstacles, the intervention was to remain on the agenda of the Paris Council until the very overthrow of the Soviet Hungarian regime a few weeks later. It seemed that the Allies, in case of unexpected developments in Hungary and deterioration in general in neighboring countries, were ready to re-examine the case for intervention.

#### BÉLA KUN'S DIPLOMATIC OFFENSIVE

On July 11 the Soviet Hungarian regime began a determined diplomatic offensive. Béla Kun, Commissar for Foreign Affairs, sent a wireless from Budapest to Clémenceau, reminding him of the latter's dispatch of June 13;<sup>315</sup> he had assured him therein that the Rumanian troops would, as soon as the Hungarian army had evacuated territory ceded to the Czechoslovakian Republic, make an analogous movement of evacuation. The Hungarian government had ordered cessation of hostilities, though its troops had then been successful. On the twenty-fourth of June they had occupied the lines which marked the neutral zone established by General Pellé, but the Rumanian troops had not made any corresponding withdrawal; to the contrary, they had engaged in several violent attacks against the Hungarian units. In his note, Kun in rather aggressive manner raised the question whether Clémenceau's "word and the engagements of the Allied and Associated Powers are sufficient to cause the Rumanian troops to retire behind the frontiers assigned to them in the dispatch of the 13th of June." He begged him to "respect your instructions of the 13th of June and to make the wishes of the Allied and Associated Powers respected."<sup>316</sup>

<sup>315</sup> *Ibid.* 6: 411-412, 416, 518, and 706.

<sup>316</sup> *Ibid.* 7: 126-127.

#### RUMANIA'S POSITION BACKED BY BALFOUR, QUESTIONED BY CLÉMENCEAU

During the Council's discussion of this telegram, Balfour, pointing to the acceptance of the Council's order by Hungary and the noncompliance by Rumania, held that these developments placed the Conference in a very difficult position.<sup>317</sup> In a private conversation Bratianu had previously informed him that Rumania would not withdraw her troops before Hungary had disarmed. The Rumanians feared to abandon the defensible Tisza River line, since they would have no guarantee against resumption of attacks by Béla Kun's army. This argument seemed strong to him, especially since "Rumania was threatened by Russian Bolshevism on its eastern frontier and by Hungarian Bolshevism on its western frontier." The withdrawal from Czechoslovakia furthermore "had not lessened the danger to Rumania, which was on the contrary more than ever menaced by the Hungarian movement!" Balfour summed up saying that he thought the Rumanians' refusal to withdraw their army was "justified . . . so long as the Hungarians were not prevented from reenforcing their troops and from manufacturing munitions and war materials." The Council, adopting this view, decided to send in reply to Kun's message the following telegram to him: "The Peace Conference cannot discuss any matter with you whilst you do not carry out the conditions of the Armistice."<sup>318</sup> The Council held that Soviet Hungary, in violation of the Armistice, had rebuilt her armed forces beyond the six divisions permitted to her, but did not specifically refer to it in this telegram.

Béla Kun immediately replied with a new telegram to Clémenceau in which he charged that the Peace Conference, instead of ordering the Rumanian troops to retreat, had accused Hungary of the failure to observe the armistice conditions, but had not offered any precise facts. The Rumanians still occupied the Tisza line, although according to the terms of the military convention of November 13 the demarcation line should be that of the Maros River. Likewise, the military convention of November 13 did not recognize the Danube as a line of demarcation; yet Czechoslovak troops were occupying this line. Any fighting which had taken place between Hungarian and Rumanian, and Hungarian and Czechoslovak troops since that day was due to the violation of the lines of demarcation by Czechoslovak and Rumanian troops, and was the direct consequence of their offensive. Thus Soviet Hungary placed responsibility for any failure on her part to observe all clauses of the Armistice agreement on the opponent. Kun concluded,

We send the observation to the Peace Conference that it is not a question of negotiations, but of observance of M. Clémenceau's promise, or rather of the order of the

<sup>317</sup> *Ibid.*, 120-121.

<sup>318</sup> *Ibid.*, 121.



Peace Conference, on the part of the Royal Rumanian troops.<sup>319</sup>

In the debate following the reading of Béla Kun's communication, Clémenceau voiced the "opinion that B. Kun had right on his side." It was a pity that Rumania's vulnerability, in view of her exposed geographic situation, had not been fully explained to the Council before the order to the Rumanian troops calling for a withdrawal from the Tisza had been issued. If now the Council would not enforce the order it would be in a bad position.<sup>320</sup>

Kun's appeal and argumentation this time had made a strong impression on Clémenceau, but had made less an impact on Balfour, though he admitted that there was force in Clémenceau's remarks. Balfour expressed the view, however, that the Council of Four would not have taken the decision of June 12,<sup>321</sup> namely arranging for a cessation of hostilities and the withdrawal of the Rumanians, had it known that Hungary was breaking the Armistice of November 13 by doubling her army. "No doubt, the Council was in an unsatisfactory position, but it would be in a worse one, if it were to order the Rumanians to withdraw."

The Council finally decided to refer Kun's note to Marshal Foch and requested him to make a full report on observances and nonobservances of the original armistice conditions by all parties concerned.<sup>322</sup> Since it had already been brought out in the sessions that, aside from the nonobservance of the armistice by Hungary's neighbors, Hungary herself had by no means always abided by it, but had frequently violated it, it was clear that Balfour's views had come to prevail and that Clémenceau's scruples and hesitations had been overcome.

#### SOVIET HUNGARY'S MILITARY THREAT— THE MAIN PROBLEM

The Council intended to take no action against Rumania. On the other hand, the possibility of a military move against Hungary was seriously examined. The Allied powers had reached the conclusion not only not to enforce their previous order to Rumania to withdraw from the Tisza, but to consider the military threat emanating from Soviet Hungary as the main and immediate problem of Central Europe. The Military Experts advised then that, as long as military intervention against Soviet Hungary was considered, Rumanian troops ought not to abandon the Tisza River line. Furthermore, the Hungarian evacuation, in response to Clémenceau's ultimatum, of all of Slovakia—its success had somewhat baffled its author—while seemingly giving proof of Hungarian acquiescence to the Western powers, actually reduced the length of

the Czechoslovak-Hungarian border and thus did not diminish, but rather increased the danger to Rumania. It was the Soviet Hungarian military threat which had become a primary source of anxiety to the Allied and Associated Powers in mid-July, and they were therefore in no mood to weigh the unquestionable merits of Hungary's case relating to the Tisza River line.

#### ALLIED MILITARY EXPERTS ON "POSSIBLE ACTION IN HUNGARY"

On July 17, the Council considered the opinion of Allied military experts on a "plan of operations against Hungary," which Foch submitted to it ("Note on Possible Action in Hungary"). This had been drawn up in accordance with the order of the Supreme Council of the Allied and Associated Powers of July 11th and was based on information provided by General Pellé for the Czechoslovak Army, General Pachitsch for the Serbian Army, General Prezan for the Rumanian Army and on information furnished by the Czechoslovakian, Serbian, and Rumanian governments and also by General Franchet d'Esperey, Commander of the French Army in Hungary. The Allies, the report concluded, would be able to dispose of about 100,000–120,000 combatants. The forces available to the Entente would "appear to be adequate to undertake, within a short time and with chances of success, a military operation against Hungary," but only under the following conditions: (a) A single supreme command for operations must be organized; (b) the supreme command must be authorized to establish a new government agreeing with the views of the Entente; and (c) the Austrian government must accede to furnish munitions to the Czechoslovaks.<sup>323</sup>

The discussion following Foch's report revealed Balfour's apprehension of the Allies setting up a Hungarian government which could be considered their puppet and furnishing a weapon to the enemies of the Entente.<sup>324</sup> Tittoni, however, pointing to the minority character of the Soviet government, suggested that the Allies act in concert with the Szeged government which had been established in the French-occupied Hungarian territory and was composed of rightists and reactionaries who carried little weight at that moment. This suggestion, however, was opposed both by the Czech and Rumanian delegates, who were not only anti-Bolshevik, but distrustful of the extreme nationalism and imperialism of all Hungarian parties. None present, however, raised questions as to the advisability or necessity of military action against Soviet Hungary.

#### SOME AMERICANS FOR INTERVENTION

When in March, 1919, the Soviet Hungarian regime had been set up and the Allies had briefly contemplated military intervention, the American delegation, with

<sup>319</sup> *Ibid.*, 139–140; Appendix A to HD-7.

<sup>320</sup> *Ibid.*, 129.

<sup>321</sup> *Ibid.* 6: 351.

<sup>322</sup> *Ibid.* 7: 130–131.

<sup>323</sup> *Ibid.*, 187–190; Appendix B to HD-9.

<sup>324</sup> *Ibid.*, 177–179.

General Bliss taking the lead and Secretary of State Lansing fully approving, had directed a blistering attack against such an adventurous and ill-advised scheme, and General Bliss in a special memorandum to President Wilson had uttered words of warning. Without their knowledge, President Wilson the very same day the American Commissioners had vented their opposition against military intervention, had vetoed Foch's grandiose project of intervention which under the flag of anti-Bolshevism combined anti-Hungarian with anti-Soviet-Russian moves. As far as Hungary was concerned, President Wilson's position was based on the assumption that Magyar Bolshevism would stay within its frontiers. Differently from General Bliss, the President was unwilling to negotiate with the Magyars on essentials, in particular the joint Allied decision of February 25, 1919 on the new line of demarcation and the neutral zone, though he considered modifying it. By implication, this meant that President Wilson was already determined, in accordance with the recommendation of the American area experts in January, 1919, to leave Transylvania in Rumania's hands.

Almost four months had elapsed. During this time the Soviet regime had taken the offensive, propagandistically and militarily, had frequently challenged the Allied Power in Paris, and, last but not least, had imposed a harsh and brutal regime on its own people. Many foreign diplomatic and military observers in Hungary, in adjoining Austria, and also in faraway Paris, in spite of the liberal inclinations of some of them, had reluctantly come to acknowledge the Hungarian peril and the unsettled character of the political and social order of Central Europe, and now favored military intervention.

On May 8 Professor A. C. Coolidge, addressing the Council in Paris, held that, if no foreign troops would march against Budapest, the Soviet government, though very shaky, might

be able to hold its own. . . . The one thing that would quickly clear the situation would be an advance of foreign troops on Budapest. Without it we may expect to wait for some time longer before reaching a solution.<sup>325</sup>

Coolidge echoed the opinion of Lieutenant W. H. Osborn who after his return from Budapest to Vienna had reported to Professor Coolidge as follows: "To sum up, it seems that energetic intervention in the city by either Czechs, Rumanians, or preferably French or British troops could be effective without much difficulty."<sup>326</sup> Both Lieutenant Osborn and Professor Coolidge inclined to a military intervention. This was still the view of Professor Coolidge when on May 26 he addressed in Paris the American Commissioners Plenipotentiary about conditions in Soviet Hungary as well as about the situation in neighboring Austria:

<sup>325</sup> *Ibid.*, 456.

<sup>326</sup> *Ibid.*, 459.

The only solution of the problem was to induce the French to send troops into Budapest to clean it out and set up a new government. Only in this way could the Danube be opened and normal economical and commercial activities be restored to the whole of South Eastern Europe.<sup>327</sup>

On July 17 Henry James in a "Memorandum Concerning Possible Action at Budapest" discussed before the American Commissioners Plenipotentiary two ways of loosening the knot at Budapest, and pointed to the possibility of either outright military interference in the affairs of Hungary and overthrowing the Kun government by force, or the more moderate alternative, which consisted in persuading Kun to include a moderate element in his government and to admit an Allied police force to some areas of Budapest and to certain points on the Hungarian railway and river systems.

Thereafter Lieutenant Emory Pottle and Dr. E. Dana Durand of the American Relief Administration, who had visited Budapest between July 6 and 9, voiced in their "Memorandum Regarding Conditions in Hungary"<sup>328</sup> their belief that

the universal sentiment [in Hungary] was in favor of some Allied intervention, that there is not the slightest possibility, in our opinion, of any armed opposition to a properly constituted allied movement. Béla Kun himself would not dare give orders to shoot at Allied forces who entered the country under proper declaration of purpose. If he gave such orders, it is extremely doubtful if they would be executed, especially in view of the attitude of Böhm.

While the French were hated, this being in large measure due to the Vyx affair, the British and American flags "would be an open sesame to every difficult door in Hungary."<sup>329</sup> The authors, while submitting a detailed plan of intervention, warned, however, against an intervention by the troops of the countries surrounding Hungary.

Though there were among these American observers discrepancies of opinion about how hearty a welcome would be extended to any intervening foreign troops, there appeared to prevail a far-reaching consensus as to the desirability, if not necessity, of intervention, from the point of view of the interests of the Allies as well as from that of the interests of the Hungarian people.

#### BLISS' DEBATE WITH BALFOUR

Yet this had not been the view of General Bliss in March, 1919. Nor was it his opinion in the month of July. It remained then for him in the meeting of the Heads of Delegations of the Five Great Powers on July 17 to direct again a scorching criticism against Foch's memorandum which has been discussed above. Brushing aside all disguises and pretensions,<sup>330</sup> he asked the candid question whether the main objective of the contemplated military move against Hungary was

<sup>327</sup> *Ibid.* 11: 188.

<sup>328</sup> *Ibid.*, 312 f.

<sup>329</sup> *Ibid.*, 320.

<sup>330</sup> *Ibid.* 7: 179.

not mainly a renewal of the war against Hungary and removal of the present government. Bliss referred to a detailed report submitted on the twenty-fifth of February, 1919, by General Charpy, Chief of Staff of General Franchet d'Esperey, to the Military Representatives at Versailles; according to it, it had been the Rumanians who had violated the armistice "at a time when the Hungarian Army had gone to pieces."

If the Council meant to take action on the ground that the Armistice had been violated, it should examine carefully at what date the Hungarian army had been reconstituted. . . . If action was to be based on the pretext of a breach of the Armistice by Hungary, the Allies ought to be quite clear that the fault was entirely on the side of the Hungarians.

Balfour, commenting on General Bliss' very important statement, dissented entirely from his allegation

that the breach of the armistice was merely alleged as a pretext for attacking the Communist Government of Hungary. He wished to be understood that he was not animated by any consideration of Hungarian internal politics, little though he might approve of Béla Kun. He agreed with M. Kramář that it was intolerable to allow the Hungarian state to become a military stronghold, from which economic and political disturbances radiated over Central Europe. When he insisted on the disarmament of Hungary by reason of her breach of the armistice, he was not disguising his intention, but stating exactly what he wished. Without the disarmament of Hungary, there could be no peace or settlement of frontiers in Central Europe.

He was surprised, Balfour further declared, to hear General Bliss state that, by Article I of the Armistice, Allied Powers were precluded from sending troops across the line of demarcation. The Article forbade the Hungarians to go beyond the line, but did not explicitly forbid the Allies to cross it. Clause III gave the Allies the right of occupying all places and strategic points to be determined by the Commander-in-Chief of the Allied Armies. Furthermore, another small point, Rumania was no belligerent at the time the Convention was signed, and he would like to hear from experts in military jurisprudence whether the Rumanian advance, "regrettable though it might have been, amounted to a breach of the Armistice in the same sense as the obvious and important breach made by the Hungarians."<sup>331</sup>

General Bliss quickly countered that the interpretation of Article I of the Armistice did not require a lawyer. The Armistice could, by its very nature, not impose a purely unilateral obligation. As to Article III, no similar provision had been made in the armistice with Germany, though there was such a clause also in the armistice concluded with Austria. The reason for the insertion of these provisions in the armistice agreements with Hungary and Austria had been merely to have the right to pass, if necessary, through Hungarian and Austrian territory in order to threaten

Germany from the south; it was then feared that hostilities with Germany might be resumed. This provision, however, gave no Allied Commander the right to occupy any point he liked, without reference to the Commander-in-Chief, and Rumanian action had been taken in defiance of the wishes of General Franchet d'Esperey.<sup>332</sup>

General Bliss' exposition seemed to have been sufficiently convincing so as to silence Balfour in regard to the legal side of the problem; Kramář too thereafter sidestepped the legal question. Both Czech and Yugoslav representatives, Kramář and Pašić respectively, then shifted attention to the actual military threat which the army of Hungary posed to her neighbors, the Yugoslavs adding their voice, expressing fear lest they become the third victim of Hungary.

Whatever the value of General Bliss' extended statement about the weakness of the Allied position, as judged from the point of view of international law, he himself did not come to grips with the urgent practical problem of whether Soviet Hungary by her acts, propaganda and policies constituted a threat to her neighbors and whether she harbored aggressive ideological and imperialist designs<sup>333</sup>—a view held then, incidentally, by General Bliss' compatriots, the members of the American delegation; this view was soon to gain strength after the resumption of the Hungarian attack against the Rumanians.

Virtually all the new or enlarged states which had arisen on the ruins of the Austro-Hungarian Empire had large, often excessive, territorial and political ambitions and were bent on extending their boundaries in the name of national security. Though nationalism gripped all of them, Hungarian nationalism, because of its dominant role in the past and its recent eclipse, and now spurred on by a new ideology of expansionism and the hope for assistance from the East, seemed especially menacing to Hungary's neighbors. The apparent internal weakness of the Soviet Republic only increased the danger to them, since only quick expansionism seemed to offer the promise of saving the shaky regime.

Yet even some of these immediate neighbors of Hungary who were especially threatened, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia, were by no means elated about the prospect of becoming involved in hostilities with a militant Soviet Hungary.

<sup>332</sup> *For. Rel. U. S., P. P. C. 7*: 181-182.

<sup>333</sup> Only in a private letter to his wife did it seem to occur to General Bliss that Allied policy might depend after all on Soviet Hungary: "If they [Hungarian Bolsheviks] could only agree to give up their official government propaganda, I believe the Allies might be willing to treat with them" (quoted by Palmer, *Bliss* . . . , 389, April 17, 1919). However, even after the Hungarian attack against the Rumanian troops which began on July 21 General Bliss held privately that the Hungarians were "justified in what they were doing" (*Bliss Papers*, Library of Congress, box 65, Diary-I, July 24, 1919) and that it was the Allies who "violated . . . the Armistice" (July 25).

<sup>331</sup> *Ibid.*, 179-181; about the Padua and Belgrade Armistice terms, see Temperley, ed., *op. cit.* 1: 481-493.

## FOCH AND BALFOUR

Marshal Foch was clearly disappointed with the outcome of the debate.<sup>334</sup> He had expected more than Balfour's spirited defense of the legal and moral position of the Allies; he apparently had hoped for concrete and substantial offers of military contribution from Great Britain and other great and small Powers. He seemed convinced of the peril which Hungary, especially Soviet Hungary, represented not only to her immediate neighbors, but also to the Great Powers gathered at Paris, and favored decisive military methods in quickly bringing peace and stability to Central Europe.

On the day following the legal sparring between General Bliss and Balfour, the latter, no doubt in reply to the blunt speech of the General, advanced a policy in regard to Hungary which, while clearly aimed against the Soviet regime, was couched in terms carefully avoiding any direct reference to communism, Soviet institutions, and to Hungary's internal regime at all. He wanted, Balfour explained, merely the execution of the Armistice by Hungary and would promise in return the withdrawal of Rumanian troops to the original frontier. The Allies, however, he declared explicitly, could not negotiate with those who were breaking their engagements. This definitely excluded the government of Béla Kun as a possible partner in any negotiations, since it was exactly this accusation that had been leveled against it. Balfour had reached the conclusion that Soviet Hungary harbored aggressive intentions and he was prepared to recommend military action<sup>335</sup> to his government, if additional evidence was to corroborate this hypothesis.

The evidence Balfour needed was soon provided by the resumption on July 21 of the Hungarian military offensive against Rumania. But neither Balfour, though still not closing the door to military action against Hungary, nor the British government even then favored a more militant course against the Soviet Hungarian Republic; it rather continued its policy of "wait and see."

The inconsistency and weakness of Allied policies toward Soviet Hungary had become clearly apparent. The Allied statesmen themselves had few illusions about the true character of their policy. It was compounded

<sup>334</sup> Foch observed that on July 11, when he had been assigned to consider a plan of operations against Soviet Hungary, "the principle of action had not been in question. If it was questioned now, it would seem that the Council was in contradiction with itself." Balfour, "dissenting entirely" from Marshal Foch in this respect, pointed out that he could not consult his government "on the propriety of military operations, unless he knew what their nature was and what chance of success they offered." The American delegate, White, though complimenting Foch on a "most able report," seemed to side with Balfour when he pointed out that "he could not commit his government, and even the President would have to be assured that the proposal did not involve a new war before he could assent, without consulting the Senate" (*For. Rel. U. S., P. P. C. 7*: 182-183).

<sup>335</sup> *Ibid.*, 199.

of indecision, influenced by public opinion in the Western countries which everywhere was opposed to another intervention—in addition to the one on Russian soil—to a new war and more sacrifices, and shaped by lack of unity among the Great Powers, by their "divergent purposes."<sup>336</sup> Allied political discrepancies *vis-à-vis* Soviet Hungary as well as their shying away from direct intervention and application of force had already become manifest in March, 1919, and had prompted the British delegate Harold Nicolson to confide in his diary: "What we want is a Dictator for Europe and we haven't got one—And never will have!"<sup>337</sup> The inevitable result of all these forces and influences pulling into different directions was vacillation.<sup>338</sup> Admonition and exhortation took the place of a clear-eyed, consistent and firm policy. As Winston Churchill wrote in regard to Soviet Hungary in *The Aftermath* in 1924: "The Supreme Council could only expostulate. It therefore expostulated."<sup>339</sup>

# VIII. SOVIET HUNGARY'S JULY OFFENSIVE, ALLIED PLANS, AND THE APPROACHING CLIMAX

## SOVIET HUNGARY'S MILITARY OFFENSIVE ON JULY 21

The increasing scarcity of food and the lack of the most urgent necessities throughout the country, the breakdown in administration and the growing anarchy—all this contributed to undermining the morale of the entire Hungarian people and was sooner or later bound to sweep away the communist government. Yet it was the regime's reckless military aggressiveness through which it dug its own grave.

The Hungarian military offensive against the Rumanians was undertaken for the immediate purpose of dislodging them from the Tisza River, but, if successful, might not have been confined to this objective.

<sup>336</sup> Clark, *Greater Rumania*, 311.

<sup>337</sup> Nicolson, *op. cit.*, 289, March 24, 1919.

<sup>338</sup> Clark, *op. cit.*, 311; also Dillon, *op. cit.*, 223. Dillon was highly critical of the Western statesmen on account of what he considered their "vacillation" (*ibid.*). He wrote: "Temper, education, and training disqualified them for seizing the opportunity" (*ibid.*, 222-223) to crush Hungarian Bolshevism. His criticism, however, was marred by his clearly pro-Rumanian bias and other prejudices and by his inclination to give credence to mere rumors (see espec. 237-239). Clark, *op. cit.*, was also pro-Rumanian and sharply critical of the Peace Conference, though only rarely going to the same extremes: "The strange partiality," he wrote, "of the Peace Conference to this adventurer [Béla Kun] needs clearing up" (243). Not only these friends of Rumania, but also Hungarians as M. Károlyi and W. Böhm have expressed their amazement that the Peace Conference pursued at times a relatively lenient policy toward the Soviet regime, as compared for instance with the policy toward its predecessor. This, of course, was not due to any preference for the latter, but partly to shortsightedness, partly to opportunistic considerations.

<sup>339</sup> Churchill, W., *The aftermath*, 235, London, 1924.

It came about ten days after diplomatic presentation concerning the line had been made to Paris;<sup>340</sup> the Allies had then ignored the Hungarian presentations. Though in a way forewarned, the offensive, nevertheless, came as a startling surprise to them. When recently the Béla Kun government had yielded to Clémenceau's order to evacuate all territories in Slovakia which Hungarian troops had formerly wrested from Czechoslovakia, it had most strikingly displayed subservience toward the Paris Peace Conference, not to mention military weakness. Since then the world situation had not changed in favor of Soviet Russia and world communism. True, the Allied ultimatum of June 13 to Hungary and the diplomatic note to Rumania had notified both governments that the new boundary line ran east of the Tisza. But the Soviet Hungarian government could have no illusion that its attempt to enforce the West's decision against their ally would appear to the Great Powers an impudent challenge of the authority of the Conference. Everything considered, such bold challenge to the West on the part of the Soviet Hungarian regime at this time did not seem very likely and was indeed quite unexpected.

Reconquest of territory which was considered as rightfully belonging to Hungary aside, Béla Kun was apparently eager to seize the proceeds of the harvest in Rumanian-held territory. He may also have been fearful of keeping an army of questionable morale, and one displaying a nationalistic, anti-Soviet spirit, too close to the capital. His government, opposed and attacked by all segments of the population, was also increasingly suspicious of the extreme left, the followers of Tibor Szamuely, who had become notorious also for his terrorist activities. The extremists had received support from abroad when in June two Ukrainian officers, Grigory and Isay, representatives of Rakovsky, President of the Ukrainian Soviet Republic, arrived in Hungary for the alleged purpose of organizing Russian prisoners of war for the Red Army. Ridiculing the Kun government as a dictatorship of the bourgeoisie rather than one of the proletariat, they plotted to overthrow the Soviet Hungarian regime on July 20-21 and to make Szamuely leader of the Soviet government.<sup>341</sup> The *coup* and its fierce repression coincided with Hungary's resumption of hostilities against Rumania.

The Soviet Hungarian government felt keenly the need of bolstering the tottering regime by military success. The increasingly desperate internal situation merely increased the Soviet government's willingness to take risks. News from Paris in early July of the Allies' indecision toward Soviet Hungary and, after

the middle of the month, of the growing firmness and hostility of the Allied and Associated Powers may have convinced the Soviet government that it had only to gain from an offensive and little to lose.

On July 21, the day the Hungarian Red Army began its attack against the Rumanians, Béla Kun sent the following radio message to Clémenceau:

In the face of the attitude of the Rumanians who have been aggressive in defiance of the will of the Entente, we were forced to cross the Tisza and try to make the will of the Entente respected by the Rumanians.<sup>342</sup>

Under this spurious pretense the Soviet government again not only threatened the peace and stability of Central and Southeastern Europe, but also threw down a gauntlet to the Allies and the Paris Peace Conference.

The Hungarian situation called for clear decisions and energetic moves on the part of the Peace Conference. But no such decision and action was forthcoming. The call for some definite policy concerning Hungary, issued by Herbert Hoover in his letter to Secretary of State Robert Lansing on July 1, warning of the danger of the economic collapse of the countries surrounding Hungary, remained unanswered even after the new turn of events.<sup>343</sup> The Council in Paris, according to one contemporary observer, clearly exhibited an inability to make prompt and firm decisions.<sup>344</sup> This was the consensus of opinion, the view of men who widely differed in their policy toward Soviet Hungary, as, for instance Herbert Hoover, General Bliss, and the French General Pellé, Commander of the Czechoslovakian troops.<sup>345</sup>

The Allied Powers, beset by numerous difficulties, were weakened by far-going demobilization and by the unwillingness of public opinion in their respective countries to support what seemed actually a new war, a war of intervention to stamp out a radical socialist regime. The Entente adopted thus the policy of waiting partly for the outcome of the Hungarian military offensive, partly, as will be seen, for the realization of plans of Hungarian opposition leaders on the democratic Left to overthrow the Bolshevik government. Such a policy, based on mere hopes and procrastination, was a policy of weakness. As the debates of the Conference had revealed, it was not one heartily endorsed either by Balfour or by Clémenceau or any of the other statesmen assembled at Paris; none of them was proud of it.

#### ALLIED NEGOTIATORS, BÖHM, AND THE SOVIET REGIME

For some time negotiations had been carried on in Vienna between Allied representatives, especially

<sup>340</sup> *For. Rel. U. S., P. P. C. 7*: 125-127; Appendix "B" (to HD-6), Béla Kun, July 11, 1919. According to Seton-Watson, *A history of the Roumanians*, Kun forestalled a Rumanian offensive "by twenty-four hours" in a last attempt to regain popularity at home (545).

<sup>341</sup> Böhm, *op. cit.*, 438, 441.

<sup>342</sup> *Ibid.*, 30.

<sup>343</sup> Dillon, *op. cit.*

<sup>344</sup> *Ibid.*, 29-30; Annexure "A" to IC-201A; see also Bliss *Papers*, Box 65, Diary I, July 17, 1919, and Pellé, in *For. Rel. U. S., P. P. C. 7*: 115.

Colonel Cunningham, head of the British Mission, and Hungarian socialist and trade union leaders, some of them members of the Béla Kun government. These negotiations aimed at the replacement of the Soviet government and at the formation of a new moderate, though leftist, cabinet, which would be acceptable to the Allies and one with which peace could be concluded. Dr. Otto Bauer, Austrian foreign minister and one of the prominent leaders of the then powerful Austrian Social Democratic Party, served for a time as mediator in these negotiations. They received a new stimulus when Wilhelm Böhm, leading Hungarian Social Democrat and former Commander of the Red Army, assumed the post of Hungarian envoy in Vienna in early July. Aside from Soviet Russia, Austria was the only country which had extended recognition to the Soviet Hungarian regime, and under these circumstances the diplomatic post in Vienna was of great political significance. At the same time, Vienna was the seat and center of activities of several Allied diplomatic missions whence agents were sent to neighboring countries.

On the twenty-fifth of July, Captain T. C. Gregory of the American Relief Administration, dispatched a telegram to Herbert Hoover, Director General of Relief, informing him that Böhm had called on Colonel Cunningham. According to Gregory, a Conference of Entente representatives had submitted to Böhm a plan of action for the overthrow of the Bolshevik government. The Kun government was to be "disbanded, communism to be repudiated and Communist propaganda to be discontinued," and a temporary dictatorship consisting of Haubrich, Agoston, and Garani was to be set up and to operate pending formation of a government representative of all classes. Böhm had accepted this proposition conditionally, pending a discussion with his colleagues. Gregory considered it imperative that Entente representatives be instructed as to whether "Entente approves principles in general."<sup>346</sup>

On the same day, July 25, that Captain Gregory's report was received, Herbert Hoover, having informed H. White of the American Committee in Paris of the latest turn of events, was asked by the latter to instruct the Council immediately of the state of negotiations between Böhm and the Allied representatives in Vienna. According to Hoover, Böhm had indicated that, if he could be suitably supported by the Allies and given certain assurances,

he, on his part, would be ready to set up a social-democratic government with himself as temporary dictator. Béla Kun would be deposed from power; all terrorist actions would cease, and order would be restored.<sup>347</sup>

Balfour raised thereupon the question whether "the best way of getting rid of Béla Kun was by means of military intervention." Perhaps "the best solution lay

in adopting the suggestions contained in Mr. Hoover's telegram." Any solution of the Hungarian question through General Böhm would have great advantage.

In each of our countries there are sections of opinion which, without being actually Bolshevik, have none the less a certain sympathy for Bolshevik programmes. Those portions of the public were most strongly opposed to military action against the Bolsheviks.<sup>348</sup>

The important question was to know whether the Allies could place full confidence in General Böhm. Even if it were possible, Balfour asserted, he himself "would not be disposed to enter into an elaborate political arrangement with him." Professor A. C. Coolidge, former Chief of the American Mission to Austria, referred thereupon to a telegram to the Council which he personally had sent from Vienna three months ago. He had then stressed General Böhm's great popularity in the Army and among Hungarian workers, and also that he was no extremist. Coolidge voiced also great confidence in the three men whom Böhm had selected as members of the projected provisional cabinet. It was then

decided that the question of further action on the part of the Allied and Associated Governments in Hungarian affairs, in view of the latest information received with regard to General Böhm's proposals, should be discussed by the Council on the following day and that Marshal Foch and Hoover should attend.<sup>349</sup>

Though there was increasing tendency among the Allies to take Böhm seriously and though his demands for raising the blockade, sending food into the country, and reopening navigation on the Danube appeared reasonable and moderate, both American representatives, White and Hoover, supported Balfour in his opposition to the Allied and Associated Governments entering into detailed and binding negotiations with either Böhm or Béla Kun. Hoover rather suggested that the Allies make a public declaration of policy and allow Böhm to make his own deductions from it. A general statement, promising economic assistance to be given to a properly constituted government might be issued; no other commitment should be made. Such a declaration would not bind the Conference to subsequent military action.<sup>350</sup> The Council, still uncertain

<sup>348</sup> *Ibid.*, 255; Balfour still did not entirely abandon the policy of Allied military intervention in Hungary. Possible military operations, assisted from within Hungary by Böhm and his friends, "with Hungarian assistance," might be preferable to any other course. About "American sympathy for Bolshevik programmes," see Hoover, *The ordeal* . . . , 118: "Our people who enjoy so great liberty and general comfort, cannot fail to sympathize to some degree with these blind gropings for better social conditions."

<sup>349</sup> *For. Rel. U. S., P. P. C. 7*: 257.

<sup>350</sup> *Ibid.*, 306. After the overthrow of the Soviet regime in Hungary the Peace Conference did not hold that it had made any commitment toward Böhm or any other Hungarians and insisted that the relations between the Allied and Associated Powers and Hungary must rest on the Armistice of November

<sup>346</sup> *Ibid.*, 310; Appendix A to HD-14.

<sup>347</sup> *Ibid.*, 254-255.

of its next move—in case the Soviet government did not fall by its own weight—wished to refrain from making military threats which it might prove unable to carry out. “The military movement against B. Kun seems to be dropped,” wryly commented General Bliss in his diary on July 25.<sup>351</sup>

#### DIRECT MILITARY INTERVENTION REJECTED

It was clear that the probability of achieving the major objective of the Great Powers, the overthrow of the Soviet government and compliance with the Armistice by troop reduction, without direct military intervention, intrigued the Entente. Action by Böhm and his friends, combined with the threat to the Soviet regime posed by the armies of Hungary's neighbors and the Entente, might produce the desired political and military change in Hungary. Even Foch held that a mere ultimatum, backed by military force, might bring about Hungarian acquiescence to Allied demands, effective disarmament without actual occupation of her territory.<sup>352</sup> Neither Foch nor Hoover, however, thought it wise to remove the military threat from Hungary's borders at the time when Böhm tried to effect political changes from within and the Allies, in return for removing a hostile and dictatorial government, held out economic and territorial promises from without.

In reply to a direct question by Balfour as to the alternative to an Allied military intervention, Clémenceau pointed out, it meant leaving Hungary to settle her own fate. Once more he summed up:

The war was over, the American army had been withdrawn very rapidly, the British army nearly as rapidly, and the French army was being demobilized. He was forced to demobilize very quickly; it could not be helped. He could not, therefore, contemplate the sending of two French divisions into Hungary unsupported by their Allies [!]. There would shortly be only two classes under the colors in the French Army. . . . In any case, he was not ready to begin fighting again. He felt inclined to adopt the proposals made by Mr. Balfour and Mr. Hoover. He would encompass Hungary with a ring of hostile states, and rely on her to rid herself of a minority in her own way. Hence, it would be well, as Marshal Foch suggested, to consult the small powers, who were, in any event, principally concerned.<sup>353</sup>

The retreat was obvious; France herself was no longer principally concerned. By this time the position of the small Powers was, as Clémenceau had to admit, not clear, and Marshal Foch, who had made his action con-

ditional, contingent on the agreement of the lesser Powers concerned, could, in the words of his civilian chief, also on this ground not offer “a clear solution.”

#### RELiance ON ALLIED “ECONOMIC POWER”

At times Clémenceau seemed hopeful that a policy short of military intervention might succeed. What he had in mind was an economic blockade of Hungary by her neighbors and the Western Powers. He conceded that this was an “inglorious” weapon. Balfour's hope now that the past prestige and economic power of the Allies—“half of the policy” he had earlier suggested—might bring about the overthrow of the Soviet government, was rather similar to Clémenceau's expectations. The economic weapon was, in his opinion, still available to the Allies.<sup>354</sup> Herbert Hoover, according to Clémenceau, held the key to the solution of the Hungarian question.

The offer of food in return for good behavior would be a very effective weapon. The case was similar to that of Russia, but in the case of Russia, there was no means of coercion, against the Hungarians there were. They could be surrounded, and in time, would have to come to terms. This might be inglorious, but there was little glory in fighting without men. . . . He would prefer to accept the proposal Mr. Balfour had read, to avoid giving any ultimatum, to refrain from engaging Marshal Foch or any troops and to give General Böhm the month for which he had asked. At the end of this time, the situation would not be much worse than the present, one third of the French troops would have been demobilized, but there would still be means of action, if absolutely necessary.<sup>355</sup>

Clémenceau seemed to be well aware that the policy of prudence which he suggested for the time being involved some elements of risk—Balfour had pointed out that Kun might possibly score military success with his new offensive—“but there was a greater risk in giving an ultimatum which, if rejected, would lead to war.”

Mr. Balfour said that he sympathized with M. Clémenceau as he had also no wish to plunge the world into war again. He would add that without a French Commander-in-Chief and without the cooperation of the two French divisions he thought there was little prospect of success. As M. Clémenceau said that neither of these conditions could be fulfilled, the case was judged. . . . If the French government who had two divisions available declined to use them, it was not for him to press for the campaign. Possibly the prestige of past victories and economic power might enable the Allies to overcome this difficulty.<sup>356</sup>

#### THE ALLIED APPEAL TO THE HUNGARIAN NATION

After some further discussion it was decided on July 26 to issue in the press and by wireless a declaration in which the Allied and Associated Governments stated

13 and on the new boundaries as communicated to Hungary on June 13, 1919 (*ibid.*, 481-483).

<sup>351</sup> *Papers of General Bliss*, Library of Congress, box 65, Diary I, Dec. 12, 1918-Aug. 17, 1919. About American opposition at that moment to using troops for such a purpose, military intervention against Hungary, and in particular President Wilson's and also Hoover's opposition, see Hoover, *op. cit.*, 137-138.

<sup>352</sup> *For. Rel. U. S., P. P. C. 7*: 307.

<sup>353</sup> *Ibid.*, 318-319.

<sup>354</sup> *Ibid.*, 321.

<sup>355</sup> *Ibid.*, 319-320.

<sup>356</sup> *Ibid.*, 321.



that they were anxious to sign a peace treaty with the Hungarian people and help to make possible the economic revival of Central Europe. This could not

even be attempted until there is in Hungary a Government which represents its people, and carries out in letter and the spirit the engagements into which it has entered with the Associated Governments. None of these conditions are fulfilled by the administration of Béla Kun: which has not only broken the armistice to which Hungary was pledged, but is at this moment actually attacking a friendly and Allied power. With this particular aspect of the question it is for the Associated Governments to deal on their own responsibility. If food and supplies are to be made available, if the blockade is to be removed, if economic reconstruction is to be attempted, if peace is to be settled, it can only be done with a Government which represents the Hungarian people and not with one that rests its authority upon terrorism.

The Associated Powers think it opportune to add that all foreign occupation of Hungarian territory, as defined by the Peace Conference will cease as soon as the terms of the armistice have in the opinion of the Allied Commander-in-Chief been satisfactorily complied with.<sup>357</sup>

In this appeal of the Great Powers to the Hungarian nation over the head of their government, the Hungarian people were told that the Soviet government was guilty of violation of the Armistice; it was accused of engaging in aggression at that very moment and of using terrorism against its own people. The Hungarian nation was urged to overthrow this government. In return, major economic gains and the end of the occupation of Hungarian territory were promised. But no military move either by the Entente or by Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia against Soviet Hungary was planned. The only tangible help extended to Rumania was to encompass, in Clémenceau's words, "Hungary with a ring of hostile states and rely on her [!] to rid herself of a minority in her own way."<sup>358</sup>

<sup>357</sup> *Ibid.*, 321-322.

<sup>358</sup> *Ibid.*, 319. A leading Hungarian communist, Ferenc Münnich, in the article The October revolution and the Hungarian Red Army, *Voprosy istorii*, 34-59, March, 1959, espec. 50-53, admits by implication that the Great Powers themselves did not directly intervene in a military manner. Rakosi, M., The formation of the Communist party. The Hungarian Soviet Republic (1917-1919), *ibid.*, Nov. 1955, similarly refers to the Entente as only threatening Soviet Hungary with "extreme measures" (59-60). However, Nezhinsky, L. N., Reaction in Soviet Russia to the Hungarian proletarian revolution, *ibid.*, 108, also 102-112, Feb. 1959, expresses himself more positively about the alleged direct military intervention of the Great Powers: "The ruling circles of the Entente and of the U.S.A. immediately undertook measures to strangle the Soviet Hungarian Republic. In the middle of April, inspired by American monopolists, the imperialists of the Entente began military intervention against Soviet Hungary." Yet he mentions thereafter, aside from Rumanian, Serbian, and Czechoslovakian troops, only French military units; actually, the latter did not engage directly in hostilities against the Hungarian Red Army. Lebovich, M. F., The struggle of the domestic and foreign counterrevolution against the Hungarian people in 1919, *ibid.*, Sept. 1957, treats mainly the period after the breakdown of the Soviet Hungarian Republic. The large number of articles on the First Soviet Hungarian Republic in the leading Soviet

This was not the first time that Clémenceau had suggested to surround Hungary with hostile states and wait for the Hungarian people to overthrow the Soviet government. The initiative in ridding Hungary of Bolshevism was, the Allies hoped, to come from within, not from without. This was no bold aggressive policy on the part of the Entente and her friends. Hungary was to be besieged, but the besiegers, unprepared to make sacrifices, were to wait for a revolt in the beleaguered fortress. This policy of weakness ignored the fact that the besieged opponent was just then making a desperate attempt to breach a segment of the surrounding wall held by Rumania, and her friends and allies made no determined move to come to her assistance.

The major Powers, it was evident, had embarked on a course compounded of pious hopes, indecision, and procrastination. The recent Hungarian attack on the Rumanians might fail, which, in Balfour's words, would make a great difference. "Should Béla Kun fall of his own weight, it would certainly be better than if he were overthrown by the Allies." General Böhm's attempt to overthrow Kun might be successful; this was another hope of the Conference and of Clémenceau.<sup>359</sup>

#### NO ALTERNATE ALLIED POLICIES

Yet it was clear that the Allied Powers had not reached any decision on alternate policies to be pursued, if either of these eventualities should fail to materialize and Béla Kun's regime weather all storms. Balfour warned that if, after issuing the declaration in the hope of encouraging General Böhm and other Hungarian groups to overthrow the Soviet regime, "it was intended to do nothing," "this was hardly desirable." Clémenceau, who after the Council's approval of the foregoing Declaration, suggested that in the meantime conversations might be undertaken with the smaller Powers immediately concerned with the Hungarian situation, countered Balfour by pointing out that he had not meant to convey the impression "that he would never act: on some favorable occasion he might."<sup>360</sup>

Yet a victory of the attacking Hungarian troops or a failure of Böhm and his friends to overthrow Béla Kun would make Western action most urgent; and neither obviously constituted a "favorable occasion," in Bal-

Russian historical journal during these last years testifies to the importance attached in Soviet Russian thinking to the shortlived Hungarian experiment of 1919.

<sup>359</sup> *For. Rel. U. S., P. P. C. 7: 322.* Béla Kun disappeared in the Great Purge in 1938. In spite of his sharp opposition to Trotsky, he was accused in the late thirties of leanings toward Trotskyism. His memory was vindicated in 1956 (Varga, E., Seventieth Anniversary of Béla Kun, *Pravda*, Feb. 21). In an article in *Voprosy istorii*, Nov. 1955, Rakosi, M., The formation of the Communist party. The Hungarian Soviet Republic (1917-1919), is still sharply critical of Kun's "opportunistic course" (48) and of the Party's numerous mistakes under his leadership during the brief Soviet period (49, 54-55).

<sup>360</sup> *For. Rel. U. S., P. P. C. 7: 322.*

four's meaning of these words, for possible Western intervention. Clémenceau promised action if none was needed; he implied that he would not move, if the situation was unfavorable and action most urgent. Similarly, a short time earlier, he had voiced the hope that Böhm's operations and Hoover's blandishments might create a favorable opportunity of which Marshal Foch could then avail himself.<sup>361</sup> Yet, clearly, the real problem for the Allies would arise if no favorable opportunities presented themselves and if the dark clouds over the Central European horizon grew darker.

The Allies had reached an impasse. They hoped for the best to extricate themselves from a precarious situation; they waited eagerly for the success of Böhm's undertakings and for the impact of Hoover's and the Allies' threats and promises aimed at the Hungarian nation. At that very moment they had neither reached the decision militarily to intervene, nor had they definitely come to the conclusion to wash their hands of the Hungarian affair. The position of both Clémenceau and Balfour was that, however inopportune and unpopular an intervention in Hungary might be and as little disposed and prepared the Allies were for it, they would have to maintain at least the threat of possible intervention and, in case either of exceptional opportunity or extreme need, might actually have to intervene. In spite of the fact, however, that the Hungarian situation, owing to the Magyar aggression against Rumania, had grown more acute during the month of July, the debates in Paris, while revealing a stiffening of the Entente, a determination to deal no longer in any way with the Soviet government, still did not attain the real climax: the decision to intervene. The advisability of military intervention in Hungary had long and seriously been considered. When for the time being at least it had been abandoned, it was done so mainly for practical reasons, the relative military weakness and the psychological unpreparedness of the West.

The breakdown of Soviet Hungary on August 1 came in consequence of the failure of the Soviet Hungarian offensive against Rumania. Bolshevism in Hungary which had drawn much of its strength from Hungarian nationalism crumbled when unable to fulfill the latter's hopes and ambitions. Its fall saved the Western Powers from having to make hard and fast decisions. The military intervention in Central Europe which the Entente had long discussed, but on which it had never agreed and not definitely approved, was no longer necessary. The "inglorious" policy of "holding the issues and waiting" had paid dividends.

### CONCLUSION

On March 22, 1919, at a moment of national crisis, a Soviet Hungarian government headed by Béla Kun had come into existence in Budapest. The preceding

day Michael Károlyi had resigned following the presentation of an ultimatum by the Entente which had demanded further retreat by Hungarian troops. The new communist-dominated government was considered a "serious threat" both by the neighboring countries and the Western Powers.

From the very beginning the Allies were anxious to "suppress the volcano," though they were "not clear" about "the means of doing it."<sup>362</sup> The resulting lack of resolve and vacillation seemed to many contemporaries the more regrettable, since both the continued existence of an avowedly aggressive Soviet regime in Central Europe and the continued absence of a peace treaty with Hungary were festering sores in the body of Central Europe which needed peace and stability to rebuild its economic life.

The establishment of a Hungarian Soviet Republic represented the first victory of communism beyond the borders of Russia and strongly buoyed Bolshevik hopes. The new regime was a challenge to the victorious Entente, being an extension of that very system which the Western Powers, though half-heartedly, were fighting in Russia. This communist projection into Hungary appeared to be the more menacing on account of the intensive Soviet propaganda and threats to neighboring countries, the possibility of Hungary's military link-up with Russia and the growing Bolshevik menace to all of Central, Eastern and even Western Europe. It seemed unlikely that the new government would accept the peace treaty which the Western Powers were then preparing for Hungary.

The new Soviet regime, intent on extending communism beyond its frontiers, was opposed by the anti-communist new national states which were allied with the West and beneficiaries of the break-up of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. Having turned the table against their former masters, Czechs, Rumanians, and Serbs had liberated their own kinsfolk and kindred nationalities and, for reasons of military strategy and viability, had also included, partly with Allied approval, Hungarian minorities in their new states. They displayed little interest in communism which, by a curious historical twist, had become the flag of the former ruling nationality, the Magyars. Their national revolution and the boundaries of the new national states could be strengthened only through friendship with the West, not through friendship with the Magyars, the Russians, and communism. It was no accident that Soviet Hungary's main proselytizing thrusts were directed westward, to German-Austria, like herself an impoverished remnant of yesterday's imperial wealth and splendor, former co-ruler and now fellow sufferer.

Soviet Hungary, prompted by both communism and nationalism, the immediate territorial objectives of which seemed to be identical, aimed at regaining especially Slovakia and Transylvania, advancing at times

<sup>361</sup> *Ibid.*, 320.

<sup>362</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.

under the banner of nationalism, then again under the flag of socialist equality and liberation. The Soviets engaged first in a defensive struggle against the Rumanians, during which they almost succumbed, then in a successful offensive against Slovakia, conquering much of this province. Yet faced with the Allied ultimatum of June 13, the new regime had no choice but to relinquish the conquered region, though not without receiving the pledge of a corresponding Rumanian withdrawal from the Tisza to the new boundary line which the Peace Conference had then made public. When the Rumanians, however, balked at implementing the Allied promise, Soviet Hungary, which only recently had acquiesced to the Western Powers, now challenged them outright by attacking the Rumanians all along the Tisza. Even then, however, the Kun government may have counted on Allied reluctance to give full support to the Rumanians, since they had not complied with their order to withdraw from the Tisza. The desperate internal situation of Hungary and the hope of prolonging the Soviet government's existence through a victory over the Rumanian troops must likewise have weighed heavily in favor of their decision to attack.

Soviet Hungarian policy toward the West was a curious mixture of bold challenges and unexpected retreats, a zig-zag policy compounded of inexperience, overestimation of one's own and Russia's resources and under-estimation, in the long run at least, of the Entente's determination to deal resolutely with an avowed enemy. The lack of unity among the Great Powers in their policy toward Soviet Hungary, underlined by the continued absence of Allied troops from Central and Southeastern Europe—two French divisions excepted—and the temporary military successes against the Rumanians and against Czechoslovak troops in Slovakia of course bolstered Soviet Hungary's confidence.

Whatever the circumstances which made possible Soviet Hungary's aggressiveness, it resulted primarily from the merger of intense Magyar nationalism and of revolutionary communist fervor. The Magyars fought not only to retain the Hungarian minorities threatened by their neighbors or to regain those recently lost to them, but also, some utterances of Béla Kun to the contrary, to maintain Hungary's historic integrity, to preserve, under a new guise, Magyar domination over Rumanians, Slovaks, Croats, and also Serbs. Fanatic devotion to the communist creed and loyal subordination to Soviet Russia and her interests likewise shaped their militant course and were partly responsible for their challenge of the authority of the Peace Conference. This is seen by the rejection of the by no means unfavorable Smuts proposals. In invading Slovakia, the hope of establishing liaison with Russian and Ukrainian troops was also a potent motive.

The establishment of a Soviet regime in the heart of Europe cast a temporary gloom over the Paris

Peace Conference. It raised a question as to the success of the entire work of the Peace Conference, since the Magyar challenge created a dangerous precedent. At no time, however, not even when the Red Army was on the way of conquering Slovakia and when Rumania herself was simultaneously threatened from Bolshevism in the East and in Central Europe, did the Allies appear seriously to doubt the final overthrow of the Soviet regime, and their own capacity, if necessary, through diplomacy, economic pressure or other means, to achieve their objective: the restoration of peace and order among the new states of Central Europe. This optimism which prevailed in spite of serious setbacks, was based on the assessment of the relative balance of power and accounts, partly at least, for the lack of Allied policy and the resulting weakness of the Great Powers *vis-à-vis* Soviet Hungary.

After Germany had signed the peace treaty in late June, 1919, the Allied Powers, visibly relieved and now stiffening their attitude, let it be clearly known that, in their view, the question of peace in Central Europe was tied up with the elimination of the Soviet regime in Hungary. Their policy prior to this time, however, was one of hesitancy and weakness, and marked by day-to-day improvisation and contradictions. They had first tried accommodation *vis-à-vis* Soviet Hungary. This policy was rejected by Béla Kun owing to over-confidence, which in turn was rooted in a messianic faith and revolutionary ardor, and in dependence on and loyalty to Soviet Russia. Last, but not least, Béla Kun feared that the very Magyar nationalism which had catapulted him into the seat of power would overthrow him, if he dared to accept the terms, even though slightly improved ones, of the Vyx ultimatum. Allied policy became then a hopeless tangle of admonition and threats, of orders and counter-orders, and ultimata, unleashing at one moment the troops of Hungary's anti-communist and militant anti-Magyar neighbors and at the next moment restraining them.

The changing fortunes of war along Hungary's uncertain borders, the preoccupation of the Peace Conference with many other than Hungarian problems, and outright blunders, such as the extension of an invitation to Soviet Hungary, quickly withdrawn, to send a delegation to Paris, may explain some of the contradictions. Giving encouragement to Rumanians and Czechs and their at times defensive, at times offensive, moves against Soviet Hungary and providing them with military leadership and advice did have its definite limits: the Rumanian army was twice solemnly warned to halt its march at the Tisza River. The Western Powers, though anxious to have the Soviet regime crushed, were equally fearful to whet Rumania's territorial appetite. And though they themselves discussed at length and in detail the possibility of a direct military intervention against Hungary to extirpate the Bolshevik menace from Central Europe, they al-

ways, to the very end, definitely rejected the use of their own forces. Public opinion in the Western countries sharply opposed a new war and new sacrifices and spurned a new intervention on many grounds, mainly because of its apparent illiberalism, the evident failure of the intervention in Russia, as well as because of fear of arousing radicalism at home. France herself was unwilling to risk an intervention which would be unsupported by Anglo-Saxon and Italian troops.

Even after mid-July when a direct appeal was made by the Peace Conference to the Hungarian people to overthrow the Soviet regime, the Great Powers banked heavily on the Rumanian army and on an internal conspiracy and revolution to break the grip of communism over Hungary and remove the Bolshevik thorn

from the flesh of Central Europe, without ever developing a clear and definite alternate policy.

The overthrow of the Soviet Hungarian regime may be traced to its own failures and to Rumania's military action, prompted by fear both of the Magyar neighbor and of the deadly embrace of Bolshevism which threatened her along her western as well as eastern frontiers. Allied errors, it was widely conceded, had substantially contributed to the rise of the First Soviet Hungarian Republic. Yet later Allied policy cannot be credited with having led to its fall, with having wiped out the earlier mistakes by a clear-eyed, firm, and consistent policy. At best, Allied moves, excepting the ultimatum of June 13, 1919, were of an indirect and indecisive nature.

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