

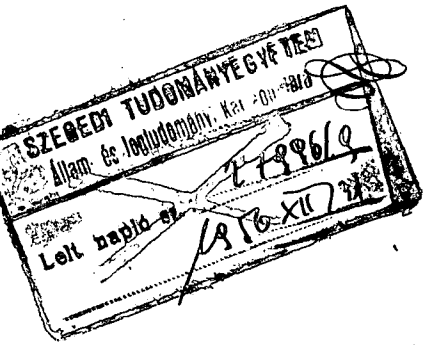
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THE AMERICAN PEACE AND HUNGARY

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THE AMERICAN PEACE AND HUNGARY.

I call «American peace» a peace based on the principles proclaimed by President Wilson. America is in honour bound to uphold them, against the spirit of imperialism which seems to have only changed sides. America's participation in the war has been announced to the world as a crusade for international justice, brotherhood, permanent peace and disarmament. It is a moral impossibility than announcements of such purport should afterwards prove mere humbug, as they certainly would, should America consent to international settlements wrought with iniquity and bequeathing to future generations a legacy of hatred, unrest and permanent militarism. There are symptoms indicative of aberrations in the peace policy of the entente, which would give the lie to Wilson's principles. We trust America will not tolerate such indignity.

Take the case of Hungary. It seems to be a small particle of the pending world-problem; but it is illustrative of the whole and on it depends to a large extent the future of eastern Europe. It may be of some interest therefore to

elucidate it and for that purpose it seems but fair that Hungary should get a hearing as well as her enemies.

Of the Wilsonian principles proclaimed in the celebrated message of January 8th 1918 the one contained in article 10 directly affects our country; it states that the nations of Austria-Hungary should be granted autonomy at the earliest opportunity. Austria-Hungary exists no more, but Hungary still exists and has accepted in perfect good faith the Wilsonian peace-programm, including the above mentioned article. The question is: how is it to take effect in — and with respect to Hungary?

The basic facts are these: Hungary within her present limits has been a political unit for more than a thousand years; her territory is perhaps the finest natural geographic unity in Europe as a glimpse on the map will show; economically her parts are interdependent, northern Hungary having iron, wood, water-power, central and western Hungary wheat, corn, pasture grounds, south-eastern Hungary (Transylvania) coal, salt, oil, bituminous gas. Each section separately is — economically speaking — a cripple, together they constitute a fine, selfsupporting organism. Belonging to the same river system, they communicate easily with each other. I don't intend to bore my readers with statistics on these facts; they are unchallenged. nobody tries to contradict them. History has been the interpreter of nature, when she created

and preserved the political union of Hungary's present territory.

On the other hand various races live on that territory, some of which have racial brethren in the neighbouring states: Germans, Slovaks, Ruthenians, Serbs, Rumanians; on which ground the new-born so called «Czecho-Slovak-State» claims the parts of Hungary where Slovaks, Rumania is those where Rumanians, Servia those where Serbs are dwelling. The territory of Hungary should then be divided according to the racial principle, disregarding history, geography and political⁹ economy. That such a clash between, the principles upon which nations are built up must be productive of many evils is self-evident; it is well worth considering which is to be paramount after all, and whether a compromise between them is outside the pale of possibilities. In my conviction it is easily effected.

To begin with: the autonomy of the «nations», let us even say: races, dwelling in Hungary is not synonymous with the annexation of their territories to a neighbouring state. The claims put forward by those border-states are not based on the Wilsonian principle, they are simply and nakedly imperialistic. They are so, even should they lean on the wishes of some fraction in the racial brethren in Hungary, because it is, to say the least, doubtful whether the supplementary principle, the right of self-determination belonging to every nation, involves a right to secession as

vested in every part of a nation. America did not think so when she commenced a bloody war with the southern States, who had most decidedly and formally declared their will to secede from the union. Is President Wilson's meaning then to be derived from Jefferson Davis or from Abraham Lincoln?

Let us therefore in theory and on principle clearly distinguish between autonomy and secession, and still more between autonomy and annexation; and having fixed this point let us consider what the secessions and annexations planned by our enemies would mean, from the racial — and self determination standpoint.

On the face of it, you would fancy them to be the most radical, the most natural solution. In fact it is the reverse. To know this I must trouble my readers with a few figures. Hungary proper, without Croatia, whose independence we have freely recognised, is a territory of 282,870 km² with 18,264,533 souls. Of these 9,944,627 (54·5 %) are Magyars, 1,903,357 (10·4 %) Germans, 1,946,357 (10·7 %) Slovaks, 2,948,186 (16·1 %) Roumanians, 461,516 (2·5 %) Serbs, 464,270 (2·5 %) Ruthenians, 194,808 (1·1 %) Croats, 401,412 (2·8 %) belonging to other races. There is, as you see, a small absolute majority of Magyars; among the cultured classes their percentage is from 82—84 and among the townspeople 76.

Now, if you except central Hungary, which is almost wholly Magyar (85 %) and northern

Hungary, which is indeed almost entirely Slovak (76 %) no territorial division corresponds to these racial differences. The races are so intermingled that you cannot cut out an unbroken territory for any of them; every such attempt creates new mixed territories, with no clear racial majority on them. This undeniable and well known fact does not disturb the serene audacity of our neighbours, extending their claims to every bit of land where some of their racial brethren live. The Rumanian claim expands over an area of 129,447 km² with 6,844,379 souls of which only 2,939,201 (43 %) Rumanians and nearly as many 2,429,446 (35·5 %) Magyars, 742,655 (10·8 %) Germans and so on. Now these 57 % of non-Rumanian people who are claimed by Rumania on — I don't know what principle, and who certainly have as good a right to self-determination as the Rumanians, abhor the idea of being incorporated into a great Roumania, because they love their Hungarian fatherland and because the experience of the Magyar citizens of old-Rumania and of the Bulgarians in the Dobrudcha teaches that the racial oppression of the worst kind, of which Hungary is falsely accused, prevails throughout Rumania.

The Rumanian claims have hardly a better case if you limit them, as some more moderate schemers would have it, to Transylvania. There you find 1,300,000 Rumanians against 1,100,000 Magyars and Germans — hardly a majority,

Magyars and Germans dwelling in masses exactly on the Rumanian frontier and forming there 74% of the towns people and 74—90% of the cultured classes.

The Servian claims — and I really must beg my readers pardon for entering into these tiresome details, but I cannot help it if the question is to be transferred from the misty realm of declamation into the clear region of fact — the Servian claims to part of Hungary's territory are more absurd still. Mind, they are, all counted 461.516, and they wish to extend their domination over 33,728 sq km with 2,371.236 souls of which they are 18.6% — including the Roman-Catholic Jugoslavs 22.6%, while 32.9% (778.308) are Magyars and 28.8% (635.052) Germans, having as good a right to selfdetermination as the Slavs and all of them loathing the prospect of Servian rule. The absurdity of such pretensions based on the racial principle and slapping it in the face seems something beyond comprehension. But it must be owned that there is no other way of cutting out a separate territory either for Rumanians or for Serbs in Hungary. Races here are to intermingled that the racial principle becomes practicaly self-contradicting, when applied to territorial settlement. The racial problem in Hungary cannot be solved through secessions and annexations; it is simply impossible to do this without begetting new racial problems. Is it not then the height of absurdity to dissect a political unit

based on the natural forces of geographic and economic laws, sanctioned by a millennial history, on account of it being racially mixed, in order to create out of it fragments new artificial units and combinations, racially just as mixed, or even more so, and wanting into the bargain every other principle of natural units? Can anything but permanent unrest flow from settlements so monstrous?

But let us consider now the one territorial claim that, on the face of it, appears to answer to the requisites of a proper racial settlement: the Czecho-Slovak claim. In northern Hungary, south of the Carpathian mountain-range, there is a territory of 34,878 sq km with 2,995,812 souls, of which 1,526,070 (76·5%) are Slovaks, 237,604 (11·9%) Magyars, 133,763 (6·7%) Germans, the latter two chiefly towns people. The only trouble is that Czeh and Slovak are nearly related races but by no means one race and that the Slovak national individuality, which is perfectly safe and which developed a literature of its own under Hungarian rule, would be speedily absorbed into the mightier and rather intolerant Czeh individuality. The additional trouble is, that this northern part of Hungary, which under proper commercial regulations is foreordained to become the seat of industrial progress while belonging to our country, has no such chance when annexed to Bohemia, which is one of the oldest and richest manufacturing districts of Europe. The poor Slo-

vaks would be doomed forever to provide cheap hands to the great manufactories of Bohemia. For these reasons the great majority of the Slovaks are decidedly averse to being incorporated into the new-born Czecho-Slovak State. Of course they will vote for it, if their sense is taken under the «protection» of the Czech soldiery. But let them be consulted under the control of neutrals, or of Americans, who are unbiassed by sympathies for the other part, and the truth will come to light. Czech sympathies exist only in the country bordering on Bohemia (Moravia). The north-central and north-eastern part of the Slovak territory shows no inclination to commit economical suicide for racial affinity's sake. From a geo-political as well as economical standpoint it is part of the Hungarian unit and cannot be torn away from it without jeopardising the welfare and the chances of progress of its people. I wish to mention only the newest phases of Czech gluttony, which, conscious of the geographic and economic absurdities resulting from the annexation of the narrow strip of land which it might claim on racial grounds in northern Hungary, tries to mend matters by claiming more land southward, as far as the course of the Danube; a territory on which not a single Slovak can be found and on which more than half a million Magyars live, with several flourishing Magyar and German cities. This territory is claimed without any show of principle whatsoever, on mere ground of expe-

diency: because we want it, so they say; we want a fine agricultural Hinterland to the barren soil of the Slovak districts; we want a big town like Pozsony (population 35.000 Magyars, 42.000 Germans, 13.000 Slovaks) for a cultural and commercial centre. Well, these are the morals of highway men: I want your coat, your watch, your money, so I take them from you. Are pretensions like these still within the pale of discussion? don't they give the lie to the Wilsonian principles, to the American peace-idea? Still they are so far humoured by the entente powers as to allow Czeh military occupation of the last mentioned districts; «provisionally» says the French commander — «permanently» says the Czech envoy. What is then the entente's true meaning?

And here I close the discussion of the planned dissection of Hungary, though much still might be said on the subject, by briefly summing up what it amounts to. Should all the aspirations and appetites of the neighbouring states based on the racial principle, get satisfaction, Hungary would lose a territory of 191,323 sq km (out of 282,870) and a population of 10.906,223 souls (out of 18.284,533) She would remain in possession of 91,547 sq km with 7.358,310 souls on it. Should the last mentioned Czeh claim be fulfilled too, Hungary would lose something like half a million souls more, nearly all of them Magyars. But even leaving this item out of consideration, we find that of the — roughly speaking. — 11 million souls taken

from Hungary 3,658,995 would be Magyars and 1,458,134 Germans; the latter being as good Hungarian patriots as the Magyars themselves, that means that over 5 million souls would be violently torn from the country they love and submitted to rule which they abhor and which is racially foreign to them. On the other hand, of the population left to Hungary more than one million would be non-Magyar, on the supposition of the framer of that beautiful scheme: adverse to Hungarian rule. Can anything more clearly and more convincingly show the impossibility of dissecting Hungary on the racial principle than the self-contradicting absurdities which follow from the first serious attempt to do so?

A fair solution of the racial problem in Hungary a solution which conciliates the laws of geographic and political economy and the deep-rooted result of history with the just demands of race, can easily be found within the territorial limits of Hungary, such as nature and history made them and can be found in no other way. By making county limits and police-districts as far as possible concordant with racial limits; by giving to every race a representation of its own elected by all the members of the race irrespective of territorial continuity, which cannot be obtained by granting to these racial representations a fair amount of self government in every matter that concerns the race as such by maintaining a common legislative body and a central government

to manage financial, commercial, military and foreign affairs: we should get a solution which gives full satisfaction to the Wilsonian principle of national (racial) autonomy, without infringing natural laws that cannot be ignored with impunity.

The new-born Hungarian democracy prepares a solution on these lines. The former system was certainly not oppressive; it fully recognised the right of the *individual* to his native language in church, school, vestry and county government; it granted state support to non-Magyar churches and schools to that extent that 2,900,000 Rumanians enjoyed such grants to the amount of 14 millions in the year 1917, while the equal number of Calvinists — a purely magyar community — had only 11 millions. But it did not admit race as self governing bodies. Now we are ready to do this, to accept union based on federation as the fundamental law of the country. It is certainly a great deviation from old traditions to do so, it is the most radical reform of a nation's constitution known to history. But we do it in perfect good faith, with absolute honesty of purpose and with the firm resolve to become thereby a pillar of peace, concord and international brotherhood in the east of Europe.

So you have before you a nation that accepts and actuates in it's home- and foreign policy every principle proclaimed by President Wilson; and you have this nation's enemies, who happened to be your allies in war, but who are

now, by their unprincipled pretensions, giving the lie to those principles.

Which side will you take?

Will you humour your allies in what is manifestly unjust, or will you stick to your principles and bring your allies round to their maintainance?

Much, almost everything depends on your decision.

Should it go against us and against the principles and declarations on the faith of which we laid down the arms, should the absolute right of the victor to crush the vanquished be proclaimed, or — what amounts to the same, be put into practice, then please let us have no more fine talk about international justice and federation of nations and so on, but let us own to a policy of violence on old lines and let us take the consequences.

The consequences are obvious.

Instead of that peace, the object of the American «crusade», which should have been the opening of a new epoch in the world's history, the beginning of the reign of justice, security, brotherhood, we should have got one more of the sort of peace instruments by which the armed conflicts of nations have been hitherto brought to a temporary close, but which, every one of them without a single exception, contained new causes of war in them. The down-trodden party, hurt in its vital interests and in its most sacred feelings, gives way, because it cannot help it, but

never submits. Should Hungary be robbed and torn to pieces, in flagrant contradiction to the Wilsonian principles on which she relied, she too would never submit. At present she would have to endure her fate, but she would constantly watch her opportunities and the resolve to overthrow the construction of iniquity under which she suffers would be transmitted, as a sacred inheritance from generation. If it comes to this I shall certainly take my son's oath never to be reconciled to his country's spoliation, and so will thousands and hundreds of thousands of Hungarian fathers.

But what does all this amount to? will some of my readers ask; let a small nation brood over her supposed wrongs, let her cherish wild designs: she is much too weak to give serious trouble. Little he knows eastern Europe who talks in that way. Whatever be the new repartition of its forces, seeds of discontent will remain in every part of that dangerous soil, seeds that will ripen in due time. The petty imperialisms around Hungary, the "Czecho-slovak" state, great Servia, great Rumania will have millions of new subjects — not *citizens*, but *subjects* — who hate the country into which they are coerced: it is like fattening on explosives and expanding over volcanos. Of all these discontents, Hungary driven to despair, will be the rallying point, just as a Hungary fairly dealt with would be the only reliable guarantee of quietude in this region.

But, there is still more to be considered. If, as is likely in case the spirit of vindictiveness prevails in the councils of the Entente, Germany feels equally ill used, a new alliance will be cemented through central and eastern Europe, clandestine perhaps, but closer than the former one, embracing 90 millions of desperate people, bent on destroying the new order of things. It would be Alsace-Lorraine all over; history sadly repeats itself, the same errors constantly reappear, only changing sides. Now fancy the military establishment which the Entente powers would constantly be obliged to keep to secure the outward submission of such an explosive force. The old evils, now eloquently denounced, of imperialism and militarism would be eternalised; every noble design would be frustrated. Is America willing, is England willing always to keep a great army on the European continent or at least in constant readiness? and by no other means could, in the supposed case peace or a semblance of peace be secured.

Or would you try to coerce us through economic retaliation? one glimpse on the map will show how ill you would fare, and on the contrary, how much you could gain by making Hungary, as nature intended her to be, the centre of your commercial relation with the near East. But then: on what grounds would you actuate such a policy of economic hostility, since nothing would be *done* from our side to justify it? You



cannot possibly open fire against *intentions*, you cannot blockade *suppositions*. From every point of view it is a hopeless case.

The obvious conclusion of all these considerations is that fairness to Hungary is commended on practical as well as on ideal grounds, that expediency points the same way as principle, that in our case the voice of utilitarianism speaks much the same language as the voice of honour; both request you to make a firm stand on behalf of an honest application of President Wilson's principles, both militate in favour of an «American-peace» based on those principles conferring on the whole world, on all future generations the blessings of a new atmosphere of safety in which justice reigns, progress thrives, love and liberty rule? The choice lays between such blissful permanent results and the vile gratification of momentary spite.

Which of the two involves moral greatness?
Which is a sound policy?

Budapest Christmas 1918.





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