

Peace Obstacles

Situation in Central Europe Is Analyzed

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NEW YORK TIMES:

Two letters were published recently in THE NEW YORK TIMES pointing out that real pacification in Central Europe requires friendly cooperation between Hungary and her neighbors. But, according to the writer of the second letter, published on June 14, Dr. Hanc, former Czechoslovak Consul General in New York, such cooperation, however necessary, cannot be achieved at present on account of reasons for which Hungary alone is responsible. Peace along the Danube being the key to continental peace, the obstacles to cooperation set forth by Dr. Hanc deserve careful analysis.

The first obstacle described by Dr. Hanc is that Hungary joined the Axis "of her own volition" and is at war with all her neighbors. Yet in a very remarkable book published recently by Dr. Hanc, "Tornado Over Eastern Europe," he wrote: "Bulgaria, Rumania, Hungary were manipulated into submission by economic and cultural penetration and flattering promises of aggrandizement. With regard to the Slovaks and Croats their nascent nationalism had been taken advantage of. Austria was an inside job. To some extent the case of Czechoslovakia was similar."

Racial Question

In other words a few weeks ago Dr. Hanc did not see much difference between the subjugation of Hungary and that of her neighbors. Why has Hungary suddenly become alone ineligible for cooperation?

The alleged second obstacle is that Hungary had obtained territories from all her neighbors and 40 per cent of her population is, according to Dr. Hanc, of foreign race.

This last statement is obviously erroneous. According even to the official Czech, Rumanian and Serbian statistics, which would hardly err on the Magyar side, the number of Slovaks, Ruthenes, Rumanians and Serbs in

present Hungary is below two and a half millions—about 18 per cent of the total population. The alien population of Czechoslovakia was, as Dr. Hanc knows, far in excess of this percentage, in fact about 34 per cent (Kerner: "Czechoslovakia," P. 191).

It should be noted, parenthetically, that Hungary did not reacquire the Magyar inhabited part of Slovakia as a result of aggression, but by negotiations and conferences. Indeed, Hungary's correct conduct at the time of the Munich crisis was recognized by all American correspondents and commended by THE NEW YORK TIMES editorial of Oct. 28, 1938. Be that as it may, if Poland's aggression against Czechoslovakia in 1938 is not an obstacle to cooperation, why should territorial questions necessarily prevent reconciliation with Hungary?

Agreement on Points

According to Dr. Hanc, "Hungary is not a democratic country." I wholly agree with him on this point with regard to the Horthy regime. But I also agree with what he wrote in his book already cited, how King Carol built up his own totalitarian regime, paving "the way for the inflow of Nazi penetration until the country became a virtual protectorate of Berlin" (P. 262). If dictatorship in Rumania is not an obstacle to cooperation, then why should the fact that "Hungary is not a democratic country" bar her from collective action with her neighbors?

Finally, according to Dr. Hanc, there are no representative Hungarians with whom preliminary agreements could be negotiated.

Does this mean that the Czechoslovak Government alone has the right of deciding who is a "representative Hungarian"? If so, this is a bad omen for Danubian peace. It was Dr. Hanc himself who wrote "much of Hitler's success in dealing with his weaker neighbors was due to his insistence on making his own choice of persons with whom he could collaborate."

Surely the Czech Government-in-Exile would not adopt such Hitlerian tactics when the question of general Central European democratization hangs in the balance.

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Washington, June 25, 1942.