

A COMMUNICATION

Undemocratic Magyars

SIR: In your issue of September 22nd appears an article by Eugene S. Bagger, entitled *The Hungarian Upheaval*, whose argument and conclusions I cannot permit to pass unchallenged.

According to Mr. Bagger, there exist two quite different Hungaries. One is that of Count Tisza and the "Magyar Junkers," a pro-German and militaristic minority, a minority which has oppressed not only the Jugoslavs, the Rumanians, and the Slovaks, but also the Magyar peasant and workman. The other is the democratic Hungary, consisting of the majority of the "Hungarian" people, desirous of peace, and disposed to undertake great social, political and economic reforms, not only for the population of Magyar race, but also for the subject nationalities and ready even to confer a certain autonomy on the latter. This democratic Hungary, which, Mr. Bagger informs us, has been in opposition to Count Tisza since the beginning of the war, has at last succeeded in overthrowing him and effecting a kind of revolution in the country. It is today in power, and asks only for an acceptable peace, that is to say, one which would guarantee the territorial integrity of the "historic state of Hungary."

Hungary according to the official statistics, which everybody knows are very partial to the Magyars, had in 1910, 20,886,487 inhabitants, of whom 10,050,575 (48.1 per cent) were Magyars and 10,835,912 (51.9 per cent) were non-Magyars (Serbo-Croats, Slovaks, Rumanians and Germans). The Hungarian Parliament consists of 413 deputies, exclusive of the 40 delegates sent to it by the Croatian Sabor, and of these 405 are Magyars and only 8 represent other races. Thus the 9,994,627 Magyars of Hungary proper (without Croatia and Slavonia) are represented by 405 deputies, and 8,320,906 non-Magyars have only 8 deputies. By what system of electoral geometry, administrative pressure and social corruption it was possible to form such a Parliament in this country of "millenary parliamentarism," foreign countries today know well from the works of two authorities in this field, Mr. H. Wickham Steed, for ten years correspondent of the *London Times* in Austria-Hungary, and at present foreign editor of that journal, and of Dr. R. W. Seton-Watson, lecturer in East European History, King's College, University of London.

Your Magyar contributor does not even attempt to defend the disgraceful treatment which the government of the "Magyar Junkers" has inflicted and still inflicts on the non-Magyar nationalities of his native country. But he promises that the "democratic Hungary," at present in power, will remedy very shortly this state of things, that it will emancipate the 10,000,000 of Jugoslav, Rumanian and Slovak pariahs, and that it is only necessary to "give it the chance" by guaranteeing it the territorial integrity of Hungary, etc.

This "democratic Hungary" is not, however, in power for the first time. Its former period of government not only brought nothing good but proved that its policy is as chauvinistic and pan-Magyar as that of the "Junkers." It was Count Apponyi, one of the "democratic leaders"

in the great opposition cabinet in 1906, under the presidency of Dr. Wekerle, who introduced the celebrated educational law, which had for its aim the forcible Magyarization of the children of non-Magyar parents.

And the hatred of the "democratic Hungary" against its Slav and Rumanian fellow-citizens, whom it accuses of being, and treats as, traitors, has only been augmented by the war. Its official party organs and the declarations of responsible Magyars give us clear proof of this. "I desire to work on democratic lines," declared Count Esterhazy, late "liberal" Prime Minister of Hungary, who succeeded the "reactionary" Count Tisza, "but it goes without saying that democracy in Hungary can only be a Magyar democracy." (Az Est, June 10th, 1917.) The present Prime Minister of Hungary, Dr. Alexander Wekerle, whom your contributor calls "one of the shrewdest and most farsighted of Magyar statesmen with an eminently liberal record, who immediately promised to put through the entire program of the radicals," has simply indorsed the profession of faith of his predecessor. As a Budapest dispatch in the papers assures us, he has declared that he "advocates the same principles regarding the suffrage as did his immediate predecessor."

Writing in the *Magyarorszag* (June 12th, 1917), Professor Istvan Apathy, a prominent member of the Independence party, expresses the following view on electoral reform: "We desire the supremacy of the Magyars, who have built up the thousand years' edifice of the Magyar State," while a reporter of the *Alkotmany*, who had undertaken an inquiry among the various politicians on the reform bill, notes as follows the opinion of Count Karolyi himself (June 13th, 1917): "Karolyi holds that the ballot should be secret with certain restrictions, especially in the villages. Karolyi realizes that in non-Magyar communities secret suffrage might become a means of dangerous propaganda, and therefore the ballot can be secret only in communities where the number of non-Magyar voters falls below a given limit." The authenticity of this statement has never been questioned or denied.

Not only has Hungary failed to solve the problem of the non-Magyar nationalities, but she cannot even give true liberty, democratic liberty, to her own Magyar population until her national frontiers are reduced so as to contain only the compact mass of Magyars. An electoral franchise which would place on an equal footing all the inhabitants of Hungary, would send to the Parliament of Budapest a majority of non-Magyars, which would signify the end of the Magyar hegemony in Hungary, a thing which not only "democrats" of the Karolyi type but even the demagogues of the most advanced kind, in search of non-Magyar electors, candidates of the Vazsonyi type, could not permit.

It has been proposed to solve the problem of nationalities in Austria-Hungary through federalization, but this solution is wholly unacceptable to the Magyars. The grounds of their opposition are given at length by Count Andrassy ("the liberal leader noted as a pacifist and a friend of England" as he is styled by Mr. Bagger) in a recent article translated in the *Christian Science Monitor* (August 23, 1917). "The idea of a federalized monarchy," he said, "would encounter the most energetic opposition, for it is precisely now that Hungarianism has entered the lists in

the full glow of chauvinism and enthusiasm for the Monarchy." Dr. Wekerle has expressed his opinion on this question in the following terms: "I protest with the utmost energy against such tendencies. Austria can only realize her domestic and autonomous reforms by leaving intact the dual form of the Monarchy. This dual form of the State I regard as inviolable." As a matter of fact, there is no Magyar party which would dare to come forward with a federal program.

It is also a fact that of twenty million "Hungarians," ten million ardently desire freedom from the other ten and union with their brothers in race outside of the Hungarian State. It is only by violence that their subjection to the Magyar state can be maintained. Before the war they expressed this desire so openly, especially those who gravitated towards Serbia, in spite of drastic and cruel repression, that Hungarian statesmen were forced to the conclusion that the difficulty could be overcome only through the extinction of the Serbian state and the division of its territory between Hungary and Bulgaria.

The war has not had the success that the Magyars hoped it would have, and today, though the majority continue to demand the annexation of a large part of Serbia, the others (the more moderate party) would content themselves with the "internal conquest" of Hungary, that is to say, the ultimate Magyarization of the subject races of the Hungarian state.

The Hungarian problem (which at bottom is only a part of the entire Austro-Hungarian problem and one which cannot be solved separately) is a problem of international importance which must be solved internationally. For it is upon a just solution of this problem that the future peace of the world depends. Hungary has always feared an international and democratic solution of the problem, and it was this fear which bound her to Austria and Germany, in spite of her proud faith in her self-sufficiency. How firmly Hungary is bound to Austria and Germany is made clear by Count Andrassy ("liberal, pacifist, friend of England") in an article published in December, 1916, in the *Revue Politique Internationale*, a review for Magyar propaganda published at Lausanne, Switzerland, from which I quote the following:

There are not, in Europe, two peoples of race and traditions whose community of interest is so evident and has taken so visible a form in the facts of history as the Germans and the Magyars; and Germany could not have a more sure ally than Hungary, if she is willing to trust us. Today Germany is nowhere more admired than among us. Our sympathies for Germany have grown keener during the war, and today to the sentiments of admiration which we feel towards the German people are added the glorious and tragic memories of bloodshed and fights fought in common. And the more this people become an object of hatred and calumny, the more we shall love it, because we are well aware that most of the accusations thrown in its face are prompted by envy and jealousy. . . .

It remains to consider the "practical policy," of making advances to a "democratic Hungary," with a view, not to detaching her from Austria (which is militarily impossible), but to forcing her to exercise pressure upon her Allies with a view to an early peace. I leave without discus-

sion the morality of such a transaction. But I will permit myself to question the expediency of making such an advance to the "democratic Hungary." It must be admitted that a large part of the population of Austria-Hungary feels and thinks with the Allies. But these are neither the Austro-Germans nor the Magyars of Karolyi and Andrassy. They are the Czecho-Slovaks, the Jugoslavs (Serbs, Croats, Slovenes), and the Poles, the Italians and the Rumanians of Transylvania, our Allies on the other side of the enemy's lines, who, though obliged to fight in the ranks of their oppressors, do not cease, so far as it is in their power, to combat this same enemy on their "invisible front." They have succeeded in organizing some actual revolts. I may mention the twenty-eighth Czech Regiment which surrendered bodily to Russia, the Eighth, Thirtieth, Eighty-Eighth, One Hundred and Second, Eleventh regiment of Landwehr, in which every tenth man was shot, etc. Hundreds of thousands of Slav and Latin soldiers of the Austro-Hungarian army have deserted to the Russians, Serbs and Italians, and more than one hundred thousand of these former soldiers of the Emperor Charles are today fighting in the ranks of the Allies.

Thousands of these Jugoslavs, expatriated from their unfortunate country, have taken refuge in all the countries of the world, especially the United States, and now serve under the flags of the Allies in the Serbian, Russian, French, Canadian and New Zealand armies and, last but not least, in the army of this great Republic.

It is impossible to do full justice to the resolution of the civil population at home or to the courage of their political leaders, who have not ceased during the war to express the real sentiments of these oppressed peoples, their demand for emancipation from Magyar and German rule. Without speaking of the injustice which the proposed offer to Hungary would do to us Serbians and to our Italian and Rumanian allies, are we going to discourage the thirty million allies in the Austro-Hungarian Empire?

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CORRESPONDENCE

The Supremacy of the State

SIR: Your issue of September 15th has just reached me. I am grateful to you for printing my letter on the supremacy of the state, which was written before events in Russia had driven home its arguments, but I wish you had read it through more carefully before commenting on it, for most of your criticism is beside the point.

You seem to think I hold the antiquated Roman view that the political state ought to be the only form of corporate organization recognized within the community. Judging from the pains you have taken to refute it, there must still be some exponents of this doctrine in the United States, but I have never met one in this country. England has always been the home of group-loyalties—of religious sects, trade unions, colleges, coöperative societies, clubs and every imaginable form of corporate life. It has been part of her schooling in responsibility and self-government. Do we not all know that the battle of Waterloo was won on the playing fields of Eton? In this sense, England was a syndicalist or, as Mr. Lippmann would say, a federal,