

THE BURGENLAND

THE Burgenland, as the territory allotted to Austria at Hungary's expense is called, *41-1) is far the smallest of any of Hungary's losses to her immediate neighbours, its area of 3,967.19 sq. km. being less than one twenty-fifth of that of Transylvania. It consists of a long, narrow strip of territory running the whole length of the Austro-Hungarian frontier, from a point in the north where the boundary between the two countries meets the bridge-head allotted to Czechoslovakia opposite Pressburg on the right bank of the Danube, to the hills south of the Raab, where it joins the frontier of Yugoslavia. Geographically, this strip falls into two very distinct halves, almost cut off from each other by the loop containing the city of Oedenburg, which has been left to Hungary. One salient of this loop leaves a space only about three miles across, and containing only a single road between the old and new frontiers of Austria.

The northern and broader half is in the shape of a right-angled triangle, the hypotenuse of which is formed by the low Leitha-gebirge, along which the old frontier ran in part. The new line now runs south from the Czechoslovak bridge-head, until reaching the Neusiedlersee-Danube canal, where it turns due west along the canal, crosses the lake near its southern end, and as it does so turns north to form the Oedenburg loop, which fills the greater part of the gap between the Leithagebirge and the Rosaliengebirge, south of Wiener Neustadt. Once the terraced vineyards of the modest range dignified by the name of Leithagebirge are left behind, the whole northern Burgenland is merely a corner, divided from the main part by a barrier, which is purely political, of the Lesser Alföld of Hungary. The country is flat, open, and sandy, and dotted with numerous lakes, many of which are mere pools. The Neusiedlersee itself, although 20 miles long and 6 to 8 miles

- 1) The name is a post-War invention, the credit of which appears to belong the Herr Odo Rötig, a Viennese resident in Oedenburg (Sopron), who in 1919 began to issue a paper entitled Das Vierburgenland, after the German names of the four West Hungarian Counties regarded as composing German West Hungary (Pressburg (= Pozsony, Bratislava), Oedenburg, Wieselburg = Moson, Eisenburg = Vásvár). The numeral had to be dropped when Pressburg was assigned in its entirety to the Czechs, but Professor Waldheim of Vienna, an Oedenburger born, and Dr K. Amon, a lawyer of Neusiedl, urged the retention of the rest of

the name, which was in any case appropriate owing to the large number of 'Burgen' or fortified castles, in this old frontier district. Interestingly enough it was afterwards discovered that the term for the district current among the local Croats was Gradiste -- an exact translation of the German Burgenland. The name Burgenland rapidly became popular, and was officially adopted by the first Landtag when it met in 1922.

42

in average width (so that it occupies no mean fraction of the total area of the northern Burgenland) is seldom more than 6 feet deep, and generally only 2 or 3, while in certain annual cycles it shows every symptom of an intention -- never resolutely fulfilled -- of drying up altogether.

From below the Oedenburg loop, the frontier runs south-west, almost parallel with the old line, but gradually approaching it until the two lines finally meet. This portion of the Burgenland is formed, geographically, by the last outliers of the Styrian Alps, and consists of a series of hill ranges, of considerable height to the west, but sloping rapidly downward, and of intervening and gradually broadening valleys. In the extreme south the valley of the Raab gives the country a more open look; on the other hand, the Günser Gebirge, in the centre, are a substantial range, across which communication is difficult. Broadly speaking, the frontier marks the line between the hills, to-day assigned to Austria, and the plain, which has been left to Hungary. In medieval times the whole of this area must have been densely wooded, and although much has been cleared for pasture and arable land, large forests still remain. The population is sparse, and there are no towns larger than small market centres.

A greater contrast still is afforded by the country to the west of these two areas, Behind the Leithagebirge lies the 'Wiener Becken', containing the important cities of Wiener Neustadt and, farther away, Vienna itself, with Pressburg to the north, Oedenburg on the south. Lying as it does full on the great natural highway between Eastern and Western Europe which is formed by the Danube Valley, the Northern Burgenland has been an immemorial channel both for trade and invasion. The southern half of the area, on the other hand, lies against a wall. In the extreme south, the valley of the Raab forms a gap giving access to Graz and Styria generally, and a railway from Graz links up at Körmend with the main Hungarian system. Apart from this, the steep and densely wooded Styrian Alps are crossed even by few roads, and only a single railway threads its way from Wiener Neustadt, via Aspang and Hartberg, to Fürstenfeld, across the 'Humpy World' (bucklige Welt), as the south-eastern corner of Lower Austria is aptly named. Until some years after the transfer, there was no connexion between this line and those of the Hungarian system, all of which stopped short a few miles from the valley mouths.

The population of this area was, according to the Hungarian census of 1910, 285,609, including 26,225 Magyar-speaking persons. The Austrian census of 1923 gave a figure (Burgenland citizens only) of 275,356, of whom 222,417

were Germans, 41,761 Croats, 9,606 Magyars, and 2,702 'others'. The 1934 figures gave

a total population of 299,503, of whom 241,326 were Germans, 40,500 Croats, 10,422 Magyars, 6,452 gipsies, and 933 others. The Jews are not listed as a separate nationality in any of these figures. The discrepancies between the Hungarian and Austrian figures are due chiefly to emigration of Magyars, and to the defection of gipsies and Jews. *43-1)

§ 1. GEOGRAPHY, POPULATION, AND HISTORY

All of this territory, with the Hungarian plain itself, as far as the Danube, belonged to various Germanic tribes after the destruction of the Roman Empire in the Danube Valley, and again formed part of the Frank Empire in the ninth century, after Charlemagne had crushed the Turanian Avars who had themselves succeeded the Germans as masters of the Middle Danube. The Magyars, however, conquered it within a few years of their arrival in Central Europe. The Leitha appears as the Austro-Hungarian frontier as early as A.D. 1043 while in the south the Lafnitz seems to have become the line between Hungary and Styria about the same date. Thereafter the frontier remained remarkably stable, the gains made by each side at various times seldom proving long-lived. Some of the border castles and cities were ceded or pledged by Hungary in the fifteenth century to the Emperor Frederick IV, his brother Duke Albrecht VI, and the Emperor Maximilian, and some of them were administered thereafter by the Estates of Lower Austria. On the strength of these ancient charters, Austria in 1919 claimed some of these estates on grounds of historic right. The Hungarian Estates, however, never agreed that the territories in question had thereby ceased to form a part of Hungary. They gradually recovered possession of the disputed castles in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and although the claims and counter-claims went on, in one case until 1833/4, yet in practice the frontier of 1918 had remained stable, and had been accepted by Austria for many decades before that date.

Historically, therefore, Hungary's claim to most of the Burgenland was unquestioned, and to the few disputed areas it was at least strong. Ethnographically, on the other hand, the Burgenland had been mainly German for quite as long as it had been politically Hungarian. The German tribes who succeeded Rome in Noricum and Pannonia were probably swept aside without a trace by the Avars; who themselves occupied the open country in the north, while if any non-Avar population existed in the forests farther

- 1) See de Nagy, 'Westungarn-Burgenland in Oesterreich', in Glasnl Minoritator, June 1932, pp. 148 ff. The Hungarian Refugees Office received 1,187 persons as refugees from the Burgenland in 1921-3.

south, it was probably of Slovene stock. When, however, Charlemagne destroyed the Avars at the end of the eighth century, he cleared and colonized part of the land with German settlers. Steinamanger (Szombathély), Oedenburg, and Pinkafeld (Pinkafő) already appear in the records of the ninth century. The Magyars probably swept away these colonists from the open country in the north, which they occupied themselves or settled with the kindred nation of the Petchenegs. Their own kings, however, acting either directly or through the agency of various monastic orders, afterwards recolonized the whole open space on both sides of the Neusiedlersee with German settlers, apparently of the same Bajuvarian stock as most of the Austrians. This colonization lasted through the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries and the descendants of the settlers still make up a large proportion of the population of the Wieselburg district, and still preserve their distinctive dialect and habits. The villages between the Neusiedlersee and the Danube were almost wiped out in the Turkish wars of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, but the country was again re-colonized, mainly by Germans -- in this case, Protestant Suabians, driven from their homes under the Counter-Reformation. These 'Heidebauern' form another distinctive group of the population.

In the Middle Burgenland a few Germans probably survived the first Magyar onslaught. The country was settled more fully in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, with yet another group of Germans, the so-called 'Heinzen' or 'Heanzen', *44-1) who appear to be of Frankish stock, and differ widely in dialect and manners from their neighbours in Styria and Lower Austria. In the Raab Valley the colonization was carried out largely by the Cistercian monks, and the population is akin to that of Styria.

The Magyars themselves never coveted the hills and forests, and their settlement stopped short where the plain ends. The line of demarcation between the two peoples had remained practically unchanged for centuries, and astonishingly clear-cut, except for two or three German villages of recent origin in the plain, and a tiny group of Magyar villages in the Pinka Valley. Apart from the latter, the only Magyar element in the country-side, within the German line, consists of a few large landowners and their staffs. In the towns, on the other hand, important changes in the national composition began some half-century ago. Almost all the towns of West Hungary were of German foundation and preserved their Germanic character, language, and atmosphere quite intact until well past the middle of the nineteenth century. Thus in 1880 Oedenburg had 17,115 Germans and only 4,877 Magyars; Güns (Kőszeg),

-1) No satisfactory explanation of this name has yet been given.

5,296 Germans and 1,458 Magyars. Farther east even such towns as Steinamanger, where the surrounding villages were Magyar, stood as German islands in a Magyar sea. From about that date onward, the position changed rapidly. Not only the towns with a Magyar hinterland but also those lying within the German linguistic area were Magyarized, more or less thoroughly; had the process continued the position would have been completely reversed, and such towns as Oedenburg and Eisenstadt would have become Magyar islands in a German sea.

The third element of some importance in the population consists of the Croats. These are comparatively recent arrivals, their ancestors having fled from Croatia and Bosnia (for the most part in the sixteenth century, although a few came earlier and one colony was established as late as 1793) before the Turkish advance. They were settled, partly by the Government, partly by private land-owners, on lands laid waste by the Turks, along a line reaching from the Mur in the south as far north as the Marchfeld, and even Moravia and Slovakia. They never formed a compact mass, but rather a sort of archipelago in the German and Magyar sea, and, thanks in part to this isolated position, many of them were rapidly assimilated. The colonies in the Marchfeld have long become German, and many of those farther south also became merged in time with the local Germans or Magyars; although there are also cases where persons of German origin have adopted the Croat language and customs. The survivors in Austrian territory to-day form four fairly compact blocs, in the neighbourhood of Parndorf, Eisenstadt, Hornstein, and Unterpullendorf respectively, and two more scattered groups centring respectively in Podgoria and Güssing.

The Croats, who still speak an antique seventeenth-century dialect (or rather, variety of dialects) of Croatian, heavily interspersed by German and (to a lesser extent) Magyar terms, are practically all Catholics, and are a people of peasants, with a small intelligentsia and modest literature. Their speciality is poultry-keeping and dealing, and the characteristic carts in which they were wont to bring their stock to Vienna were well known in that city before the age of the lorry. Some of them also followed the traditional Slovak calling of besom-binders and hawkers, while many emigrated in the nineteenth century to the U.S.A. In recent years their distinctive national dress has almost disappeared in favour of the local German costume; but they keep up various specific family and religious ceremonies. The other elements in the local population are far less numerous. The Jews never penetrated West Hungary in large numbers, but the 'Seven Communes' of the north long enjoyed a reputation

extending far across the Hungarian frontier as the homes of strict piety and cultural activity. Eisenstadt, with its picturesque ghetto, Mattersburg, and Deutschkreuz still harbour considerable Jewish communities, and still earn the respect of all interested in the country. The private museum established by Mr. Wolf, of Eisenstadt (Kis Marton), is even to-day one of the best private collections in Europe, and a storehouse of interest for the Burgenland.

The gipsies, who spread over Hungary in the fourteenth century, encamped in considerable numbers on the spacious shores of Neusiedlersee. So far as outward national culture was concerned, they adopted the Magyar in preference to the German. Finally, a few Slovenes are to be found in the extreme south of the territory.

The connexions between all West Hungary, including the Burgenland, and Austria have naturally been intimate for many centuries. When the Turks held Central Hungary, the western strip which remained under the Habsburgs, was at times almost a part of Austria, and it was the stronghold of the big landowners and princes of the church whose spiritual affinities lay far rather with Vienna than with the 'betyárs' of the Alföld. In the nineteenth century a close economic connexion also developed. The central Burgenland, which gravitated naturally towards Steinamanger, formed an exception, and incidentally remained economically the most backward part of the country. The southern districts, on the other hand, tended increasingly to look for their markets in Graz and the industrial towns of Styria, rather than in the small and undeveloped towns of South-Western Hungary, while in the north a similar orientation towards Vienna and Wiener Neustadt was even more clearly marked. Even Hungarian writers admitted that the population of Pressburg, Oedenburg, and the surrounding districts stood economically and culturally far nearer to Vienna than to Budapest. Economically, this tendency was particularly strongly marked. The dairy and garden produce and the wines in which the Counties of Wieselburg and Oedenburg excelled went almost exclusively to Vienna, which again drew a very considerable proportion of its supplies of these commodities from North-Western Hungary (at this time there were no customs duties between Austria and Hungary). The immigration into Austria was, moreover, important. In 1890, out of 221,139 Hungarian citizens domiciled in Austria, 130,905 of whom were in Lower Austria alone, *46-1) no less than 29,314 came from the County of Pressburg, 30,386 from Oedenburg, 29,500 from Eisenburg, and 7,352 from Wieselburg; the great majority of these were Germans. A large

1) At this time Vienna formed part of the 'Land' of Lower Austria,

number of the immigrants were gardeners, builders, or domestic servants; but many also rose to eminence. *47-1) Very important also for the poorer classes was the rapid development of industry in Wiener Neustadt and other localities in the plain south of Vienna. Many of the workers in the new factories came from the Burgenland, and travelled in by train to their work either daily or for the week, returning on Sundays to their homes.

In spite of this, there was before the War no irredentist movement among the Germans of West Hungary, nor did the Magyarization of the towns awaken any resistance. This may be taken as absolutely certain, since it is agreed both by Austrian writers, who deplore the fact, and by Hungarians, who make the most of it. Perhaps the most striking testimony which I have found is that of a journalist sent by a nationalist paper in German Bohemia in, I think, the 90's, who wrote as follows:

I could never have thought possible such a hot-house culture of renegade feeling as goes on in the little towns of West Hungary, only a few hours' journey from Vienna. The Germans there, especially the so-called educated classes, are in a great hurry to be rid of their German character, and Jews, as well as priests of all cults, especially, of course, the Roman Catholic, hurry on the Magyarization as fast as they can. It is incredible how the members of the German people in West Hungary, who are far superior to the local Magyars in numbers and culture, simply throw themselves on the neck of that little people. *47-2)

This report is completely corroborated by all that I have heard from other sources.

Nor was there any question in Austria of a West Hungarian irredenta. The Austrians are a modest and incurious people, and to them the land a mile beyond the Hungarian frontier was a terra incognita. After the last frontier disputes had died of inanition in 1833, the question was hardly raised again; a couple of speakers in the Austrian Reichsrat, a brochure published in Vienna in 1906 by one S. Patny under the title of Westungarn in Deutsch-Oesterreich an occasional reference to the subject in the literature issued by the Alldeutscher Verein and other Pan-German societies in the Reich, about exhaust the interest taken in it outside Hungary until the autumn of 1918.

- 1) The rate of overseas emigration was also high, although lower than that of North Hungary. This was due to the prevalence of large estates, and has continued under Austrian rule.
- 2) I copied this quotation out of a book lent me in a foreign land, and regret to say that I have now lost the reference. It was one of a series of reprinted anti-Hungarian articles; the author was a fervent German nationalist.

§ 2. THE MOVEMENT FOR ATTACHMENT TO AUSTRIA

The active German national movement in Hungary, of which the West Hungarian movement is only a part, began only towards the end of the War, under the influence of the wave of nationalism then sweeping over Europe and, in particular, of the personal contact into which the War brought the German soldiers of West Hungary, for the first time in their lives, with their German and Austrian kinsfolk. The national re-awakening came too late to touch many of the Hungarian Germans at all; a considerable proportion of them, confronted for the first time with a choice of loyalties, decided in their hearts for the Magyar ideal, and must be counted henceforward, as Magyars. The remainder fall into two groups, which were soon in venomous opposition to each other. *48-1) The one was on the whole most strongly represented among the Transylvanian Saxons, whose leader, Dr. Brandsch, was its spokesman and chairman of the 'Deutscher Volksrat' formed to represent it. The Deutscher Volksrat started from the postulate of the German nationality of its members, and was prepared to come to agreement with whatever State offered it the most favourable terms from the national point of view. As price for remaining in Hungary, Dr. Brandsch demanded at least far-reaching autonomy for the whole German 'nation' in Hungary.

The second group was stronger among the Suabians, and its leader and chairman of its 'Deutsch-ungarischer Volksrat' was Professor Bleyer, of Budapest University. Professor Bleyer accepted absolutely the Hungarian State, and was prepared only to accept the best terms which he could get, within those limits, by negotiation with the Hungarian Government. In no case did he wish for 'national' organization, nor even for so much German education as would impair the cultural unity of Hungary.

The latter movement counted many adherents among the Germans of Hungary, but at the end of 1918 their voices were not often heard; the more so as the Deutscher Volksrat was, of the two, the more strongly represented in the Ministry of Nationalities. West Hungary had two representatives in the Deutscher Volksrat, one of whom, the spokesman for the northern districts, supported the claim of the Volksrat for national autonomy within Hungary; but the representative of the southern districts advocated separation from Hungary and union with Austria.

In the course of the following weeks, a number of communes in

- 1) A sketch of these events, from the Austrian side is given by Dr. H. Kunnert in *Burgenland Vierteljahreshefte für Landeskunde*, Folge 2, 2 Jahrg. pp 127 ff. See also D. Eitler, 'Der Kampf um Oedenburg', in *Volk und Reich*, 1929, Heft I, pp. 69 ff. I have supplemented these sources out of certain private information.

the centre and the south, including some Croat villages, held meetings or organized plebiscites in favour of union with Austria or with Styria (in one case, in favour of an independent 'Heinzenland Republic', as a prelude to such union). The north, and with it the majority of the special 'Deutscher Volksrat für Westungarn' which had been established to concert policy and watch over the interests of the West Hungarian Counties, still stood by the integrity of Hungary, but grew impatient as the promised autonomy for the Germans failed to appear, although a law for the Ruthene districts was issued on December 25th. *49-1) When the Czechs occupied Pressburg and the Serbs advanced in the south, the impatience grew even greater, and on January 20th, 1919, a general meeting of the Germans of West Hungary, assembled in the County buildings at Sopron, sent the Government an ultimatum demanding the immediate enactment of the autonomy; failing which West Hungary would proclaim either its independence or its union with Austria.

The Ministry for Nationalities, through its German representative, now hurriedly drafted an Act, modelled on that already issued for the Ruthenes but adapted to the peculiar circumstances of the Germans. *49-2) This measure, which was adopted by the Ministerial Council on January 27th as People's Law No. 6 of 1919, recognized all the Germans of Hungary as a single 'nation'. Where the Germans lived in compact masses, districts ('Gauen') were to be formed, in agreement with the non-Germans living in them. Within these districts the German people enjoyed complete legislative and administrative autonomy as regards internal administration, justice, education, and cultural and church questions; the language of communication with the authorities was German, even in 'common' affairs not falling within the sphere of their autonomy. For autonomous questions the German nation possessed a National Assembly of its own; for questions of common interest, they were represented in proportion to their numbers in the Hungarian Parliament. A German Ministry was established under a Minister who was to be equally responsible to the German National Assembly and to the Hungarian Parliament, and to sit as an equal member of the Hungarian Government in all common questions. The different districts each had its Governing Council, composed of departmental specialists, under a governor, and an elected assembly. The work of the districts was controlled by the German Minister. Other provisions safeguarded the rights of national minorities; while a provisional Council was appointed, consisting of four members of each of the two Volkräte and two representatives from each district inhabited by Germans.

1) See below, p. 213 f.

2) Text in Szana, op. cit., pp. 265-7.

It had been proposed to create five districts; Transylvania, North Hungary, South Hungary, West Hungary, and Central Hungary. In fact, the north, south, and east were by this time all in enemy occupation, and in the centre the resistance of Magyar opinion was too strong to allow the plan to be realized. For West Hungary, however, a Governing Council and Governor (M. Zsombor) were actually established, with a German Minister in Budapest (M. Junker). It was certainly never fully effective, owing to the resistance of the Magyar and Magyarophil officials, but the administration was partially Germanized, and a good deal of work was done as regards the schools, a number of which were turned into genuine German schools with Magyar taught only as a subject. This work went on almost undisturbed during the Communist period, since M. Kalmars, himself a German, who under the Commune succeeded M. Junker as People's Commissary for German affairs, sensibly left the Germans to work out their own salvation and even abstained from placing any Communists in the Ministry. Not many Communists were sent at all into the German districts, which lived a bourgeois existence enough under the Commune.

The People's Law of July 16th re-enacted the law of January 27th without substantial modification, except in one respect: the position of Oedenburg. Here the local Magyar press resisted the January law vehemently, declaring it to be no less of a catastrophe for Hungary than the Serbian occupation of Pécs. An agitation began for exempting Oedenburg from the law, on the ground of its Magyar character and culture, and a 'propaganda office for the maintenance of the integrity of Hungary' was founded to press this claim. Herr Junker refused it, but Kun excluded Oedenburg from the operation of his law and from the competence of the District Council (Gaurat) set up thereunder.

On August 1st the Commune broke down. The counter-revolutionary Government swept away the autonomy, first ignoring it, then definitely cancelling it, with all other legislation of the revolutionary period, under the comprehensive Law I of 1920. Plebiscites were arranged calculated to reverse the impression made by the previous demands for autonomy or for union with Hungary, and troops were garrisoned in the district to fortify the loyal sentiments of its inhabitants.

Meanwhile, a parallel and more open agitation had begun in Vienna in the autumn of 1918, although even among the Austrian politicians not all were agreed on the desirability of annexing German West Hungary. The comparatively

small Pan-German Party favoured it; and the Social Democrats, who officially advocated self-determination for all peoples of Austria, saw no reason

why they should not benefit from it. Moreover, they entertained small respect for the sanctity of historic frontiers. The Christian Social Party, on the other hand, and particularly its right, or monarchist, wing, was more or less openly opposed to the annexation out of respect for historic rights, consideration for Hungary, and anxiety that no apple of discord should disturb the friendship between Austria and Hungary so necessary to any plan for a restoration.

An active agitation was, however, carried on by some Viennese of West Hungarian origin, who, to awaken interest in the question, founded a 'Verein zur Erhaltung des Deutschtums in Ungarn', and was supported in the old Austrian Reichsrat by two German Bohemian Deputies, Lodgmann and Heilinger, who urged the Reichsrat and later the Austrian National Assembly to plead at least for the Germans of West Hungary to be given an opportunity to exercise the right of free self-determination. The resistance of the Christian Socials was swept away by the strong feeling among the other parties, and the Austrian Delegation, which left for St. Germain in the spring of 1919, headed by the Social Democrats, Renner and Seitz, acceded to a request from the German West Hungarians in Vienna and attached to their number an expert for the region (Dr. Ernst Beer).

§ 3. PROCEEDINGS AT THE PEACE CONFERENCE

The Conference had already had this question before it in another connexion: it had been urged to grant a strip of West Hungary either to Czechoslovakia or to the Serb-Croat-Slovene State, in the form of a corridor linking up the two States.

The first reference to this plan which I have found is in a draft for a proposed -- or perhaps ideal -- Slav Empire elaborated by Dr. Kramar, the well-known Czech Slavophil leader, and given by him in June 1914 to the Russian Ambassador in Vienna. *51-1) This exceedingly generous scheme, which contemplated incorporating in various Slavonic States all territory which could by any stretch of imagination be termed Slavonic, suggested assigning to the enlarged Serbia a strip of West Hungary (comprising, so far as can be judged from the map, most of the County of Zala and the Raab Valley as far as the Danube), the excuse being the existence in this region of the Croat settlements.

This plan was revived in 1915 by no less a person than Professor Masaryk, afterwards first President of Czechoslovakia, who

- 1) This plan was reprinted in the Národní Osvobození, of Prague, June 24th and July 5th, 1934, reproduced in translation by the German periodical Volk und Reich, Nov. 1934, pp. 819 ff.

submitted to the British Foreign Office a statement of Czech claims, or desires, including the following passage:

The maximum of Czech and Serbo-Croat aspiration would be the connexion of Bohemia and Serbo-Croatia. This can be effected by giving the strip of land at the Hungarian frontier in the west either to Serbia, or the half of it (north) to Bohemia, the other (south) to Serbia. This corridor would be formed of parts of the Counties of Pozsóny, Sopron, Moson, and Vas. The population is German, containing considerable Croatian minorities; the south is Slovene;... This Serbo-Bohemian corridor would facilitate the economic interchange of both countries -- industrial Bohemia and agricultural Serbo-Croatia -- and it would lead from Bohemia to the Serbo-Croatian ports. The corridor would, of course, have great military significance. It must be added that many Serbo-Croatian politicians accept this plan of a corridor just as the Bohemian politicians. By forming this Serbo-Bohemian corridor the Allies would prevent Germany from colonizing the Balkans and Asia Minor, and they would prevent the Magyars from being the obedient advance guard of Berlin. *52-1)

If such a corridor came into being, it was suggested that Bohemia could be a monarchy, and a personal union could be established between Bohemia and Serbo-Croatia. *52-2)

According to Dr. Benes, the plan was the subject of 'repeated negotiation' during the War, but the Czechoslovak National Committee finally dropped it, before the Peace Conference, on account of Italy's sharp opposition. *52-3)

It was, however, placed before the Peace Conference on February 5th, 1919, by M. Benes, at the end of his statement on the Czech claims -- merely, it is true, as a 'suggestion'. He asked for 'a small territory either under the Czech or Yugoslav Government, or under the League of Nations' to enable Czechoslovakia 'to free itself from the grip of the Germans and Magyars' by establishing 'close relations with the Yugoslavs and Italy'. A railway line alone, with territory on either side of it, would, he thought, be insufficient. He would suggest that this territory should be marked out, as the

1) Reprinted in C. Nowak, Chaos (Munich, 1923), pp. 313 ff

- 2) According to Masaryk himself, the idea was not his own, and indeed seemed 'impracticable' to him. It was suggested to him in the late autumn of 1914 by Dr. Lorkovic, a Croat Deputy who also supplied Masaryk with a map and statistical tables of the Croat settlements in the projected corridor. The Plan was 'warmly supported by many of our people and by some Southern Slavs' (Masaryk, *The Making of a State* (London, 1927), p. cI. Masaryk took it up again when he visited Rome in December 1914, and 'interested the Southern Slavs, though I thought that, at best, it should only be mooted as a tactical move. Several Southern Slavs took it up, but Trumbic was reserved and wished it to be left to the Czechs' (ibid., p. 55). The Yugoslavs who advocated the 'corridor' included, by his own account, M. Radic (see his autobiographical notes in *Current History*, October, 1928, pp, 84ff.).
- 3) Benes, *Der Aufstand der Nationen* (Berlin, 1928), p. 60.

confines of the Germans and the Magyars. It would thus furnish a corridor between Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia. *53-1)

The suggestion met with small sympathy from the majority of the Entente representatives, *53-2) but it might yet have been adopted (since France was inclined to favour the project) had not the Austrian representatives hastily drawn the attention of the Italian delegation to the danger which might threaten Italy from the 'Slav Corridor'. *53-3) Italy, therefore, interposed her veto on the 'corridor', while the knowledge that their own moderation might not benefit Hungary, but only the Slav States, caused the Austrian Conservatives to drop their opposition to the idea of claiming the Burgenland.

On their own demand being refused, the Czechs suggested dividing the area between Austria and Hungary, hoping by this means to prevent an alliance between Austria and Hungary against Czechoslovakia. They also wished the two railway lines connecting Slovakia with Croatia to belong to different states, since they calculated that they were unlikely to be at war with both Austria and Hungary at the same time.*53-4)

When the Conference turned to discuss the treaty with Austria, it was at first proposed to leave the frontier with Hungary untouched; but, Mr. Balfour having intimated that the population might wish to join Austria, a Commission was appointed to report. No action was to be taken unless either Austria or Hungary raised the question.*53-5) The draft terms presented to Austria on June 2nd gave her no gains at Hungary's expense; but Austria in her replies of June 16th and July 10th asked that if the inhabitants, through a plebiscite, declared this to be their wish, she should be given the German-speaking districts of the Counties of Pressburg, Wieselburg, Oedenburg, and Eisenburg: an area of some 5,800 sq. km., with a population of about 495,000, 325,000 of which were Germans. She argued that the majority of the population was ethnographically and linguistically German, and that, while under the old system the frontier had been unimportant, if Hungary became a strange and 'possibly hostile' State the strategic position of Wiener Neustadt, Vienna, and even Graz would be dangerous; a barrier would be interposed between the Neustadt factories and the workmen from Hungary; and the food-supplies of Vienna and Graz would be endangered, while their factories would lose

- 1) D Hunter Miller, My Diary of the Peace Conference (printed privately, 1924-6 -- subsequently referred to as Hunter Miller, Diary), vol. xiv, p, 224.
- 2) Harold Nicolson, Peacemaking (London, 1933), pp. 252, 273.
- 3) Statement by Dr. Renner in a speech at Eisenstadt, Sept. 12th, 1931.
- 4) O. Bauer, Die österreichische Revolution (Wien, 1923), p. 155; Renner, Loc. cit.
- 5) Hunter Miller, op. cit., vol. xvi, pp. 227-9.

important markets. Budapest had ample alternative sources of supply. *54-1)

The Commission had reported on July 9th recommending by 4 votes to 1 (the Italian) a line substantially identical with that finally adopted, except for the Oedenburg loop. *54-2) The Supreme Council adopted the report unchanged, and on July 20th informed Austria that she would be assigned a frontier accordingly, without a plebiscite (which was held to be impracticable in the circumstances). *54-3) Austria renewed her previous request on August 6th, protesting that the line offered her excluded precisely those districts which were economically most valuable to her, *54-4) but on September 2nd the Allies replied that the frontier offered by them was the best for all concerned. It could not be extended. If Austria decided to take a plebiscite within it, she might; but the will of the population was so clear as to make such a step unnecessary, and the Powers could not help to supervise or organize it. *54-5)

Hereupon Austria gave up her efforts to obtain further concessions, signed the Treaty on September 10th, 1919, and ratified it on October 17th. She was not, however, allowed to proceed to occupation, in spite of her repeated requests that she might do so to maintain order; but on September 17th the Powers agreed to send an Inter-Allied Military Commission to Oedenburg to assist in the maintenance of order in the territories granted to Austria by the Treaty of St. Germain'. *54-6)

§ 4. THE OEDENBURG (SOPRON) PLEBISCITE

Meanwhile, as we said, the counter-revolutionary government had succeeded the Communists in Hungary, and showed no disposition to reconcile itself in advance with the loss of the Burgenland. It suggested to Austria that a plebiscite should be held to

- 1) Austria: Konstituierende Nationalversammlung, Bericht über die Tätigkeit der deutsch-österreichischen Friedensdelegation in St. Germain en Laye (Wien, 1919 -- subsequently referred to as Bericht), i. Bd. pp. 130 ff., 135 ff. The document of June 10th is the short 'reply'; that of July 16th the larger official counter-proposals, which contain the same arguments set out in more detail. From Temperley, A History of the

Peace Conference of Paris (6 vols., London, 1920-4 -- subsequently referred to as H.P.C.), it would appear (vol. iv, p. 382) that the strategic argument proved unexpectedly effective owing, no doubt, to the existence of a Communist régime in Hungary; for the Powers were at the time far from reassured that Western Europe was safe from infection by militant Communism.

- 2) Hunter Miller, *Diary*, vol. xix, p. 510. The Italian seems to have wished the whole territory to remain with Hungary, or at all events to keep it undivided. According to Dr. Renner, *loc. cit.*, the true reason for refusing Austria the German-speaking districts of Eastern Wieselburg was the desire to meet Czechoslovakia's wish that the two north-south railway lines should run through different states.
- 3) H.P.C., vol. iv, p. 385.
- 4) Bericht, Bd. ii, pp. 99-100.
- 5) *Ibid.*, Bd. ii, p. 307. 6) *Ibid.*, pp. 315, 320.

determine the fate of the area, and offered her certain commercial advantages as the prize for her consent. Austria, however, now maintained that the area was legally hers, and refused to renounce it, or even to negotiate concerning it.

In January 1920 the Hungarian delegation arrived at Trianon, where it was handed the draft peace terms, including the frontier as fixed with Austria. Hungary refused to take this as final and by her answers of January 14th and 26th and February 12th, 1920, refuted Austria's historic claim, and went on to deny that the Burgenland was economically at all necessary to Austria. It did, indeed, send vegetables to Vienna; but Budapest's own supply was being cut off by the other treaties. The main sources of Vienna's milk and meat supplies were the Magyar districts lying farther east. In this, the Hungarian argument agreed with the Austrian; but it differed in suggesting that if economic factors alone were to be considered, it would be more rational to move the frontier west instead of east, and to incorporate the whole basin of Graz in Hungary. As to Austria's industrial argument, there was no reason why Hungary should be made to pay for the fact that her industry had been repressed in past years, in favour of Austria's, while the annexation would ruin such industries in the annexed territories as had, in spite of all, managed to take root.

In a more detailed annexe the Hungarians argued, mainly from war-time statistics, that the German-speaking areas were economically passive, particularly as regards cereals, and they further affirmed that although the population of the region concerned was German-speaking, it was neither Styrian nor Austrian and had never shown any discontent with its position in Hungary, nor any hostility towards the Hungarians except for a transient phase when they had been alienated by the Communist régime, since destroyed. They therefore asked the Powers to revoke the decision passed by the Austrian Peace Treaty and to leave Hungary the territory 'if necessary by means of an impartial plebiscite'.

A further memorandum by the Magyar population living in the territory claimed by Austria stressed particularly the argument that the industries in the area transferred would be cut off from their sources of raw material, and would be ruined by the competition of Austria.

A promise was given that the population should enjoy the widest freedom in cultural and national matters. *55-1)

The Allies did not reply in detail to Hungary's objection to this frontier, but on May 6th required Hungary to accept the Peace terms, with such slight

modifications as were made in the second draft, while holding out the hope of further rectification if the

1) Hungarian Peace Negotiations vol. ii, pp. 11, 516 ff.

frontier were found particularly oppressive or unjust in any detail. Under pressure Hungary signed the Treaty on June 4th, 1920.

No steps were, however, taken to enforce the transfer, which was to take place only when the Hungarian Treaty came into force. This had not been effected when the elections of October 1920 brought the Christian Social Party into power in Austria. Unlike the Social Democrats, who had sought the friendship of the Czech Socialists, the Christian Socials desired to renew relations with 'Christian Hungary', and negotiations to this effect were opened. Hungary, however, demanded as prize for any rapprochement Austria's renunciation of the whole, or at least the greater part, of the Burgenland; and in view of her attitude the Austrian Government had to return to the Czech orientation of its predecessor. The ratification of the Hungarian Treaty was still delayed, and when, in April and May 1921, the Tyrol and Salzburg held provincial plebiscites which voted by overwhelming majorities for union with Germany, the Allies actually threatened to cancel the transfer of the Burgenland unless the dangerous movement for Anschluss were stopped. Thereupon a change of government took place in Austria; the Treaty of Trianon was ratified at last (July 26th, 1921) and the transfer became imminent. An Inter-Allied Commission, headed by the Italian, General Ferrario, was sent to Oedenburg to supervise the operation. The Commission arrived in Oedenburg on August 6th and fixed August 29th as the date of the transfer.

Meanwhile, Hungary had not been idle. Official resistance was, indeed, impossible, but for some time past bands had been assembling and drilling on the large estates of the Magyar landowners in the Burgenland. These bands were for the most part in mufti, but armed with rifles, hand-grenades, &c., and often commanded by regular officers or assisted by various officers, notably MM. Pronay, Hejjas, Osztenburg, and some others.

Hungary maintained that this movement represented a spontaneous upheaval of the local population of the Burgenland, determined to resist to the last the transfer to Austria, and that the Government in Budapest was unconnected with it and, indeed, unable to control it; while Austria contended that it was organized, financed, and controlled from Budapest and carried through by elements imported from the interior of the country, who terrorized the genuine local population. As our judgement as to how far the transfer of the Burgenland accorded with the principle of self-determination must clearly depend largely on which of these two theses we believe to be more nearly correct, it is impossible to

avoid pronouncing upon the question, delicate as it is. It is therefore necessary to say that the weight of evidence clearly supports the

Austrian contention. The large landed proprietors were undoubtedly against the transfer. They helped to organize and assist the resistance, of which their estates were the chief centre. The bands certainly included a proportion of the personnel employed on these estates, and also a number of the Magyar intelligentsia, notably the Oedenburg high school students. To this extent the movement was local.

On the other hand, there is nothing to show that the German or Croat peasants joined the bands, except in quite isolated instances. As a rule they seem to have remained quite passive. The bulk of the armed bands, by the admission of Hungarian speakers themselves, and by the overwhelming evidence of contemporary eyewitnesses, consisted of elements brought by train from other parts of Hungary. Most of them were refugees from Slovakia or Transylvania, and they included, in particular, large numbers of Székely. The main organizers belonged to that group of officers which had taken a leading part in stamping out the embers of the Socialist and Communist movements in Hungary, and continued in later years also to play a leading, if not always an official, part in Hungarian politics, and their close connexion with high official circles in Budapest was admitted by some of their number in the Hungarian Parliament and Press.

While, therefore, the participation of some local elements is not to be denied, it must be stated categorically that these elements belonged almost exclusively to the Magyar minority; that the bulk of the resistance came from inner Hungary; and that to regard it as a spontaneous resistance on the part of the local population to Austrian rule would be greatly mistaken.

In view of the prospect of resistance, Austria had returned to the idea of a plebiscite (to be carried out not only in the area promised to Austria, but in the larger area claimed by her). On August 27th proposals on this basis were made to Hungary, but received no answer. On August 29th Austria began her attempted occupation, but in such manner as to court disaster.

The Austrian army was at this time a Socialist organization, deeply unpopular in Conservative circles, and regarded by its enemies as little better than a band of Bolshevik agitators. It was, if possible, even less popular among the Austrian Conservatives than outside the country. When, therefore, the clerical leaders in Oedenburg requested the Inter-Allied Commission to order that only gendarmerie should carry out the occupation, the Austrian Government raised no objections; but the result was that when the gendarmerie crossed the frontier, it was met by

the armed bands and quickly driven back to the frontier, and across it. The Austrian army, supported by Socialist armed formations, was hurriedly

brought into action to defend the frontier, and some fighting took place on Austrian soil. A complete deadlock ensued.

The Commission of Generals was quite impotent, and when Osztenburg's bands had successfully expelled the Austrian gendarmerie, it found no other resource than to 'take note of', and acquiesce in, Osztenburg's action. The Conference of Ambassadors, meanwhile, continued to reject Austria's repeated requests to be allowed to send troops into West Hungary, while informing Hungary that they insisted on the maintenance of the Treaty, and the transfer of the whole area. The Hungarian Government temporized, and little real change occurred in the situation. Meanwhile, the Hungarian Government had requested Italy on September 14th to guarantee that Oedenburg and its immediate entourage should be left to Hungary after the rest of the area had been transferred. She made a similar request to the Czechoslovak Foreign Minister, asking him to guarantee that Austria would return Oedenburg. Austria rejected Dr. Benes' intervention, and protested strongly to Italy; but the Ambassadors, while again calling upon Hungary to evacuate the disputed area within ten days (September 22nd), announced publicly that they would not object to mediation. Italy then renewed her offer (October 2nd), and on the following day it was announced from Budapest that the evacuation had begun, and that all military and civil authorities would have left the area by midnight. In fact, however, the civil officials were not withdrawn, and the Oedenburg police also remained, at the request of the Commission of Generals, who also, surprisingly, asked for the retention of the 'Osztenburg Gendarmerie' to help maintain order. In the rest of the Burgenland the bands remained undisturbed.

France and Great Britain urged Dr. Schober, the Austrian Chancellor, to accept Italy's invitation, and on October 10th the Austrian and Hungarian plenipotentiaries met the Italian Foreign Minister in Venice. On October 13th the so-called 'Venice Protocol' was signed, under which Hungary agreed to compel the irregulars to evacuate the territory, while Austria (who had been threatened by Italy with withdrawal of credits) consented that a plebiscite should be held in Oedenburg and the eight adjoining villages, eight days after the Commission of Generals who were to preside (assisted by one Austrian and one Hungarian delegate) had satisfied itself that the country was completely pacified. If Oedenburg was returned to Hungary, Hungary promised to grant Austria railway facilities.

A further delay was caused by the ex-King Charles's arrival in West Hungary on October 20th; and Austria, who was standing out for guarantees that the plebiscite would be impartial, did not

ratify the Protocol until threatened by the Conference of Ambassadors that, unless she did so, they would disinterest themselves in the whole question. On November 19th, however, the Austrian forces began their occupation of the Burgenland outside the plebiscite area, and had completed it by December 3rd, almost without incident.

The plebiscite in Oedenburg and district took place on December 14th and 15th. Many protests were heard at the time against the fairness and reliability of the arrangements. The Commission had issued its regulations on November 18th. These were along normal lines, with the one important exception that the time left for drawing up and revising the register of voters was extremely short. The Austrian delegation only reached Oedenburg on November 29th, and the revision did not begin until December 4th, leaving actually only six days for the lists. Hungary had working for her the entire apparatus of State, County, and municipal officials, assisted by ready volunteers. The issue of the necessary documents was thus entirely in Hungarian hands, while, in addition, the frontier was closed almost hermetically against Austria -- the home of many persons born in the plebiscite area -- while wide open to Hungary. Further, the area was still under martial law, the gendarmerie active and severe. The Austrian delegates protested many times against alleged abuses, and resigned in a body on December 12th, the Austrian Government declaring that it could not accept the verdict of the voting. The actual voting, however, took place in good order and under conditions of secrecy, under the control of Entente troops, which arrived on December 8th, the Hungarian forces leaving Oedenburg on December 12th.

Eighty-seven per cent. of the persons inscribed on the registers were recorded as having voted, and the polling resulted in 15,334 votes for Hungary and 8,227 for Austria. Six wards of the city and two villages had a majority for Hungary, one ward and six villages for Austria. The Conference of Ambassadors upheld the result, supposing that Austria's grievances related to intimidation of voters, and that the result would therefore have been unaltered even had all the remaining voters voted for Austria. The plebiscite area was therefore handed over to Hungary on January 1st, 1922, and Austria persuaded, on February 25th, to recognize the cession. Writing so long after the event (although the writer was at the time in fairly close touch with what went on) it is hard to pass judgement on the fairness of this result. It is not to be doubted that many abuses took place; that votes of unqualified persons were registered for Hungary, and that qualified Austrian voters were disfranchised. Whether a completely fair vote would have tipped the scale in favour of Austria it is difficult to say; the fact that, in

spite of all the abuses, six out of the eight villages gave a majority for Austria must give rise to doubts whether a fair vote would not still have given a Hungarian majority in Oedenburg. The final delimitation of the frontier was made after a commission had been over the ground. When this was due to meet, Hungary put forward very far-reaching claims, asking for the cession, in all, of no less than 97,000 hectares, with over 62,000 inhabitants, or nearly one-quarter of the total area and one-fifth of the population. Fears of a fresh coup were awakened by the reappearance of some of the armed bands, notably on the Esterházy estates in the north, and Austria hurriedly reinforced her garrisons. Only minor incidents, however, occurred, and the adjustments recommended by the Commission, in accordance with which the final line was laid down, comprised the re-cession of only a few communes to Hungary.

§ 5. ECONOMIC AND ADMINISTRATIVE CONDITIONS SINCE 1920

It will be seen that the cession of the Burgenland was conducted in a manner very different from that of Northern, Eastern, or Southern Hungary. Austria could not count on the indulgence of the Powers. What she received was given her grudgingly, with strict regard for the principle of nationality and with none of the concessions to economic advantage so generously lavished elsewhere. It is hardly probable that Hungary would have retained Oedenburg had the rival claimant been Roumania or Czechoslovakia, nor that the frontier would, in such a case, have run so closely along the edge of the hills, to the grievous detriment of the transverse communications. *60-1) The natural result has been to burden Austria with a disproportionate weight of economic problems, but to leave her almost entirely free of the corresponding political difficulties.

The principal problem -- and one which no goodwill and no effort can ever completely overcome -- is one of communications. As regards the north and centre this has, of course, been immeasurably accentuated by the loss of Oedenburg, the natural centre on which the entire rail and road system converges. The transit agreement with Hungary stipulated in the Protocol of Venice was, indeed, concluded in 1922, when a system of privileged transit traffic between Wiener Neustadt and Parndorf on the one hand and the districts south of Oedenburg on the other was introduced. These arrangements are punctiliously observed,

- 1) The effect of the final adjustment had been, for example, that the frontier cuts the course of the Pinka and of the road which follows it eight times in twelve miles,

and give rise to no friction. The possibility of free transit cannot, however, compensate the districts round Oedenburg for the loss of their natural centre and local market.

The Oedenburg loop, moreover, almost cuts the Burgenland in half, only a single road running through the narrow strip between the loop and the Rosaliengebirge. Farther south, the situation is even more difficult. The northern districts have easy access through open country to Wiener Neustadt and Vienna; but the valleys of the centre are the natural complement of the plain, from which they are now cut off, and their natural markets are Güns and Steinamanger. The situation was partially easy for the villages in the Stoob Valley when in 1929, after prolonged negotiations conducted in part through the League of Nations, Austria took over the management of the Oedenburg-Güns railway, including those parts of it which lie on Hungarian soil. This did not remedy the fact that in 1918 there was no railway communication between Austria and Hungary along the whole stretch between Oedenburg and St. Gotthard. With great difficulty, and at heavy cost owing to the nature of the soil, Fürstenfeld and Friedberg were linked up by a new line which thus brought the Central Burgenland into direct rail communication with Vienna via Aspang. The Fürstenfeld-Friedberg-Vienna railway is, however, itself a single line, which winds a slow, laborious, and costly way through mountains of some altitude, Traffic along it can never be either quick or cheap, while the hardly less important construction of a line from Güssing to Fürstenfeld has not yet been undertaken at all, for lack of funds.

There is clearly a much greater future for motor traffic, and, in fact, most of the villages are now linked up by motor omnibus services; but here, too, conditions are unfavourable. The roads when Austria took them over were in a deplorable state. The few which possessed any pretensions were those leading down the valleys into Hungary; transverse communications were poor, roads into Austria almost non-existent; A good deal of spirited work has since been done, including the construction of a through road right down the Burgenland from north to south; but an Austrian map published as recently as 1919 divided the entire system into roads which were respectively impassable, passable with difficulty, and fairly well passable in wet weather; the last-named category being much the smallest -- and rightly so, as I can testify. Even if all the roads were put in first-class condition, the difficulty would remain that all traffic from the Central Burgenland must make a long and difficult journey before reaching any market in Austria.

The lack of communications has thus weighed heavily on the
 BURGENLAND THE BURGENLAND

Burgenland, cutting it off from the markets on which it must now depend, and, conversely, preventing access to the country from the rest of Austria. In spite of vigorous propaganda, the Burgenland still remained for many years a closed book to the conservative and incurious Viennese, not to mention foreign tourists, and does not get anything like the share of tourist traffic to which its natural beauties and interest entitle it. In this one respect, the world depression which set in in 1929 proved an unexpected boon to the Burgenland. Owing to the general impoverishment, and to the difficulty of exporting currency out of all Central European countries, foreign travel almost ceased, and the Viennese began to discover this cheap and agreeable land which lay at their doors.

The difficulty of communication does not, however, affect the whole territory in equal measure. For the centre, it must be permanent; not so for the northern districts, which possess alternative lines to Vienna and Wiener Neustadt. The loss of Oedenburg was serious, but its inconveniences to Austria may have been exaggerated at times for obvious political reasons.

That loss had, however, other consequences. The Burgenland, as has been pointed out, is no historic unit, but merely a strip of land cut out of the western edge of four separate Hungarian Counties. All the higher administrative, economic, and educational apparatus was centred in the various county towns, not one of which was allotted to Austria. She was left merely with a number of rural districts, isolated from each other and lacking any apparatus more elaborate than had been required by local needs. It would obviously have been far more economic, when Oedenburg was receded to Hungary, to partition the country between Lower Austria and Styria. The decision to adhere to the original plan of constituting the Burgenland as a separate province seems to have been taken partly out of a desire to spare the political susceptibilities of the Burgenlaender, by giving them a status equal to that of the Styrians and Tyrolese, partly as a gesture of defiance and hope that Oedenburg might after all one day come to Austria (some say that an element of caution was present also; the fear that the Burgenland might one day be lost again, and the desire to avoid complications if that day ever came). It was a brave resolve, but an expensive one. To begin with, a new provincial capital had to be chosen. When, after large hesitation, Eisenstadt was selected, on account of its size and accessibility from Vienna, new Government buildings had to be erected and homes provided for the officials. A large number of other administrative buildings, schools, hospitals, gendarmerie, post, customs-stations, &c., were also required.

The federal constitution of Austria being very wide, and leaving

many important interests to the sole charge of the 'Länder', much of this necessary work had to be paid for by the Burgenländer themselves. The Federal Government had advanced the funds for current expenditure during the transitional period, but cut off its supplies as soon as the first Diet was constituted in July 1921, and the next year sent in its account for the moneys advanced, with interest. After that the Burgenland had to shift in most things for itself, and it found the task difficult, for the taxable capacity of the peasants was low, and for several years lack of confidence in the stability of the new order was so great that it was unable to obtain any credit whatever. Things improved later, and eventually it was possible to float an internal loan for the most urgent improvements. The Federal government has also helped where it could; but its own resources have, of course, been scanty.

Progress has thus necessarily been slow, and the country still wears a somewhat forlorn and ragged aspect. In respect of public works of all kinds -- roads, drainage, public buildings, &c; the Burgenland is still the most backward of all the Austrian Länder and is likely to remain so for long years to come. The roads are still rough, the countryside poverty-stricken, signs of any life more spacious than the village are rare, except for some few modernized castles and the ancient but tiny 'royal free cities' of Rust and Eisenstadt (the only two places in the whole territory possessing old municipal charters). Nevertheless, the progress has been real, and cannot possibly be denied by any person acquainted with the country as it was in 1920 and as it is to-day. It has also, so far as the writer could judge, been more rapid on the Austrian than on the Hungarian side of the new frontier. Even Hungarian writers admit the praiseworthy efforts made by the Austrian Government. *63-1)

Moreover, the transfer to Austria has undoubtedly proved of great economic advantage to most of the inhabitants of the Burgenland. The cereals, sugar-beet, wine, fruit, poultry, and fat cattle of the northern districts, in particular, are products of a kind in which Hungary is only too rich, whereas many of them are entirely lacking in the greater part of Austria. They can thus count on a ready market, lying, moreover, at their very door -- far nearer than Budapest. Not only is the market secure, but agricultural products of all kinds have ever since the War commanded far higher prices in Austria than in Hungary, so that the independent producers have benefited very largely. Much, too, has been done for the local agriculture, which in 1918 was in a somewhat backward state, the credit system being grievously

1) de Nagy, op. cit., p. 154.

disorganized, and the average yield per hectare of nearly all crops substantially lower than in neighbouring Lower Austria; in some cases the difference amounted to 70-80 per cent. The credit difficulty proved very obstinate, since the only facilities offered during the first years came from Hungary, and it was thought advisable to reject these for political reasons. It was several years before an Agricultural Mortgage Institute was set up, with the help of the sister institution in Lower Austria, to enable the small-holders to get long-term credits at reasonable rates, while an extensive network of co-operatives (mainly on the Raiffeisen system) has been set up. The technical advance in agriculture has been considerable; the yield of wheat per hectare increased between 1921 and 1927 from 11.5 to 15 zentner, and the total wheat harvest from 362,000 to 487,000 zentner.

Unfortunately, the independent producers with a surplus to market constitute only a minority of the population. Of the 56,000 agricultural properties listed in the Burgenland in 1929, 200 belonged to large landed proprietors, 1,000 to big farmers (these two categories between them owning 4 per cent. of the total cultivable area), 7,500 to smaller independent farmers, while about 42,000 were dwarf holdings of 5 hectares or less. The largest landowners alone owned 24 per cent. of the total, half of this being in the hands of a single family, the Princes Esterházy. Moreover, nine-tenths of these great estates belong to non-Austrians (for the most part to Hungarian nobles), and the revenues from them are spent in Budapest. From the Austrian point of view, the situation has the additional disadvantages that the landowners (who, as remarked, are nearly all Magyar) are able to exert a considerable political influence through the appointment of priests, teachers, and even local officials. Nevertheless, Austria, alone among the Successor States, has carried through no land reform on any large scale, although this was often demanded by the Social Democrat representatives of the Burgenland. By her restraint Austria avoided many political complications with Hungary, but she certainly increased her economic and social difficulties. There is much misery among the dwarf-holders and landless peasantry of the Burgenland, who still emigrate in much larger numbers than the population of any other Austrian province. Besides the permanent migration, seasonal migration also remains high, and the masons and other seasonal workers are forced to seek a living, not only in other parts of Austria, but much farther afield also: in Germany, Switzerland, and even in Russia and Turkey. The independent farmers themselves suffer from this situation, for the competition for the available land has driven up its price to a quite uneconomic level.

Exactly the same evils, however, exist in Hungary. Austria has not created a difficult situation; she has only failed to remedy one which already existed. Moreover, the Austrian organization for placing the migrants has probably been more efficient than the Hungarian.

The position of the important forestry industry is far less satisfactory than that of agriculture proper. If Austria is poor in cereals, Hungary over-richly endowed, the reverse is true of timber. Moreover, the forests lie for the most part in the centre of precisely that district in which communications are easiest towards Hungary, most difficult and expensive towards Austria. Partly owing to the shortage of land mentioned above, industry plays a considerable, if still a minor part in the life of the Burgenland. Large-scale industrial establishments are, however, very rare, the overwhelming majority of persons engaged in industry being independent artisans, working alone or employing at the most one apprentice. Many dwarf-holders also work seasonally, or during the week, in factories in and around Wiener Neustadt. Owing to the close relations between the two countries which existed before 1919, the establishment of any frontier which constituted a real barrier was bound to have a disturbing effect, and the present arrangement has admittedly ruined a certain number of establishments. The effects have not, however, been altogether so bad as might have been feared, owing to the very small scale and local importance of most undertakings. The workers would probably have suffered far more severely had they been cut off from Wiener Neustadt; in addition, they reap the benefit of the far more advanced system of social legislation prevailing in Austria.

§ 6. POLITICAL FEELING AMONG THE GERMANS

For the peasant and small labourer, living in that desperate poverty which still reigns throughout Central Europe, where a few pence mean the difference between destitution and something approaching comfort, the economic factor bulks largely in determining political attachment. It may, indeed, easily outweigh all other considerations in a district where national passions do not run high; and they had never been violent on Hungary's western frontier. Thus the Germans of the Burgenland to-day, when asked their opinion on the comparative merits of Austrian and Hungarian rule, generally answer by a reference to markets and prices. The older people, who remember the days before the War, will most usually reply that they were better off in the old days, when not merely Hungary, but the Austro-Hungarian monarchy itself, was intact. If, however, Austria and Hungary

66

were to be divided, then almost all agree that under present conditions they are better off in Austria than in Hungary. This answer will be given both by the farmers, who enjoy better prices and a more secure market, and by the workers, who receive better wages and enjoy a more advanced system of social insurance. *66-1)

The largest fly in the ointment is the heavier taxation due to the increased cost of administration. Hungary was never a bureaucratic country, and if its administration was less efficient than that of Austria, it had the merit of simplicity and cheapness; virtues much cherished by those fortunate enough to enjoy them. The old system has been in part retained, so that the administration of the Burgenland, even to-day, differs in several respects from that of the rest of Austria. Nevertheless, the modifications which were made involved the introduction of a considerable staff of new officials, some 800 in all, nearly all of whom came from inner Austria. While these included some first-class men, the general level was not quite the highest which Austria has to offer, and the Burgenländer are inclined to regard many of their activities as superfluous. The system of taxation, too, is regarded as unnecessarily complicated. These drawbacks, however, weigh but little in comparison with the advantages. If cultural and political considerations carry less weight than economic, they speak, for the great majority of the population, at least as decisively in favour of Austria. Admittedly, it was only a minority among the Germans of West Hungary which before 1918 felt the Hungarian cultural policy to be aggressive. The Germans of to-day are not, however, the Germans of 1919. In the last twenty years they have become conscious of their 'Deutschtum', and they would no longer tolerate assimilation to Hungarian culture. The educational system in the Burgenland is still unsatisfactory. There is still a plethora of small, ineffective schools (sometimes there are even four in one village, each imperfectly equipped and often consisting only of a single class), relics of the old Hungarian system of denominational education, which could not be altered owing to the resistance of the Catholic Church to any increase of lay influence on education. Nevertheless, improvements have been made; new schools built, new classes opened, and the period of school attendance lengthened from the six years obligatory in Hungary to the eight years general in Austria. Secondary and higher education laboured under a still more severe handicap, owing to the fact that practically all the towns of West Hungary were left to Hungary. Great efforts have, however, been made

- 1) During the first decade after the transfer, the workers also appreciated the greater political freedom and influence. To-day (1937) they have a choice between two systems of repression.

both by the parents themselves, by the provincial and Federal Governments, and by such organizations as the Südmark, to fill in the gaps. If much still remains to be done, yet the population is conscious that the authorities are working in the same direction as themselves, engaged in a common struggle against material difficulties. If the Burgenland returned to Hungary to-morrow, any attempt to return to the old Hungarian system would meet with violent opposition; and the fear that such an attempt might be made weighs heavily with the local population. If only on cultural grounds, nearly all the Germans of the Burgenland would to-day oppose a reversal of the decision of 1919; the more so as Austria, alone of all the Successor States, has escaped the reproach of over-centralization and forcible assimilation. The decision to constitute the Burgenland a separate 'Land' entailed heavy economic and financial burdens, but politically it was wise. The Burgenländer have appreciated the opportunities which the decision allowed them of managing their own affairs and of preserving their local characteristics. For their home to be placed on a footing of equality with Styria or the Tyrol was flattering for them, and they are gradually developing a provincial patriotism similar to that which prevails in those territories.

§ 7. THE NATIONAL MINORITIES

The minority problem is comparatively unimportant. All the minorities together comprise only about one-sixth of the total population; and of them, the larger number are at least equally content with Austrian rule, while none, so far as could be ascertained, has any real grounds for complaint. The Magyars number only a few thousand persons, nearly all peasants, with a few officials and a sprinkling of landowners. Austria has treated all categories with great consideration. The landowners have been left undisturbed in possession of their estates, and nearly all the officials who were prepared to do so were allowed to retain their posts (the most irreconcilable, including all the magistrates, left when the transfer took place, and a few were dismissed). Although all the higher education, including even the burger schools, has been Germanized, instruction in Magyar has been retained in the primary schools in the little group of Magyar villages, and no discrimination appears to be practised against the Magyar peasants. While it is to be presumed that most of the Magyars would prefer to return to Hungary, it is admitted even in Budapest that they are well treated and have no cause for complaint.

The Croats, like most minorities in a similar position, probably feel little genuine attachment in their hearts to either party. Some

of them voted for the annexation in 1918 and 1919, others remained neutral. Since the event they have conducted themselves as loyal citizens of Austria, and on one occasion (in 1925) protested vigorously against the impertinence when M. Pribicevic, then Yugoslav Minister of Instruction, closed some German schools in the Voivodina as a protest against the alleged oppression of the Croats in Austria.

I have not, in fact, found any evidence of oppression. It is true that Austria since the War has considered herself a purely German national state; German is the official language, both of the Federal Government and of the Burgenland. No attempt is, however, made to assimilate the Croats against their will. Every commune is free to determine the language of instruction to be used in its elementary schools, and this applies not only to the denominational schools, which comprise 80 per cent. of the whole, but to the state and communal schools also. There are in the Burgenland to-day twenty-nine purely Croatian schools, where German is only taught as a subject of instruction, and eight 'utraquist' schools, in which instruction is given in Croat in the lower classes, in German in the upper. The number of Croat schools is perhaps rather lower than it ought to be, as there is a shortage of teachers; but in several Croat communes the parents have themselves requested that instruction should be given exclusively in German. A long-felt wish was gratified in 1934 when a Croat school inspector was appointed. There is a flourishing Cultural League, with many local branches, and the local Croat periodical literature, although still scanty, is richer than it was in Hungarian days. There has been in the past complete freedom of cultural association, and although the language of the Courts is German, any person unable to express himself in that language is given full facilities for the use of his mother tongue.

The fact is that the Croat minority is not possessed of an acute national consciousness, and is gradually being absorbed by a process of an entirely natural and voluntary assimilation. This is probably proceeding faster under Austrian rule than it did under Hungarian. This may be regretted by the few nationally conscious leaders, one of whom complained to me that the Austrian rule was a greater danger to Croat nationality than the Hungarian had been, precisely because of its higher standards. So long, however, as the assimilation proceeds by the will of the minority itself, there seems no purpose in wishing to check it, although we may, on the score of historical and ethnographical interest, deplore it. Such little active national feeling as exists is artificially fostered by the same circles who desired the formation of a 'Slav Corridor' and have not even to-day altogether given up hope of reviving that

project. There seems no valid reason why any one else should support these ambitions.

At the first elections held after the transfer, the Croats put up a national candidate; but he polled only 2,557 votes out of 120,620 cast in the province, and thereafter about one-third of the Croats voted with the Social Democrats, the remainder concluding an electoral pact with the Christian Socials.

I cannot venture to interpret the feeling of the gipsies, beyond remarking that, as a general rule, this race is strongly attached to Hungarian culture. The same remark has usually proved true in the past of the Jews, but most of the West Hungarian Jews undoubtedly welcomed the transfer to Austria, which took place just when the White Terror in Hungary was at its height. To-day that movement has spent its force, and a Nazi Austria, either as part of Austria or merely *gleichgeschaltet*, would hold out far more terrors to the Jews than any régime which seems at all likely to take power in Hungary. Hitherto, however, the Jewish voice, such as it is, has been in favour of Austria.

§ 8. THE POSITION OF OEDENBURG

For Austria, the acquisition of the Northern Burgenland, at least, has been of great advantage. Vienna draws from the Burgenland a considerable proportion of its requirements in garden produce and smaller quantities of dairy produce, live stock, and cereals, and Austria's balance of payments is thus relieved of a burden which it could ill afford to shoulder. The fears expressed by the Hungarian delegates at the Peace Conference that these districts would prove a drain on Austria have fortunately not been justified; neither has Budapest suffered notably from the diminution of its supplies, which the other rural districts of Hungary have easily been able to make good.

It is, however, also true that the relief to Austria's balance of payments, while definite, has not been great. Vienna still depends on Western Hungary for the bulk of her supplies of dairy produce and live stock. The arguments of both parties at the Peace Conference have proved correct.

The Central and Southern Burgenland, on the other hand, have proved of little value to Austria, whereas their timber would have been important for Hungary, and is much more easily transported to Hungary than to Austria.

Of the towns which the Treaty left just within the Hungarian frontier, Oedenburg has been placed in by far the most difficult position. The tiny ring of villages left to it after the plebiscite form no compensation for the far wider field of which it was previously

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*71-1) Frankfurter Zeitung, December 27th, 1918

the centre. It has lost much of its position as a market and centre for local traffic, this having been largely captured by Mattersburg; the loss is the more important since the peasant of the present Burgenland has far more purchasing-power than the labourer on the estates in the Hungarian plain. Oedenburg's importance as an administrative centre has declined also. The general decline in prosperity is, however, far less than logic would lead one to suppose. Oedenburg was described to me, even in 1934, as the richest town in Hungary. It is, indeed, suggested that the wealth which it still undoubtedly enjoys is due largely to the solid and careful German qualities of its inhabitants, who have husbanded their resources much more carefully than most Hungarian towns. The city has, however, other resources. It is a considerable centre of tourist traffic, its beautiful old buildings and picturesque surroundings attracting many visitors from Hungary and other countries. It is the Cheltenham of Hungary: retired Generals, Heads of Sections in Ministries, and other Excellencies occupy a whole imposing villa-quarter above the town. It has developed into an educational centre, containing no less than six High Schools and three Teachers' Training Colleges, besides a University Faculty of Evangelical Theology and a Forestry School moved from Pressburg when that city became Czech, and a mining school. It has certain activities as a railway centre and even as a frontier station, *70-1) and it has developed since the War a medium-scale industry which had been unable to flourish before, owing to the proximity of Vienna. Most of this has been done by local initiative, for the inhabitants repudiate the suggestion that they have received any special concessions from the Government. As a legitimist centre, they allege, they have suffered, if anything, from discrimination against them.

Thus Oedenburg still presents a reasonably flourishing appearance, and has probably suffered less than Güns -- a smaller place and also hard against the frontier -- or Steinamanger, which lies farther from the frontier but possesses less solid economic foundations.

§ 9. INTERNATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

As an international problem, the Burgenland stands on a different footing from Slovakia, Transylvania, or the Voivodina. Hungary, it is true, has never renounced her claim to recover it,

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although she acknowledged in the Venice Protocols, and by agreement stated publicly, that in her view the solution found under the Protocols represented a 'just compromise'. On a later occasion again, Count Bethlen, then Minister President of Hungary, stated publicly that his country 'had no intention of raising the Burgenland question as a practical issue, not even in connexion with our often-misunderstood policy of revision'. *71-1) Nevertheless, in the view of Hungary's statesmen, the dogma of the maintenance or recovery of her territorial integrity, within its pre-War frontiers, admits of no exception. In some respects, indeed, Hungary felt the loss of the Burgenland to be an unkindler cut than that of Transylvania, Slovakia, or the Voivodina. The Serbs, Czechs, and Roumanians, she felt, were enemies, from whom hostile conduct was only to be expected; but Austria was a friend and an ally. Therefore, even if any separatist feeling had existed in West Hungary (which she denied), Austria ought not to have taken advantage of it. Her conduct amounted to a treacherous stab in the back. It was even suggested, and is still believed (although the history of the negotiations shows the insinuation to be unfounded) that the Allies only made the transfer in order to throw a bone of contention between Hungary and Austria.

Hungary, then, still maintains her claims, although she has put them for the time into cold storage. Only two days before the speech quoted above, Count Bethlen had told a German audience that he thought that 'the 70 million Germans

who had been Hungary's allies would not in the long run refuse to reconsider this question in agreement with Hungary and. in accordance with her wishes'.

Austria on her side, once she had made up her mind to claim the Burgenland, fought for it as stubbornly as any other claimant, and has on various occasions stated officially that she had no intention whatever of giving up her rightful property. A priori, then, there is the same absolute conflict of interests on Hungary's western frontier as in the north, east, or south. On the other hand, the Burgenland itself is small; the number of Magyars in it is positively insignificant, and their treatment by Austria has, by common consent, been equitable; nor has Hungary lost in the Burgenland any important part of her economic system. Thus her grievance against Austria is so small, by comparison with those which she cherishes against her other neighbours, as not to preclude the possibility of friendly relations, which she has, in fact, maintained with Austria for some years past. Austria, again, is not one of those States whose very existence is bound up with the maintenance of the Peace Treaties. In nearly every other respect

1) Frankfurter Zeitung, December 27th, 1918

72

she stands to gain rather than to lose by treaty revision. She would hardly join an anti-revisionist bloc, like the Little Entente, merely on account of the Burgenland.

Moreover, in spite of the official utterances of her Chancellors, from Schober to Dollfuss, she is not wholly opposed in principle to restitution. As we saw, a party in Austria (in power again in 1930) was reluctant to accept the gift at all. Certain circles long played with the idea of reversing the decision; at one time there even existed in Vienna a League for the re-cession of the Burgenland'. More important still is the possible influence of Italy. Italy is at present acting as protector of Austria and Hungary both, but, at least for some years, she undoubtedly looked on Hungary as her chief friend. Inspired articles against the Austrian administration were at one time not uncommon in the Italian Press.

Thus the curious situation has arisen that while the Burgenland is the one area, of all which she has lost, the loss of which has been the least important to Hungary, the restoration of which would remove the fewest justified grievances - - it is yet the only one which she has any prospect, however faint, of recovering by negotiation.

But there is yet another side to the question. Since the Allies treated Austria with such strict justice, as compared with their lavish generosity towards the Little Entente, any local revision, if carried out on either economic or on ethnographical grounds, would go in Austria's favour and not in Hungary's. The Burgenland remains a torso without Oedenburg, the incorporation of which would certainly be of great economic and administrative advantage. More than this: the German population east and south of the Neusiedlersee has in recent years, despite all official pressure, awakened to new national life.

If Austria continues to exist as an independent state -- independent in the true sense of the word -- then Hungary may feel safe, may even hope for favourable revision by negotiation. But if Germany should consummate the Anschluss with Austria, or if Austria came wholly under German influence, a different situation might arise. It might be that Germany would leave Hungary unmolested, or even cede certain areas to her, calculating, as Herr Hitler has hitherto done in the case of the South Tyrol, that a grateful ally was worth the 'Deutschtum' of a few score of thousands of peasants. On the other hand, she might stretch out her hand, as some Hungarians fear, over Wieselburg and Altenburg and as far as the Balaton itself.

What would happen is speculation; but the possibilities are interesting and various. The little Burgenland may yet become the scene of great events.