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Three Small Pivotal States in the Crucible: The Foreign Relations of Austria, Hungary, and Yugoslavia with France

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THREE SMALL PIVOTAL STATES IN THE CRUCIBLE:
THE FOREIGN RELATIONS OF AUSTRIA, HUNGARY, AND YUGOSLAVIA
WITH FRANCE, 1934-1935.

by

Anthony Komjáthy

Advisor: Dr. Walter Gray

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The dearest, and at the same time the hardest duty of any author is, I suppose, the writing of the acknowledgements. It is the dearest because one has a chance to express his thanks and gratitude to those persons who helped in the creation of the study, and it is the hardest because it is almost an impossible task to list the names of all those persons who contributed something to the quality of that work. Even after an author has made up the list of his most helpful friends and advisors, he has to face one more problem, and that is in which order should he mention the many persons without unwillingly violating some protocols or sensitivity. I hopefully shall solve this second problem by using a list assembled according to chronology.

First, I am very glad to mention the names of those persons who inspired me to write this study. My dear friend, former Major General Béla K. Király--presently a professor of history at Brooklyn College of the New York City University--who encouraged me in the first place to pursue an academic career, as well as to utilize my energy by researching and writing about the history of Central Europe. However, even his encouragement would not have been enough if I had not had the good luck to meet, and then to be supported by my devoted and kind instructors at Loyola University. It is my pleasure to express here my gratitude to Dr. Paul Lietz, professor emeritus, former chairman of the history department; Dr. George Szemplér, associate professor, who was not only my instructor, but is also a respected and cherished friend; Dr. Margaret O'Dwyer, associate professor, who already had faith in me at the time when I struggled with the English language as a greater obstacle than history;

Dr. Raymond Schmandt, who taught me the little technical secrets of research, evaluation and interpretations. The bulk of my thanks is addressed to Dr. Walter Gray, associate professor of modern European history, who was kind enough to advise me in my research and writing, kept up my self-confidence, and was tireless in directing my work, discussing my problems, and giving me precious suggestions for the organization and writing.

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I would like to say special thanks to my student-secretary, Rita Valdes at Barat College, Lake Forest, Illinois, who not only tirelessly typed and re-typed my study several times, but also pointed out to me some of the shortcomings of style and phrasing.

Finally, I would like to mention--though I honestly feel that hers is the first place--my wife, Edith. She gave me encouragement and comfort and throughout the years accepted without complaint the lonely evenings while I was working on my study. She then listened patiently to my reading of the paragraphs, and with her remarks, helped me to write a study that is hopefully enjoyable for the general public also.

Looking back on this list of names, one may wonder what was my share in this study? I wonder myself! One thing, however, I may say for sure: if there are any faults or mistakes in my study, they are mine and have nothing to do with the above-mentioned persons to whom I feel indebted for the rest of my life.

ABBREVIATIONS

DGFP = Documents on German Foreign Policy

DBFP = Documents on British Foreign Policy

DHFP = Documents on Hungarian Foreign Policy

RAA = Reports of the Austrian ambassador (Lothar Egger-Moellwald) to Chancellor Dollfuss until July 25, 1934, and after that to the Austrian foreign minister, Egon Berger-Waldenegg. For identification of these reports I used the original registry number and the page number of the documents, which is stamped on every typewritten page, starting with number one in each year. The microfilm copy of these documents is in my possession.

Note: Quotations taken from the original French, German, and Hungarian sources are given in my translation.

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INTRODUCTION

On January 30, 1933, Hitler became the chancellor of Germany, and with him the reign of the National Socialist regime began. Very few people suspected at that time that this date would mark the beginning of a new era, not only for Germany, but for all mankind. Only the pessimists stressed such disturbing omens as: the renewal of the 1926 Treaty of Berlin between Germany and the Soviet Union; German withdrawal from the Disarmament Conference, as well as from the League of Nations in October; rumors of German economic designs concerning Central Europe;¹ secret negotiations between Germany and Poland;² and, Japan's withdrawal from the League of Nations. The optimists, however, were able to point out that France was still the most powerful continental power, the Little Entente was strong, Mussolini was in a cooperative mood, Germany was seemingly quiet, and the new regime was not in a position to challenge the status quo drafted by the Versailles Peace Treaty.

Three years later, however, the situation was different. Hitler's moves were so spectacular and unexpected that very few Western statesmen had the time or the nerve to pay attention to anything but the German problem. Central Europe and its problems came to the foreground again only during the Czech crisis and at the time of the Munich Agreement. They came too late, however, and developments led to World War II.

¹C. A. Macartney and A. W. Palmer, Independent Eastern Europe (London: MacMillan, 1962), pp. 314-17.

²Ibid., p. 320.

It is understandable, therefore, that modern historians describe the history of Central Europe from 1933 to 1938 only when they write about the history of Central Europe or of a specific Central European country. In books which narrate the history of Western Europe, only a few pages or footnotes are devoted to the Central European events and their relations with Western Europe in the crucial period from Hitler's rise to the Munich crisis.

To exclude possible misunderstanding and for the sake of easier definitions, I shall use the expression "Central Europe" when I refer collectively to Austria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, Rumania, and Yugoslavia.

Keeping this in mind, we may and should ask some questions from the historians' point of view. Did the events of Central Europe develop separately, without influencing Western European affairs? Had the Western European states no reason to pay more attention to Central Europe before 1938? Were not the events related at all? Or did the historians and those contemporary Western statesmen make a great mistake when they neglected and still neglect the history of Central Europe? Is it not possible that back in 1934-1936 they could have prevented the future annexation of Austria, the destruction of the unity of the Little Entente, the dissolution of Czechoslovakia, and even the outbreak of World War II?

All these questions, if they were asked at all, were asked from the point of view of the Great Powers, and this is the second interesting characteristic of that period. Only a few nationalist writers have attempted to understand and interpret the policy of the small Central European states from their respective nationalist points of view. However, these interpretations have been dismissed by our Western academic authorities as biased, chauvinistic, and narrow-minded. Are these authorities right? Can we really pass judgment on the Central European statesmen according to our own standards--praising them

if they were useful for the Western Powers, and condemning them if they were not? Should we not try to understand them as they were--representatives of small nations? Do we have the right to downgrade them? Should we blame the Austrian, Hungarian, or Yugoslavian leaders, who after experiencing the unconcern of the Western democracies, tried to save and serve the interests of their respective peoples by accepting an anti-Entente and pro-Nazi foreign political line?

Furthermore, the basic question of whether the small states ever had a chance to make a real independent decision in their foreign policy, or whether they were always pressured to fall in line with the foreign policy of their respective Great Power patrons has not been decided.

It is impossible to make a thorough analysis of all the small states of Central Europe within the framework of this dissertation. Such an analysis should cover Austria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, Rumania, Yugoslavia, the Balkan states of Bulgaria and Albania, and their relationships with Britain, France, Germany, Italy, and the Soviet Union. Consequently, I have limited my study to dealing with only Austria, Hungary, and Yugoslavia, and I shall try to answer the foregoing questions from my study of the foreign relations of these three pivotal states.

The reasons for selecting these three countries are manifold. Austria has the same language, a long similar past, a cultural tradition, and other experiences in common with Germany. Hungary, unique in her language, had a long anti-Habsburg and anti-German tradition. Yugoslavia was the successor of the Serbian kingdom, and for a long time a strong follower of the French political designs. Based on their past histories, one might expect that Austria would, by all means, work for a unification with Germany, and yet just the opposite happened. One might expect that Hungary would be the firmest enemy of

Germany and Austria, and yet just the opposite happened. Also, one might expect that Yugoslavia would follow the old sentimentalist, panslavic political plans, and again just the opposite happened. Austria was created by the victors of World War I, and naturally one might expect that the victors would defend her most vigorously. Instead, her traditional foe, Italy, became her best patron. Hungary and Yugoslavia became friends after a long, agonizing period of double-dealing statesmanship in the camp of their greatest enemy, Germany. There are as many puzzles as there are countries. The oversimplified answers of the historians writing from the Great Powers' point of view are partly misleading, and partly unsatisfactory.

The reasons for analyzing the relationship of these countries with France are also many! Up to 1934, France seemed to be the unchallenged leader of the European continent. All of Central Europe, with the exception of Austria and Hungary, was firmly allied with her, and even within these two countries there were influential political groups who would have welcomed stronger ties with her. France's attempts to utilize these conditions for her own benefit were less than fortunate. She displayed almost complete unconcern toward Hungary, she was hesitant toward Austria, and she was bossy and aggressive toward Yugoslavia. This French indecisiveness and aggressiveness equally influenced the political decisions of these three states. It was not Germany, but France who created the opportunities for the German penetration of Central Europe. It was the incomprehension of the interests of small states (among them the special nationalist interests of Austria, Hungary, and Yugoslavia) on France's part that started the chain-reaction ending with the complete dissolution of the French security system.

I shall try to analyze and interpret, therefore, the actions and passivity of the three states from their own particular points of view. The basis for

judging these states will not be their usefulness or uselessness to the Allied powers. Rather, the judgment will be based on how the Austrian, Hungarian, and Yugoslavian statesmen served the interests of their respective countries.

With this approach, the study will hopefully make some worthy conclusions, which will help to explain the seemingly very complicated history of Central Europe in the years 1934-1936. It will also hopefully serve to help the statesmen and diplomats of the present to avoid mistakes that are usually committed because of the misunderstanding of the Central European politics, and because of the disregard of the special Central European interests.

CHAPTER I

FRENCH RETREAT FROM CENTRAL EUROPE

France's Situation Up to 1934

The economic crisis that struck Europe in 1930 had avoided France for a while. Curiously enough, among the French statesmen, only André Tardieu (prime minister, November 2, 1929-February 17, 1930; March 2, 1930-December 5, 1930; and February 20, 1932-May 10, 1932; and foreign minister, February 20, 1932-May 10, 1932) understood the world-wide scope of the crisis, and he alone tried to warn his country of the possibility of a crisis in France also. The Chamber of Deputies, though, disregarded his warnings and "continued in their customarily irresponsible attitude toward economics and finance."¹ It is, however, too harsh of a judgment to call the deputies irresponsible. Since 1929 there had been an oversupply of raw materials, especially of wheat. The financial crisis had effected, first of all, the producers of agricultural products. Albrecht Carrié describes the possible consequences of such a situation in the following words: ". . . agricultural interests will clamor for subsidies and tariffs, which least appeal especially to industrial interests, while industrial workers will equally resist a diminution of their wages and, if wholly deprived of employment, will turn to the state for assistance."²

¹H. Stuart Hughes, Contemporary Europe, a History (Englewood, New York: Prentice-Hall, 1961), p. 207.

²Rene Albrecht-Carrié, A Diplomatic History of Europe Since the Congress of Vienna (New York: Harper & Row, 1958), p. 449.

The government, as well as the deputies, were equally pressured and caught in the middle in this situation. Not so much the political principles of the different parties, but their ability or inability to deal with the crisis caused the fall of many French governments in a rapid succession between the years 1930-1934.

International Trade

The frequent change of leadership undoubtedly weakened France's international authority, hindered the cooperation with other nations, and very decisively influenced and promoted the decline of the French pre-eminence in Central Europe. However, it was perhaps more important that France lost her importance economically in the trade-transactions of these states, and with her declining role in economics, she also lost political influence. A short review of the foreign trade will explain this statement.

The economic relationship with Austria showed a steady decline from 1929 to 1932. The amount of French export to Austria fell from 94 million schillings to an all-time low of 31 million schillings, while the import from Austria declined from 79 million schillings to 29 million schillings.³ The following two years brought some improvements, and the French export reached 36.9 million schillings, while the imports climbed back to 33.9 million schillings.⁴ Still, France ranked only tenth among the most important business partners of

³Jean Morini-Comby, Les Échanges Commerciaux entre la France et les États Successeurs de l'Empire Austro-Hongrois (Paris: Centre d'Études de Politique d'Étrangère, No. 2, 1936), p. 91.

⁴Ibid., p. 13.

Austria, and was even surpassed by the U.S., which imported 61.9 million schillings of merchandise.⁵

Nor did France do much better in Rumania. She imported the greatest amount of goods in 1931, buying 565.6 million francs worth of Rumanian products, and at the same time selling an amount of 115.1 million francs of merchandise.⁶ In 1934, however, the Rumanian imports fell to 246.7 million francs, while France increased her exports to 167.1 million francs.⁷ With these amounts, Rumania ranked fifteenth as a client in the French trade and ranked twenty-third as supplier among the forty most important business partners of France.⁸ Rumania was most sensitively hit because of the decline of Rumanian oil exports to France, which was due to the Soviet-French and Iraqi-French commercial treaties signed in 1934.⁹

Czechoslovakia also imported the greatest amount of merchandise in 1931. It was close to 220 million francs, while France, on the other hand, bought more than 330 million francs of Czechoslovakian products.¹⁰ In 1934 the export to Czechoslovakia had risen to 225 million francs worth of goods, though the imports declined to 190 million francs.¹¹

⁵Morini-Comby, Les Échanges Commerciaux, p. 13.

⁶Ibid., p. 94.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Ibid., p. 92.

⁹Ibid., p. 62.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 101.

¹¹Ibid.

Yugoslavia exported to France 74.3 million dinars worth of merchandise in 1933, but only 51.4 million dinars in 1934;¹² and France sold to Yugoslavia 120.6 million dinars worth of merchandise in 1933 and 177.6 million dinars in 1934.¹³ By 1934 France had slid to a rank of sixth as supplier and to a rank of eleventh as a customer of Yugoslavia.¹⁴

Interestingly enough, during the period 1930-1934 France's share in the import business of Hungary grew, although, the amounts showed a decline from 24.7 million pengos to 10 million pengos.¹⁵ France remained the fifth most important business partner of Hungary, holding only 3.2 per cent¹⁶ of the Hungarian foreign trade.¹⁷

The general picture that can be drawn from these statistics shows a steady decline of the dominant role of France in the economic life of the Central European states.¹⁸ The successor states searched desperately for new markets to sell their wheat, oil, and timber (to mention only the most important ones), and found ready buyers in Germany and Italy.

¹²M. Vuglijenovic, Die Stellung Englands und Frankreichs am Yugoslawischen Markte in Verhältniss zu der Italiens und des Deutschen Reiches (Wien: Hollnek, 1940), p. 17.

¹³Ibid. Though the full amount of Yugoslavian trade declined only \$9 million, the trade balance became strongly unfavorable. See Table I.

¹⁴Morini-Comby, Les Echanges Commerciaux, p. 46.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 36. The reason for the decline in amounts was the changes of values in the relationship of the franc and the pengos.

¹⁶Calculated on the basis of: Ibid., p. 36.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸See Table I.

This decline of French-Central European trade increased during the first half of 1935, and drastically changed the position of France by allowing German economic penetration of these areas.¹⁹

The roots of this disastrous French foreign trade policy can be found in the even more disastrous domestic economic policy of the consecutive French governments and the methods they applied to fight the economic crisis. Instead of cooperating with England and the U.S. in their efforts to stabilize the world financial situation, France remained stubbornly faithful to the gold standard. She alone of the Great Powers refused to devalue her currency and in this way priced herself out of the foreign markets.²⁰ At home they followed a deflation policy, and as a result the prices sank at least 15 per cent during the year of 1934.²¹ The closing of the gap between the agricultural and industrial prices was intended to regain the competitive capacity of the French products on foreign markets. However, this deflation policy created great hardship in France: salaries were cut back, wages declined, and production lowered. The conditions of the French workers (in offices, factories, and on the farms) deteriorated.²²

It is small wonder that the dissatisfaction with the economic situation took the form of political protest. It is also natural that this political protest was directed not only against the government, but also against the political parties, groups, and ideologies, as well as against the system. The

¹⁹See Table II.

²⁰Elisabeth Haag, Die Französische Aushandelspolitik, 1931-1938 (Lachen: A. Kessler, 1942), p. 24.

²¹Revue de la Situation Économique Mondiale, 1934-1935 (Geneva: League of Nations, 1935), p. 9.

²²Haag, Aushandelspolitik, p. 25.

president of the Chamber of Deputies was correct when he said, "(All) peoples are alienated from parliamentarianism without anyone knowing what one can use to replace it."²³ The irony of this situation was that not only the Communists, but also the moderate Marxist-Socialists (under the leadership of Léon Blum) frequently joined forces with the Right in their effort to undermine and defeat the existing bourgeois-radical governments.

These efforts were too successful; clubs, leagues, and organizations sprang up in France looking at the economic and political successes of Nazi Germany with admiration. At first these leagues were only advocating, but by the beginning of 1934 they were already demanding the overthrow, not only of the respective governments of France, but also the whole parliamentary republican system.

It is necessary to analyze in a few sentences the French domestic political affairs during the year of 1934, in order to fully understand the foreign policy of France during the same year.

Domestic Policy

The history of the Third Republic is rich in scandals. The most important and the best known in the 1930's was the Stavisky affair, not so much because of its preponderation and size, but mostly because it triggered political events of great consequences.

Serge A. Stavisky was an adventurer. Born in Kiev, he migrated to Paris with his Russian-Jewish parents in 1900. As early as 1912, at the age of 26, he was brought to trial for fraud. In 1926 he was arrested again, but his

²³Reports of the Austrian ambassador, Lothar Egger-Moellwald to Chancellor Dollfuss, RAA, Jeanneney to Egger-Moellwald, Paris, Z1, 19/Pol., March 12, 1934, p. 480.

trial was postponed, and in 1927 he was released from prison due to the intervention of his mysterious patrons. He continued his fraudulent activities, floating worthless bonds in different French cities. In January 1934 the French newspapers discovered these new frauds and demanded his and his patrons' punishment. Among his patrons were high government officials, and possibly the chief of police. Stavisky committed suicide, but the papers, especially the L'Action Française kept the issue alive and demanded the resignation of the government.²⁴

The political Right found a common cause in the Stavisky affair. They united, not only to discredit the government circles, but also to stage mass demonstrations and street fights, and if necessary, by means of revolution in order to force the direction of French politics toward the Right. A concerted effort of the Rightist groups produced a mass demonstration and street fights on February 6, 1934, between the Rightist groups, ironically joined by many Communists²⁵ and the police, who were supported by units of the mobile guard. Though the police gained the upper hand, and the Chamber of Deputies voted confidence for the Daladier government, Daladier submitted his resignation. On February 9, 1934 Gaston Doumergue (a former president who was thought to be above parties) formed a new coalition government in which all the other political parties held positions, with the exception of the Socialists and Communists, who refused to participate. The government was dominated by the conservatives. The general workers' strike indicated that the February days produced a negative effect from the Rightist point of view: it called the

²⁴L'Action Française (Paris), January 9, 1934.

²⁵William L. Shirer, The Collapse of the Third Republic (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1969), p. 214. Shirer's book is quoted here as an eye witness account.

attention of the Left to its dangers and urged them to unite against these dangers. Only the Communists continued to oppose every action of the "bourgeois" government.

The danger of a Rightist revolution was over for the time being, but the self-confidence of the Republican leaders was badly shaken. On March 12, 1934, one month after the riots, the president of the Senate, Jules Jeanneney, addressed the following words to the visiting Austrian ambassador: "In every country, energetic authoritarian government chiefs should take over the leadership, as was the case in France during the time of Clemenceau, in order to surmount the general political difficulties all over Europe."²⁶

At the end of May 1934 the Humanité republished in its May 31 issue the article of the Pravda. The article called for the cooperation of Socialists and Communists against Fascism. Perhaps it is only a coincidence, but certainly an interesting one, that the Pravda published that article shortly after the meeting in Geneva (May 18, 1934) of Maxim H. Litvinov, the Soviet people's commissar for foreign affairs, and Louis Barthou, French foreign minister, for the discussion of Barthou's plan of an Eastern Pact.

Doumergue aroused high hopes in the country concerning the possibility of curtailing inflation and creating, with the use of constitutional reforms, a more stable government. The political party interests, however, proved to be stronger than the patriotic appeals of Doumergue. He was forced to resign in November 1934, and was followed by Pierre Etienne Flandin, and then by Pierre Laval on June 7, 1935. French economic conditions remained in distress, and the domestic political situation was in turmoil for one more year when the

²⁶ RAA, Jeanneney to Egger-Moellwald, Paris, 21, 19/Pol., March 12, 1934.

general elections again put the Socialists in control, and the Popular Front government was organized by Léon Blum.

Military Situation

From the end of World War I, France's main concern had been the possible revival of Germany's power, and the possible turn of German foreign policy toward revisionist lines. To be ready to deal successfully with such a situation, France had already created a network of alliance with the Little Entente states in the 1920's.²⁷ Although these treaties looked impressive on paper, their application actually depended on the military capacity of France, and on the will of the French governments to use that military might in case of necessity. However, the French army became the victim of its own victory of 1918.

The French military and political leaders had made two basic mistakes. The first mistake was the evaluation of the events of the world war and its conclusion, which stressed the superiority of defensive tactics and strategy over the offensives. As a result, they spent millions of francs on the building of the Maginot line, while they neglected the development of mobile units. The second mistake was their unilateral disarmament following the peace treaties. They gradually reduced the number of their army between 1921 and 1933 from 857,000 men to 560,000, with almost 40 per cent of them not serving on the continent, which left only 224,000 men for the defenses of France proper;²⁸ and the fifty-two infantry divisions were reduced to twenty.²⁹

²⁷Treaty with Poland, February 19, 1920; with Czechoslovakia, January 25, 1924; with Rumania, June 10, 1926; and with Yugoslavia, November 11, 1927.

²⁸Speech of Colonel Jean Fabry on February 20, 1933, at the "Conference on International Cooperation" organized by the "Old Students" and the "Students of the Free School of the Political Sciences in Algir" (Paris: Edition of the Conference, 1933), p. 131.

²⁹Ibid.

According to the plans of the French general staff, for the modernization of equipment, retraining of personnel, and completion of the Maginot line, the army needed 5,040 million francs in eight annual amounts of 630 million francs.³⁰ From 1927 until the end of 1934 the French government appropriated only 2,097 million francs for the military budget,³¹ less than half of the amount the general staff originally requested. The army leaders were alarmed when they learned at the end of 1933 that the military budget proposed for 1934 would force them to further reduce the size of the army to less than 100,000 men.³² This reduction sounded terrifying in the light of the reports of the Deuxième Bureau, which estimated the strength of the German army to be twenty-one combat divisions, backed by thirty to fifty reserve divisions.³³ Yet, the new, lower army budget bill was not altered; it was passed by the deputies against the protest of the Army Council. Why did the deputies close their eyes to the threatening signals produced by Germany when Hitler withdrew from the Disarmament Conference on October 14, 1933, and then five days later left the League of Nations?

The reasons for this behavior of the deputies are numerous. The first and most widely accepted reason refers to the effects of World War I. In 1917 the French army had already displayed strong signs of war weariness. "The thirty-two months of hardship that many soldiers had experienced, the repeated promises of swift victories that seemed forever to go unfulfilled, the lack of

³⁰Maurice Gamelin, Servir (3 vols.; Paris: Plon, 1946), II, 20.

³¹Ibid.

³²Paul-Marie de la Gorce, The French Army (New York: George Braziller, 1963), p. 254.

³³Ibid.

confidence in their leaders and a growing feeling of the pointlessness of so much carnage had led to a number of mutinies. . .³⁴

The memories of this hardship and frustration were not erased from the minds of the former soldiers by the victorious end of the war. However, while this hardship left its imprint only in the minds of the soldiers, the loss of human life influenced the thinking of the civilian population also. France lost a million and a half soldiers,³⁵ which was slightly less than German's losses, but Germany had a population of 65 million while France's population was only 41 million, with tendencies toward further decline.³⁶ The psychological effects of these conditions prevailed in the sinking popularity of the army, in the spreading of pacifist convictions, especially among the Socialists, and in the mood of the consecutive governments and deputies, who hesitated to vote for the appropriations for the army.

This reasoning is only part of the picture since the losses suffered in World War I "left no permanent scar."³⁷ Paul-Marie de la Gorce argues convincingly that the French army, after the victorious end of World War I, found no new mission for herself, since "Alsace Lorraine was French once again and the deepest source of inspiration for patriotism or nationalism, in pre-war days, no longer existed."³⁸ The economic consequences of the war, such as the

³⁴Herbert Tint, The Decline of French Patriotism (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1964), p. 156.

³⁵The exact figures were: 895,000 died in action; 245,000 died of wounds; 175,000 died of illness. 16.5% of the French soldiers died during the war; 27% of all the losses were 18-27 years old. See: Jacques Chastenet, Jours Sanglants (Paris: Hachette, 1964), pp. 190-91.

³⁶Tint, Ibid., p. 195.

³⁷A. J. P. Taylor, A History of the First World War (New York: Berkeley Publ. Corp., 1963), p. 178.

³⁸la Gorce (de), The French Army, p. 181.

devastation of northern France, the termination of the German indemnity payments, and the great depression forced the French political leaders to be more concerned with the imminent social and economic problems than with the questions of national security. The declining army budgets and the declining pay forced more and more army officers "to look for an opportunity to leave the service. The youthful elite turns away from our military schools."³⁹

This decline of patriotic spirit and the bad financial conditions within the army were not the only reasons for the deteriorating military conditions and for the disconcert of the deputies. Patriotism and the respect for the army had not declined so catastrophically as one might suppose after studying the actions of the deputies. The growing membership of the patriotic Right wing organizations proved that nationalism was not dead in France. "In 1936 the Croix de Feu, for example, boasted two million members."⁴⁰ Even the Socialists and Léon Blum agreed on the importance of the defense of France. Their opposition to the army was rooted in the Socialist dogma, which put political consciousness of a soldier ahead of military skill, equipment, and training. "The working class," Blum said, "would rise as one man if ever there were an invasion."⁴¹

Finally, Maurice Baumont expresses the conviction that the overriding issues in the eyes of the respective governments and in the minds of the deputies were centered more on party strifes and struggles than on the questions of national security.⁴² The recognition of this short-sighted policy led to

³⁹de la Gorce, The French Army, pp. 191-192.

⁴⁰Tint, The Decline, p. 201.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 203.

⁴²Baumont, Les Origins, pp. 98-101.

the formation of the Government of National Unity under Doumergue in February 1934. This idea of national unity was not yet dominant in the last months of 1933.

In light of these arguments (each of them has a certain amount of merit), we may more easily understand the actions of the deputies, yet we cannot absolve them from their responsibility.

On December 18, 1933, (while the new budget was discussed in the Army Council and in the Chamber of Deputies) Hitler sent an official proposal for a disarmament agreement. In this proposal he put forth a plan that decided the strength of the German army in half of the French.⁴³ Germany was ready to renounce the use of offensive weapons (tanks, airplanes). Hitler also suggested a reciprocal control system. He asked for the return of the Saar Valley to Germany and recommended the conclusion of a Non-Aggression Pact.⁴⁴ French domestic problems delayed the answer to this proposal until April 1934 when it was rejected against the wish of Barthou.⁴⁵ In other words, after the further reduction of the size of her army, France closed the doors to diplomatic negotiations. In February 1934, newspaper reporters already had begun to send alarming reports about the speed of the German rearmament, thus corroborating the information of the Deuxième Bureau: "Germany may have 3 million men in her army in case of mobilization. The German air force, according to Göring, will already equal the French air force in May 1933."⁴⁶

⁴³ Georges Bonnet, Quai d'Orsay (New York: Times Press, 1965), p. 112.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 113.

⁴⁶ Le Temps (Paris), Sundry Referee, February 5, 1934.

After the February riots, Marshall Philippe Pétain, the hero of Verdun, took over the defense ministry. The conditions of the army continued to deteriorate; the military leaders, now had to fight even their own minister, since Pétain felt that the Maginot line provided satisfactory defense and opposed the modernization of the army.⁴⁷ They sent desperate appeals to the government stating: "In its present state, the French Army will be in no situation to face a threat without grave risks."⁴⁸ The government, however, was not moved.

The political consequences of the weakening of the army were far more important for the time being than the military consequences. The weakening of the French army alarmed her allies and created doubts in the allied governments as to whether or not France could fulfill her obligations, of which she had many. Although the alliances with Poland and the Little Entente were designed as 'mutual assistance' treaties, the secret military clauses provided actual assistance only for the small states, and not for France.⁴⁹

Poland was to be helped with war material and technical personnel. France's duty was to secure the communication lines and the maritime transportation routes to Poland in case of war, and the control of the "Sound" between Denmark and Sweden was the key to the success of that plan. However, the French navy was far too weak to accomplish such a great task, although among the branches of the armed forces, the navy was in the best condition.

⁴⁷Gamelin, Servir, II, 112-29. Pierre Cot, Triumph of Treason (Chicago: Ziff-Davis, 1944), pp. 181-84. Cot's testimony is the more significant since he was an admirer of Leon Blum, and also a Socialist.

⁴⁸Ia Gorce (de), The French Army, p. 255.

⁴⁹For the text of the treaties see: Gamelin, Servir, II, 465-75.

The army had not even prepared plans to fulfill this obligation.⁵⁰ The treaty, therefore, was a military absurdity.

The treaty with Rumania envisaged a military cooperation "in case of necessity," but no exchange of views ever took place between the two general staffs.⁵¹

The Czech treaty projected the creation of a coordinated military operation against a "common enemy," but no such plan was ever worked out.⁵²

The security treaty with Yugoslavia did not envisage any military conventions. When the Yugoslavian general staff proposed a "conversation" between the two staffs in 1928, the French government found the time to be "inopportune," and with that answer the subject was dropped forever.⁵³

Naturally, for France the most important question was her own defenses against Germany. Mutual assistance treaties especially with Belgium, Poland, and Czechoslovakia, were of utmost importance to her. Yet, the building of the Maginot line, the openly accepted principle concerning the superiority of defense, and the drastic reduction of her army brought home the point even to her most faithful allies that France was concerned only with her own security. "To maintain the Versailles treaties, it would have been necessary to organize an 'offensive' army," wrote General Gamelin.⁵⁴ This mistake of France was rightly evaluated by her allies: Poland negotiated and signed a Non-Aggression Pact with Germany on January 26, 1934. Benes began to look for security in

⁵⁰The speedy occupation of Denmark in case of war.

⁵¹Gamelin, Servir, II, 465-75.

⁵²Interview with General Julien Flipo (chief of staff of the French Military Mission in Prague, 1931-1938), Paris, June 15, 1971.

⁵³Gamelin, Ibid.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 25.

the Soviet Union, and Yugoslavia sought an understanding with Italy. On the scene of the Great Power politics, Britain continued negotiations with Germany for an agreement on the proportion of German rearmament, and the U.S. refused to participate in European politics.

The security system, designed for France by Clemenceau was near total collapse. French domestic conditions remained fluid under the influence of the economic crisis. Her allies became the business partners of Germany and Italy. Their economic interests demanded rapprochement with these two states, even at the expense of possible French rancour. The French army was only a weak shadow of her former strong past. It was Barthou's task to rebuild France's security system or to provide a new one, negotiating from a position of weakness and not of strength. It was quite a task!

French Foreign Policy under Barthou's Direction

Louis Barthou (1862-1934) began his career as a politician in 1889. He served in several governments during the years 1894-1922, was a member of the Senate, and was chairman of the Reparation Commission until 1926. He was selected as foreign minister by Doumergue. Basically a conservative, his foreign political conceptions generally followed Clemenceau's "hard line" policy, including the desire of his own predecessors to have Russia as an ally against Germany.

As we have seen in the preceding analysis, Barthou had to start almost from the beginning in order to rebuild a security system for France. While the governments changed frequently, the aim of the foreign policy--to by all means defend the status quo created by the Versailles treaties-- had never changed. However, while the predecessors of Barthou could believe that the status quo could be defended by using the existing system of international

treaties, Barthou had to realize (and he did), especially after the German-Polish Non-Aggression Pact, that the system, itself, was in a stage of dissolution. He found himself in a situation in which he could more or less freely decide the formula that would serve France's interest the best. Taking into consideration the existing situation as I see it, he had the following options from which to choose:

to continue the old policy based on the idea of international cooperation within the framework of the League of Nations (under French domination) and revitalize the alliance systems of France with Poland and the Little Entente;

to start a completely new foreign policy concerning allies and methods, but leaving unchanged the aims, that is, the containment of Germany; or

to give up the idea of French domination and start a rapprochement policy with Germany based on equality and reconciliation.

Which of these options promised the most benefits for France? On the following pages we may attempt to evaluate the above-mentioned alternatives and decide which one promised the greatest advantages for France. Then, by comparing the best one with the policy of Barthou, we shall be able to judge his activities more objectively.

Alternatives for France in February 1934

Continuation of the Old Foreign Policy

The basis of this foreign policy was the idea of international cooperation within the framework of the League of Nations, and at the same time, a system of alliances of the pro-status quo nations, that is, Poland and the Little Entente states with France.

The advantages of this foreign policy seemed to be well-proven in the 1920's. The League of Nations was more or less under French domination and devoted its activities to the preservation of the status quo. At the same

time, it represented a supra-national moral authority which commanded the respect of the world's public opinion.

Poland and Czechoslovakia represented a second front against Germany in case of a possible armed conflict. The Little Entente states firmly controlled the Danube Basin and their alliance successfully restrained the Hungarian revisionism, prevented a rapprochement between Germany and Austria, and blocked the Habsburg restoration attempts. In the Balkans, Bulgarian revisionism was held in check by Rumania and Yugoslavia.

Conditions changed greatly in the first few years of the 1930's. The League of Nations lost a certain degree of international respect, due to the Japanese withdrawal from membership on February 24, 1933, as a result of the hopeless deadlock of the disarmament negotiations from February 2, 1932 to April 17, 1934, and due to the withdrawal of Germany from the League on October 14, 1933. The League of Nations could not enforce its resolution against the will of a Great Power. It was futile and senseless to seek solutions and resolutions within the framework of the League of Nations on the part of France if the power that France wanted to check most was no longer a member. It became clear that the League had lost importance which suggested to France that she also seek solutions outside of the League.

Ironically enough, instead of strengthening their already existing alliances, the predecessors of Barthou began to look for a new ally, and found it in the Soviet Union; with this step they, themselves, began to destroy the already existing alliances. Later, the signing of the French-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact (November 29, 1932), its ratification in the French Chamber the following year (May 18, 1933), the visit and friendly reception of Litvinov in France in July 1933, the French Radical Socialist Party leader, Edouard Herriot's visit to the Soviet Union in August 1933, and the trip of the French

air minister, Pierre Cot, escorted by an air squadron to Moscow in September 1933⁵⁵ all alarmed Rumania, as well as Poland, and speeded up the new foreign policy of Pilsudsky. Pilsudsky tried to disengage his country from the French alliance and secure for Poland some kind of neutral status between France, Germany, and the Soviet Union. French politicians and diplomats denied that any reasons had existed for this new Polish foreign policy. Yet Poland's distrust in French diplomacy appeared to the Poles to be well-founded. While "both Germany and Soviet Russia had shown the desire to revise their frontiers with Poland to their own advantage"⁵⁶ since the peace treaties of Versailles and Riga were signed, the French-Polish Guarantee Pact (October 15, 1925) was not strong enough to counter-balance the Rapallo Treaty. "Poland could not be too sure of French support, as was shown by Locarno and deficiencies in French deliveries of arms."⁵⁷ Pilsudsky was confronted with this situation as soon as he assumed power, and it forced him to pursue a policy of non-engagement.⁵⁸ This policy led to the Soviet-Polish Non-Aggression Pact in July 1932 and to the German-Polish Non-Aggression Pact in January 1934, which frightened

⁵⁵Frederick L. Schuman, Europe on the Eve. The Crisis of Diplomacy, 1933-1939 (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1942), p. 96.

⁵⁶Hans Roos, A History of Modern Poland (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1958), p. 126.

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 127.

⁵⁸For more detailed discussions of Poland's problems concerning French diplomacy, the reader may consult the following works: Colonel Josef Beck, Final Report (New York: Robert Speller & Sons, 1957), pp. 2-15; Roman Debicki, Foreign Policy of Poland, 1919-1939 (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1962), Chapters III and IV; Robert M. Kennedy, The German Campaign in Poland (Washington, D.C.: Dept. of the Army, 1956), pp. 2-4; S. Konovalov, Russo-Polish Relations (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1945), pp. 37-43; William Evans Scott, Alliance Against Hitler (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1962), Chapters III and IV.

Czechoslovakia even more than France, although some French political experts had already arrived at the conclusion that "one cannot count on Poland any more."⁵⁹

To make the traditional French policy work again, it was absolutely necessary to bring Poland back into the French camp. The price that France would probably have had to pay was the dropping of the Soviet friendship. Which had more value? This is what was Barthou's duty to decide.

A new shock which weakened the confidence of the Little Entente in France was caused by the French participation in the Four Power Pact negotiations. The basic idea of the pact came from Mussolini, who seeing the impotence of the League of Nations, wanted to place the preservation of the peace in the care of only the Four Great Powers--Britain, France, Italy, and Germany.⁶⁰ The cooperation was to be based on mutual understanding and satisfaction and, therefore, the basic text indicated the necessity of the revision of the peace treaties. This one sentence alone was enough to mobilize the foreign ministers of the Little Entente against the pact. They protested against it and confronted France with the dilemma of choosing between the cooperation with the Great Four and her alliance with Poland and the Little Entente. France gave way to her allies' wishes. Although the pact was signed in June 1933, due to the French counter-proposals, it resembled very little the original draft, and finally was not ratified by the Chamber.

Yet, there were other consequences of the Four Power Pact negotiations. The Little Entente states and the Balkan states began to look after their own

⁵⁹RAA, Moellwald to Dollfuss, Paris, ZI, 34/Pol., May 4, 1934, p. 524.

⁶⁰Albrecht-Carrie, Diplomatic History, p. 467. Carrie compares the Four Power Pact's idea to the idea of the Concert of Europe.

security instead of relying completely on France. Already by February 16, 1933, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, and Rumania had signed a pact of organization; and on February 9, 1934, Greece, Rumania, Turkey, and Yugoslavia signed a new treaty called the Balkan Entente.

These treaties signalled to France a certain amount of distrust on the part of her allies and presented her with a new problem, because although the treaties served the idea of "collective security," they did not interpret it anymore from the French point of view. To make the old French policy prevail, it was necessary to convince these states to incorporate their new pacts into the broader French security system.

In light of the diminishing French economic relations with these states, the weakened French military power, and the new political developments, the policy, which was aimed at the restoration of the old French alliance system, promised a very dim success.

The Start of a New Anti-German Foreign Policy

It had to be clear for Barthou that the only way to stop the growing Germany was to create new, stronger anti-German alliances. He had prospective allies for such a design--the Soviet Union, Italy, Austria, and Hungary on the European continent, and Britain outside the continent.

The Soviet Union

An alliance with the Soviet Union was already the goal of the preceding French governments. Yet, this alliance promised realistic benefits in case of war only if the Soviet Union would have had a common frontier with Germany. Not having that, it would have been necessary to secure the permission of the Polish and the Rumanian governments for Russian troop crossings, but neither

the Poles, nor the Rumanians were willing to see Bolshevik troops pass through their territories. In the absence of Polish and Rumanian cooperation, the alliance with the Soviet Union had only a theoretical value, and it did not provide any security for France. The pushing of such an alliance would possibly deteriorate the French-Polish relationship without any results; the pursuit of the Soviet alliance simply meant the chasing of utopian dreams.

Italy

Under the leadership of Mussolini, Italy was an unpreferred ally in the eyes of the French political Left. At the same time, France and Italy had a common interest in the prevention of the Anschluss and in the blocking of German penetration in Central Europe. The pursuit of a rapprochement with Italy was of primary interest to France, but the question of Italian friendship had other aspects, which made the realization of it harder. France and Italy had their differences in colonial questions, but these were unimportant.⁶¹ A more sensitive problem was the fact that Mussolini was the champion of revisionism. Furthermore, he advocated the revisions of all the peace treaties. His thesis, if accepted, would have led to the mutilation of Czechoslovakia for the benefit of Germany, Hungary, and Poland; of Rumania for the benefit of Bulgaria, Hungary, and the Soviet Union; and of Yugoslavia for the benefit of Bulgaria, Hungary, and Italy. In the final analysis, it would have produced the complete collapse of the French alliance system by weakening ad absurdum the capacity of the Little Entente to survive. A rapprochement with Italy seemed feasible only if it was restricted to French-Italian cooperation for the mutual guarantee of Austria's independence. Yet, at the same time an Italian

⁶¹ Ia Gorce (de), The French Army, p. 257.

rapprochement was an absolute necessity for France in order to prevent, in case of armed conflict with Germany, the formation of a second (Italian) front at her back. So, Barthou had to find an acceptable basis for cooperation with Italy.

Austria

Austria represented a difficult problem, too. It was France's interest to preserve Austria as an independent state, but the political Left in France and the government of Czechoslovakia were extremely unhappy with the autocratic rule of Dollfuss. After the February events in Vienna,⁶² there seemed to be no chance to secure very much understanding between Czechoslovakia and Austria.⁶³ It was Barthou's problem to find some basis for their agreement, and if possible, an alliance between them, and in this way strengthen the anti-German front.

Hungary

Hungary played no important role in the eyes of the French government. French foreign policy was directed toward Hungary according to the interests of the Little Entente states, and any special agreement reached without their consent would alienate them from France. On the other hand, a modus vivendi

⁶²The Socialist uprising was crushed by Dollfuss and the following investigation proved that Czech Socialists were actively involved in the preparation of the revolt.

⁶³RAA, Paris, ZI, 19/Pol., March 12, 1934, p. 480. Bouisson, president of the Chamber of Deputies said to Egger-Moellwald on March 11, 1934 (speaking of the February 17, 1934, uprising in Vienna): "On the sixth of February Mr. Léon Blum was informed through a phone call from Prague what was in preparation for the next days in Austria. If Mr. Leon Blum would have informed Mr. Daladier about that phone call, he could have warned through the French ambassador the Bundeschancellor not to irritate the Social Democratic Party." (italics mine)

reached in a common agreement with the Little Entente would release the pressure, especially on Czechoslovakia, and would enable her to concentrate her efforts according to France's interest in the containment of Germany. It was up to Barthou to find such a formula.

Britain

A cooperation with Britain in Central Europe was very unlikely because of the basic differences between the political views of Britain and France concerning Germany and concerning the question of a possible revision of the peace treaties. However, there was one agreement Barthou needed to seek and reach with Britain: to remain absolutely neutral and, if possible, renew the agreement of Anglo-French cooperation declared on July 13, 1933.

After this short review we may draw the following conclusions concerning the feasibility of new allies:

Alliance with the Soviet Union had no practical value without the cooperation of Poland and Rumania. Negotiations toward that goal should proceed only with their complete agreement and participation.

Alliance with Italy was of primary interest to France.

Alliance with Austria was not a necessity, but Austria's independence was a basic interest of France.

Alliance with Hungary was not feasible, yet it was important.

Alliance with Britain was preferable, but not a vital question.

Rapprochement with Germany

A step toward a rapprochement with Germany would have demanded a complete reversion of the French foreign policy. In light of the February events, it could have triggered a renewal of demonstrations, possibly a revolution, and most certainly a further split in the national unity. Yet, there were many reasons why this policy could have won the support of the majority. The

average Frenchman was "a social reactionary, tending altogether toward conservation and resistance to change, a man who fears revolution." The political organizations of the Right counted some 70,000 active members, and their numbers were growing rapidly, while the Left (Communists) commanded about 30,000. Even if we add to it the hesitant Socialists with their 130,000 members,⁶⁵ the Left still represented only a small minority of the population. Because of the fear of revolution, and because of the disappointment in the whole parliamentary system, many Frenchmen believed that "the power of the Executive will have to be increased."⁶⁶ This conviction was widely held not only among the politically less-educated people, but also among the politically most-influential personalities of the Senate and of the Chamber of Deputies.⁶⁷ It was natural that people with such convictions were more or less ready to accept rapprochement with an authoritarian Germany.

A similar conclusion was reached on the basis of practical reasons. French industrial production sharply declined and had no hope to catch up with aggressively expanding German economy.⁶⁸ Certain French capitalist circles worked for the creation of a German-French economic block⁶⁹ as a way out from the decline. Furthermore, French military weakness, a rapidly declining population, and an aging society⁷⁰ were good enough reasons for the

⁶⁴Hans Rogger and Eugen Weber, eds., The European Right, A Historical Profile (Berkeley: University of California, 1966), p. 118.

⁶⁵Ibid., p. 106.

⁶⁶Phillip Gibbs, European Journey (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co., 1934), p. 28.

⁶⁷RAA, Moellwald to Dollfuss, Paris, ZI, 19/Pol., March 12, 1934, p. 480.

⁶⁸Rogger and Weber, Ibid., p. 120.

⁶⁹RAA, Moellwald to Dollfuss, Paris, ZI, 11/Pol., February 3, 1934, p. 461.

⁷⁰Rogger and Weber, Ibid., p. 122.

discontinuation of the alienation from Germany and for the change of basic foreign political principles.

Finally, there was the genuine pacifist argument against any confrontation which could lead to war. Even the "Ancien Combattants de Guerre" believed that "if a vote were taken (what is called a plebiscite) the whole French working class would be against war for any reason. There would be a revolution first . . ." ⁷¹ (italics mine)

We may say that there were three reasons: a fear of Communism and disappointment in parliamentarianism, realistic economic and military conditions, and finally, pacifism that presented the rapprochement with Germany from the domestic political point of view as a feasible foreign policy.

France also needed a rapprochement with Germany because of her present weakness. Only a mutual understanding with Germany could stop a complete German rearmament; only a mutual understanding on the economic field could stop the German penetration into Central Europe and could perhaps produce a division of spheres of interests; and only a rapprochement policy with Germany could secure time for France. Time was needed to stabilize the domestic political scene; time was needed to reorganize the crisis-ridden economic life; time was needed to rebuild and modernize the army; and time was needed to restore the confidence of old allies. These considerations demanded a rapprochement policy with Germany.

On the other hand, there were several disadvantages of that policy, too. First of all, a German-French understanding outside of the League of Nations could cause the complete collapse of that institution. If the rapprochement policy were to be initiated on the part of France, then Germany and all of

⁷¹ Gibbs, Journey, p. 24.

Europe would interpret it as a sure sign of France's weakness, thus producing a complete loss of confidence in France. It could bring the complete alienation of the Soviet Union; it could endanger a complete break with Italy; it could strengthen the revisionist movement; it could lead to a complete collapse of the existing alliance system; and it could lead to a situation in which, like in the time of Bismarck, France would live in complete isolation, depending on the goodwill of Germany. The disadvantages and the risks involved were undoubtedly much, much greater than the advantages. However, the consideration of the time factor, alone, suggests that in case of a German proposal, France should not reject it flatly, but should start negotiations in accord with her allies, and secure time for herself to put her household in order.

The results of the above analysis clearly show that Barthou could have done a successful job by flexibly selecting one of the options which could demand--as conditions changed with the passing of time--a possible switch to another option, or even using different details of the different options if the use of them were to promise the most advantages for France. The most acceptable policy could be built on the following axioms:

- not to flatly reject any German proposal to gain time;
- secure the friendship of Italy;
- guarantee the independence of Austria;
- try to bring Poland back to the side of France; and
- restore the confidence of the Little Entente.

The simplest and most promising solution of all these problems could be reached if all the states concerned would agree and sign a new pact, which would guarantee and protect the basic interests of all the signatories.

The Course of Events

"Barthou wanted to recreate European balance of the collective security. For him, Fascist Italy and Soviet Russia were representing two master cards, two trump cards against Hitler. He would have liked to organize a common front against Nazism . . ." ⁷²

Most historians agree with Baumont in his definitions of Barthou's foreign political aims. However, his methods, as we shall see below, sometimes caused confusion.

Barthou, himself, stated in his speech in the Chamber of Deputies on May 25, 1934, that his policy was the continuation of the foreign policy of the preceding French governments. ⁷³ However, such statements should not be taken at face value. Because his actions seemed to be the continuation of the "unchanging" French foreign policy, it does not necessarily mean that his plans and methods were the same. One example of this is the French rejection of Hitler's rearmament proposal, an action which was decided in the cabinet by majority vote against the vigorous objections of Barthou. ⁷⁴

It is, therefore, advisable to take into consideration in the following analysis, not only the actions, but also his plans, and only then can one pass judgment on his foreign policy concerning Central Europe.

⁷²Maurice Baumont, Les Origines de la Deuxième Guerre Mondiale (Paris: Payot, 1969), p. 103

⁷³Chambres des Députés, Journal Officiel de la République Française, "Debats Parlementaires," Paris, 1934, pp. 1254-55.

⁷⁴Bonnet, Quai d'Orsay, p. 112.

The Eastern Pact

Barthou had only about a week's time to get acquainted with the foreign political conditions of France when the events began to speed up. Germany had already meddled in Austria's domestic affairs in 1933. Though the Paul-Boncour government protested against it, Hitler renewed the German-supported Nazi activities in Austria in 1934. Austria submitted her complaints to France, Britain, and Italy, and the Three Powers signed a communiqué on February 17, 1934. In this declaration the Three Powers expressed "their common views concerning the necessity to maintain the independence and integrity of Austria in accordance with the existing treaties."⁷⁵ There was no question in Barthou's mind that Austria's independence was a primary interest of France. Because of this he continued the foreign policy of Paul-Boncour, who had already stated on November 14, 1933, in his speech in the Chamber that "an independent Austria is an essential element of Central Europe's stability and equilibrium."⁷⁶

The first signs of a new French foreign policy can be traced in the comments on the Balkan Pact that had been recently signed. In the view of the former governments, Bulgaria was a revisionist state, and therefore an enemy. Circles near the foreign ministry of Barthou, on the other hand, expressed their conviction that "the Bulgarian claim for territorial revision has mainly a theoretical and sentimental character,"⁷⁷ and emphasized that everybody should give time to the "Bulgarian" public opinion to bury the long existing

⁷⁵Le Temps (Paris), February 18, 1934.

⁷⁶Journal Officiel, 1934, p. 4103.

⁷⁷RAA, Moellwald to Dollfuss, Paris, 21, 13/Pol., February 12, 1934, p. 467.

revisionist illusions."⁷⁸ These statements indicated that Barthou better understood France's real situation (economic, military, and political) and changed the method from the enforcement of the peace treaty to a reconciliation.

The Rome Protocols

A month later, Italy, Austria, and Hungary signed the Rome Protocols (March 17, 1934).⁷⁹ It caused alarm among the members of the Little Entente. The French Left interpreted it as the alliance of Fascist, Revisionist states. Barthou, on the other hand, expressed sympathy: ". . . France has to cooperate with Italy in the rebuilding of the Danube Basin and welcomes the protocols."⁸⁰ However, he went one step further and expressed his hope that "the members of the Little Entente will find out that the Rome Protocol will be beneficial for them, as well as for Europe."⁸¹ Le Temps, which had

⁷⁸RAA, Moellwald to Dollfuss, Paris, ZI, 13/Pol., February 12, 1934, p. 467.

⁷⁹The Rome Protocols consisted of one political and two economic agreements. The political agreement stressed the importance of the political cooperation of the three states. They agreed that in case of foreign political problems, they would consult each other if anyone of the three states should desire to do so.

The first economic agreement projected the widening of the Austrian-Hungarian-Italian trade relations, and the second agreement planned a new Austrian-Italian commercial exchange.

The economic clauses of the protocol were realized in May 1934 when the three states signed new commercial treaties.

In light of the economic crisis, of the discriminating custom policy of the Little Entente states, and of the deteriorating French foreign trade, it could be interpreted as a defensive economic policy which, if it hindered the commercial plans of any state, then it hindered the German economic penetration of Austria and Hungary.

⁶⁷RAA, *Ibid.*, 26/Pol., April 2, 1934, p. 496.

⁶⁸*Ibid.*

excellent connections with the French foreign ministry, had already begun to publish sympathetic articles about Austria in February 1934, giving Dollfuss' side of the history of the Social Democratic uprising of Vienna. The foreign ministry, in response to a reporter who had asked about the Leftist intellectual efforts to organize a committee for the investigation of the Austrian "massacre," expressed the view that "from the practical political point of view, the effect of the activity of that committee up to this time is insignificant."⁸²

These articles and comments indicated that Barthou had taken the decision of the Three Great Powers seriously and sought some kind of friendly understanding with Italy on a more "direct" nation-to-nation basis. However, before starting out on this scheme, realism demanded of him to try to salvage the old alliances of France with Poland and the Little Entente.

His visit to Poland was carefully monitored by the French press, and it certainly did not help him to create a friendly atmosphere, repeating the old charges of treason by referring to and even republishing the article from the Yzvestija, which was published on February 5, 1934. It said, "The German-Polish Non-Aggression Pact is a denial of the French-Polish Alliance of 1921; it reduces the quality of Poland as a member of the League of Nations; it gives a free hand to Germany in Austria and gives the freedom of action to Germany against the Balkan states."⁸³

The main reasons for Barthou's failure to reconcile Poland, however, were not the hostile French public opinion and press. The reasons already existed

⁸²RAA, Moellwald to Dollfuss, Paris, ZI, 32/Pol., April 30, 1934, p. 513.

⁸³Le Temps (Paris), February 28, 1934.

in 1933,⁸⁴ and after the signing of the Non-Aggression Pact, Poland reached the point of no return. Barthou could conclude after his trip that "France cannot count on Poland anymore, and it is, therefore, urgent and necessary to befriend Italy."⁸⁵

The visit to Czechoslovakia was refreshing after the Warsaw experiment. The Czechs displayed their friendly feelings toward France; their policy was a strict pro-status quo policy. Benes was sympathetic toward the Rome Protocol and agreed with Barthou that it was a further assurance against the Anschluss.⁸⁶ The Czech army was the best equipped and strongest army in Central Europe,⁸⁷ and Edouard Benes, the foreign minister of Czechoslovakia, was revising his former judgment concerning the main enemy of his country. He accepted the French position, that is, that the main enemy was not Hungary anymore, but Hitler's Germany.⁸⁸

The news from Rumania also seemed to be reassuring. Though Nicolai Titulescu, the Rumanian foreign minister, still refused to consider the possibility of Russian military aid, he became more flexible toward Italy and expressed his conviction to a French news reporter that "only an entente with Italy can

⁸⁴ I intend to devote a whole chapter to the Polish view in a book, which will also incorporate my whole dissertation. To explain the origins of Polish-French disagreement is out of the frame of this study.

⁸⁵ RAA, Moellwald reported this to Dollfuss. He based this conclusion on the report of one of his informers planted in the French Foreign Ministry. Paris, ZI, 34/Pol., May 4, 1934, p. 524.

⁸⁶ Magda Ádám, Magyarország és a Kisantant a Harmincas Években, "Hungary and the Little Entente in the Thirties" (Budapest: Akademia Publ., 1968), p. 62.

⁸⁷ Interview with General Flipo.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

bring the necessary relaxation which is needed to solve the problems of Central Europe."⁸⁹

The creation of a common front with Italy seemed to be the best solution. Not the French-Italian differences, but the differences between the clients of the two governments hindered the French-Italian rapprochement. Because both states considered their clients as indispensable, both governments made reassuring statements to them. During his visit to Hungary, Fulvio Suvich, the assistant secretary of Italian foreign affairs, expressed his feeling that "my joy would be greater only if I could have stepped on the soil of Great Hungary, instead of the present, mutilated Hungary."⁹⁰ This declaration alarmed the Little Entente, which demanded reassurance from Barthou against a revisionist attempt. The creation of a common understanding with Italy seemed to be distant because of the conditions in Central Europe.

In the absence of an immediate better solution, Barthou renewed the plans of the Paul-Boncour government concerning the creation of an Eastern Locarno. Barthou, himself, regarded the participation of the Soviet Union in the Eastern Locarno as the most important condition for the security of France. He could not create a simple French-Soviet alliance, because "he could neither challenge the Locarno Pact, nor appear to turn away from the spirit of the League of Nations."⁹¹ The idea of an Eastern Locarno seemed to solve this problem. The Soviet willingness to take part in such a plan was already

⁸⁹ Le Temps (Paris), February 23, 1934.

⁹⁰ Ibid., February 22, 1934.

⁹¹ de la Gorce, The French Army, pp. 233-234.

signalled in the speech of Stalin during the XVII Congress of the Soviet Communist (b) Party.⁹² He said:

Certain German politicians say that the Soviet Union is now oriented toward France and Poland, that she changed from being an enemy of the Versailles Treaty to being a supporter of it . . . if the interest of the Soviet Union demands to make rapprochement to one or another country which does not want to disturb the peace, we shall do so without hesitation.⁹³

The undisguised admiration of the French military experts for the Soviet armed forces also urged the rapprochement with the Soviet Union. On May 18, 1934, Barthou met with Litvinov to discuss the Eastern Pact; he was accompanied by General Gamelin as military advisor. Gamelin advocated a French-Soviet rapprochement from the military point of view because "Russia represented the only really great Eastern counter-weight needed against Germany."⁹⁴ He stated that the French military leaders attached great importance to a French-Soviet military collaboration, and he hoped to obtain from this collaboration not so much of an actual Russian military aid, but rather the intensification of the French military build-up.⁹⁵

Litvinov responded positively to the French suggestions. Barthou, since on April 11, 1934, he was already able to secure the consent of England⁹⁶ to the Soviet Union's entrance as a member of the League of Nations, began to make the necessary preparations, and at the same time, announced his great plan for the Eastern Locarno.

⁹²January 26, 1934.

⁹³Quoted in Mária Ormos, Franciaország és a Keleti Biztonság, 1931-1936, "France and the Eastern Security, 1931-1936" (Budapest: Akademia Publ., 1969), p. 297.

⁹⁴Gamelin, Servir II, 132.

⁹⁵ibid., p. 133.

⁹⁶Ormos, Eastern Security, p. 305.

The Barthou-Litvinov discussions represent a turning point in the foreign policy of Barthou. Up to that point, he had rightly evaluated the realistic political conditions. He had tried to bring Poland back to the French alliance, but failed; he tried to reassure the Little Entente and--especially in the case of Czechoslovakia--he was successful. He tried to initiate a rapprochement with Italy, and as far as Austria's independence was concerned, he was 100 per cent successful. Then after so much success, he suddenly gave in to the pressure of the French Left, and to the pressure of the French general staff, and he began a rapprochement with the Soviet Union.⁹⁷ It was a fatal mistake, not only because a Soviet alliance did not promise any positive security for France,⁹⁸ and therefore, it was not a question of first importance, but rather it was a fatal mistake because of its consequences.

It indicated to Germany that France arrived in her decline to the point where, instead of enforcing the peace through unilateral actions based on her military might,⁹⁹ she was frightened to act alone. It proved not only to Germany, but to the whole world as well, that France's military power was in such an inferior and handicapped position that her hope no longer lay in the strength of her army, but in international agreements that would provide security for France without forcing her to rebuild her own army. In other words, France wanted to maintain her superiority in Europe by asking others to make the necessary sacrifices,¹⁰⁰ and the Eastern Pact did not conceal this hidden

⁹⁷For a more detailed discussion of this domestic power play see de la Gorce, The French Army pp. 233-34. *

⁹⁸See Chapter I, p. 26 of this study.

⁹⁹Like the Ruhr Occupation in 1923.

¹⁰⁰Waclaw Jedrzejewicz, ed., Diplomat in Berlin, 1933-1939 (New York: Columbia University, 1968), Lipski to Beck, Berlin, June 22, 1934, Doc. No. 28. (Hereinafter referred to as Lipski Papers.)

goal. The former obligations and alliances of France became unimportant in the basic idea of the Eastern Pact: to gain guarantees for the Rhine Frontier without French participation. The Soviet Union, being the only Great Power to express her willingness to participate in the Eastern Pact, was designated by France to control Central Europe. The German accusation was not unfounded when it had stated that the Eastern Pact would only increase the Soviet influence in Central Europe.

The consequences of such an arrangement were even greater. Britain disliked the idea of a French-Soviet alliance;¹⁰¹ and Poland, on whose cooperation the Soviet help really depended, stubbornly refused to grant the passage right to Soviet troops,¹⁰² and made her joining conditional on the German acceptance.¹⁰³ Also, Italy was skeptical and prepared counter-proposals.

In conclusion, we may say that the idea of the Eastern Pact did more damage for France than good. It did not increase the security of France; it did not restore the Polish-French alliance; it did not bring the English government out of isolation; it did not dismiss the Yugoslavian suspicion concerning a French-Italian rapprochement; it did not gain the unconditional approval of the Rumanians; and it did not oblige even the Soviet Union to subscribe unconditionally to the French designs. However, most important of all, it did not help the Central European states to solve their immediate economic problems of not having any commercial clauses. It did, on the other hand, create a greater hostility toward France in Hungary; it did create a suspicion in Italy; it did leave the door wide open from the French point of view for the

¹⁰¹Baumont, Les Origins, p. 112.

¹⁰²Ibid., p. 114.

¹⁰³Ibid., p. 150.

continuous German economic penetration in Central Europe, and it did help pave the road for a Hitler-Mussolini meeting, which took place in Venice, June 14-15, 1934.

The negativism was overwhelming; the positivism was almost nil. One may wonder what made Barthou, who was such a strong realist, follow this utopian line. One explanation is that the whole idea of the pact was picked up and aired for tactical reasons: "Though France knows that among others, neither England, Italy, nor Poland will accept the pact, she offers it so that in case of a refusal, she may put the responsibility for the failure of the disarmament and peace on these powers."¹⁰⁴ Even if this "tactical" success was achieved, the value of it was questionable. More acceptable were the reasons that were a result of the French domestic situation. The political scandals were neither solved nor stopped. The financial reform was a flop, and the work programs were uneffective.¹⁰⁵ "The unhappy conditions in the Chamber"¹⁰⁶ indicated disunity among the deputies. The Socialists and Communists formed a block against the government and decided to strengthen their attacks on the government.¹⁰⁷ Foreign observers did not see too much of a chance for the Doumergue government to survive the Autumn.¹⁰⁸ However, following the Barthou-Litvinov meeting in Geneva, this situation suddenly changed.¹⁰⁹ The question of survival justified,

¹⁰⁴Report of the Italian and (with similar wording) of the Hungarian ambassadors from Paris. Quoted in Ormos, Eastern Security, pp. 506-07.

¹⁰⁵RAA, Moellwald to Waldenegg, Paris, Z1, 57/Pol., July 30, 1934, p. 581.

¹⁰⁶RAA, Moellwald to Dollfuss, Paris, Z1, 19/Pol., March 12, 1934, p. 480.

¹⁰⁷Ormos, Ibid., p. 300.

¹⁰⁸RAA, Ibid.

¹⁰⁹See p. of this study.

from the government's point of view, the tactical step expressed in the proposal for the Eastern Pact. Did the French government submit the national interest to its own party interest? No! If the Doumergue government would have fallen, the "anti-Fascist" block would have followed a stronger pro-Soviet policy. By making these concessions, Barthou secured the government's position and kept the door open for a possible and vital French-Italian rapprochement, a plan which he advocated from the beginning.¹¹⁰

For the time being, this rapprochement did not promise too much success. Barthou delayed his visit to Italy, and the government indicated that such a meeting could take place only if Mussolini should ask for it.¹¹¹ Hitler was not so proud, and he realized that this was the right moment to approach Mussolini. On June 14-15, 1934, the two dictators met in Venice, an occasion which came as a surprise to the French government. During the meeting, while Mussolini shared Hitler's negative views concerning the Eastern Pact, he was completely hostile to Hitler's plans concerning Austria.¹¹² From the French point of view, it meant that Mussolini proved to be a trustworthy ally for the containment of Germany, and Hitler's visit did not present any obstacles in the way of a rapprochement. However, the French public opinion became suspicious of Italy and "in the light of the Hitler-Mussolini meeting . . . they did not value the possibility of an entente with Italy."¹¹³ The opposing politicians explained that Italy was a Great Power with a population equal to that

¹¹⁰Gamelin, Servir, II, 131.

¹¹¹RAA, Moellwald to Dollfuss, Paris, 21, 36/Pol., May 8, 1934, p. 526.

¹¹²Lipski Papers, Lipski to Beck about the Hitler-Mussolini meeting, Berlin, June 22, 1934, p. 145.

¹¹³RAA, Ibid., 50/Pol., July 5, 1934, p. 566.

of France, and that alone was reason enough to be discontent.¹¹⁴ French government circles, on the other hand, stressed the necessity of a Barthou-Mussolini meeting, but added that "it would make sense only after all the differences have been settled between France and Italy."¹¹³ (italics mine) It indicated unwillingness to accept compromise, and so it meant the postponement of the Italian visit--forever.

While Barthou visited England to enlist her support of the Eastern Pact, he tried to obtain not only the British support, but also British pressure to make Mussolini more agreeable in his attitude toward the pact. France believed that because of Italy's long seashores, she could not resist an English demand.¹¹⁶ Also, the slow moving French diplomacy was then surprised by the Austrian Nazi Putsch and by Mussolini's reaction to it.

The Nazi Putsch in Vienna (July 25, 1934)

The Nazi Putsch in Vienna created a crisis for Barthou. He probably wondered whether or not he should act immediately with energy and decisiveness? It would have demanded some military demonstrations alone or in harmony with Italy and Czechoslovakia, but they were and had to be cautious! The French army was organized for defense; only a few divisions were motorized, and their provisions would be sufficient for only six months.¹¹⁷ No commercial or military agreement took care of further provisions, especially of motor fuels. To chance a possible prolonged armed conflict with Germany, or even a war

¹¹⁴RAA, Moellwald to Dollfuss, Paris, 21, 50/Pol., July 5, 1934, p. 566.

¹¹⁵RAA, Ibid., 51/Pol., July 8, 1934, p. 568.

¹¹⁶RAA, Ibid.,

¹¹⁷Gamelin, Servir, 11, 129.

would have been risky! It was necessary to secure England's consent and help, but England's attitude was characterized by the absence of their ambassadors from Berlin and from Rome at that time. They spent their vacations in London and did not intend to interrupt their vacations because of the Austrian crisis.¹¹⁸

The Czech army, though superior in strength to the German army, was completely trained for defense purposes and had no strategic plans prepared for such a situation.¹¹⁹

Only Italy acted with swiftness, moving four divisions to Brenner Pass. However, instead of relief, it caused even greater "nervousness" in the French diplomatic circles.¹²⁰ The English diplomacy's attitude may be best summed up in the words of Sir Eric Campbell, Charge d'Affaires in Paris: "One more step forward and that would mean a general war."¹²¹ Barthou warned Mussolini about the prompt and unforeseeable consequences of further isolated steps on the part of Italy.¹²²

The French nervousness was understandable. A good part of the Czech press and the whole Yugoslavian press openly raised the matter that "France has to get out from the anti-German front of the Great Powers¹²³ or has to

¹¹⁸ Le Temps (Paris), July 1934.

¹¹⁹ Interview with General Flipo.

¹²⁰ RAA, Moellwald to Waldenegg, Paris, ZI, 64/Pol., August 11, 1934, p. 609.

¹²¹ ibid.

¹²² ibid.

¹²³ Reference made to the Three Power Declaration (February 17, 1934).

deny her political and military solidarity with Yugoslavia."¹²⁴ If France did not give up her solidarity with Yugoslavia, it would mean--as the Austrian ambassador put it--that she would be "incriminating" Austria.¹²⁵

France tried to avoid an open stand, though she recognized that "the price she has to pay for the preservation of Austria is cheaper than what she would have to pay in case of Austria's collapse."¹²⁶ No actions followed up their conclusions, though. The only steps the French took was a great press campaign, in which they proved beyond a doubt the responsibility of Hitler for the Austrian Nazi Putsch.¹²⁷

Barthou suggested two alternatives to avoid the possible repetition of the crisis.¹²⁸ According to the first one, Austria should secure the promise of Germany through direct negotiations to discontinue the Nazi propaganda in Austria. The second alternative was the signing of a general pact, which would oblige the contracting parties to respect the principle of non-intervention, demand them to refrain from interfering in the domestic affairs of other states, and demand them not to tolerate any subversive activity on their own soil directed against a foreign state.

None of these was satisfactory for Austria. She, on the other hand, readily accepted the suggestions of Mussolini, who suggested that "the Three

¹²⁴RAA, Moellwald to Waldenegg, Paris, 21, 64/Pol., August 11, 1934, p. 609.

¹²⁵RAA, ibid., p. 610

¹²⁶ibid.

¹²⁷An illustrated report of the Excelsior showed that the official German press service prepared the news release concerning the Nazi Putsch three days before it actually happened. Excelsior (Paris), August 11, 1934, p. 1.

¹²⁸RAA, ibid., 62/Pol., August 8, 1934, p. 604.

Great Powers who are interested in the preservation of Austria's independence should announce with the greatest firmness and clearness that they will not tolerate either an Anschluss nor a Gleichschaltung under any circumstances."¹²⁹

He thought that this declaration "should be worded so categorically and brutally (italics mine) that not only Berlin, but also her sympathizers in Austria would understand it and would give up every hope of realization of their goals."¹³⁰ The French answer was negative to these suggestions.¹³¹

In the eyes of Austria, Italy remained to be the only sure champion. In the eyes of the Little Entente, the insecure feeling grew stronger. It was time, especially for Austria, to review her foreign relations and if necessary, change them according to her basic interests.

¹²⁹ RAA, Moellwald to Waldenegg, Paris, Z1, 62/Pol., August 8, 1934, p. 604.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Ibid.

CHAPTER II

THE FIRST CRISIS: THE MURDER OF CHANCELLOR DOLLFUSS

Conditions in Austria

The first half of 1934 continued to be a time of great tension and of temporary diplomatic successes and setbacks for Austria. Although the rowdy propaganda campaign of Germany was softened to a certain degree, Hitler had not given up his plans for the Gleichschaltung of Austria. He had kept the economic pressure on,¹ while diplomatically trying to isolate Dollfuss from the rest of Europe.² Austria, however, was a member of the League of Nations, and Dollfuss considered the support of this international organization to be of primary importance. He was prepared to present the Austrian grievances against Germany in the League of Nations session.³ At the same time, he successfully tried to secure the assistance of Britain, France, and Italy and received their support in the "Three Power Declaration" (February 17, 1934).

¹The German government imposed upon the German tourists visiting Austria a 1,000 mark "visa-fee" in May 1933. This regulation brought German tourism to a standstill and increased the economic problems. United States Department of State, Documents on German Foreign Policy, 1918-1945, Series C, III, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1957), Doc. No. 262. (Hereinafter referred to as DGFP.)

²Horthy, the Regent of Hungary, saw the possible annexation of Austria by Germany as a "natural development" and expressed his views to the German Minister, von Machensen, in Hungary. Magyar Tudományos Akadémia Történettudományi Intézete, ("Historical Institute of the Hungarian Academy of Science") A Wilhelmstrasse és Magyarország. Német Diplomáciai Iratok, 1933-1944 ("The Wilhelmstreet and Hungary. German Diplomatic Documents Concerning Hungary, 1933-1944"), (Budapest: Kossuth Publ., 1968), Doc. No. 21.

³Gerhard L. Weinberg, The Foreign Policy of Hitler's Germany (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), p. 93

Ironically enough, this support was lost the very same day, as it was published because of the Social Democratic revolt in Vienna. It was crushed mercilessly, and the Social Democratic Party itself was outlawed--actions which alienated the Western Democracies, as well as the Little Entente states.⁴ So the isolation came about, not by German diplomatic steps, but by the domestic events of Austria. The following month the declaration of the Rome Protocols (March 17, 1934) seemed to compensate for the lost Western support. Even more favorable for Austria was the outcome of the Hitler-Mussolini meeting (June 14-15, 1934), in which Mussolini warned Hitler that Austria's independence was a main concern of Italy. Dollfuss seemed to have secured for Austria the time to introduce the "corporative state" system step by step.

Then, on July 25, 1934, the Austrian Nazis made an attempt to overthrow the government. Though the attempt was unsuccessful, Dollfuss was murdered during the attack.. His successor, Chancellor Kurt von Schuschnigg, was convinced that in order to save Austrian independence, he "had to embark on a course of appeasement. This meant that everything had to be avoided, which would give Germany a pretext for intervention, and that everything had to be done to secure some way for Hitler's toleration of the status quo."⁵ This statement creates the impression that Schuschnigg had made up his mind concerning the possible alternatives for Austrian foreign policy and found the solution in the good grace of Hitler, which if kept, meant that Austrian

⁴See p. 28, footnote 63 of this study. Also, the Czech minister to Austria, Dr. Zdencky Fierlinger, "deemed it necessary to intervene," since certain members of the Czech minority in Vienna had become implicated in the Socialist movement. Felix J. Vondracek, The Foreign Policy of Czechoslovakia, 1918-1935 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1937), p. 380.

⁵Kurt von Schuschnigg, Austrian Requiem (London: Victor Gollanz Ltd., 1947), p. 14-15.

independence would stand forever. Yet, the events following the misfired Nazi coup--such as the Italian troop movements, Mussolini's declaration,⁶ and the sudden decrease of German militancy⁷--indicated that he could have chosen another course for Austria, possibly even anti-German. He however, did not. What were the conditions in Europe, and what were the factors in Austria that forced him to follow Dollfuss' unchanged policy? Was he right or did he make mistakes, and could he have selected other alternatives that would have been more beneficial, not only for Austria, but for all of East-Central Europe? These are the questions which, if answered objectively, create a basis to pass judgment on the foreign policy of Austria after 1934.

Hitler had hoped to realize the Gleichschaltung of Austria without using force. The Austrian economic conditions were deteriorating, and he thought that by speeding up the economic decline through the application of pressures (such as the restriction of German tourist traffic), he would cause the downfall of the Austrian government and would prepare the way for a Nazi takeover. To understand the political developments, it is necessary to know a few details of the economic conditions of Austria.

Economic Conditions

Since the end of World War I, Austria had always had acute economic problems. These problems were caused partly by the consequences of the St. Germain Treaty ("head without an empire"), and partly by the Nationalist Protectionist Economic Policy,⁸ which was practiced all over Europe in the late

⁶DGFP, C, III, Hitler to Papen, Berlin, August 19, 1934, Doc. No. 165.

⁷Ibid.

⁸The expression tried to cover the real meaning: strong protectionist trade policy in imports and state-subsidized exports to prevent a loss of the foreign markets. For example, Hungary sold sugar to Austria for half the home consumer price.

1920's. A custom union with Germany could have helped, but it was prohibited by the victorious powers. The Tardieu Plan (custom union of the Central European states under French patronage) was blocked by England and Italy. Being alone and not having fertile plains and great material resources, Austria was hit by the depression and the economic crisis more than any other country of Central Europe.

Between the years of 1922-1934, the Austrian population decreased by 1-2 per cent, which amounts to 107,680 in a country of 5,384,000 people.⁹ The active population¹⁰ numbered 3,134,000 (58.2 per cent). The unemployment rate reached its peak (480,000) during the winter of 1933 and remained high in 1934 (440,000).¹¹ Of the unemployed, the number of the industrial workers was the greatest (44.5 per cent).¹²

More than half of Austria's import and export business was transacted in 1933 with Germany, Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Yugoslavia.¹³ The volume of her exports was also highest with these countries.

However, in order to draw valid conclusions concerning the influence of the political situation on the economic conditions and vice versa, it is necessary to group the different countries into friendly, neutral, and unfriendly blocks. The friendly ones in 1933 were Germany, Hungary, and Italy and in 1934, only Hungary and Italy. Those outspokenly hostile in 1933 were

⁹Frederick Hertz, The Economic Conditions of the Danubian States (New York: Howard Fertig, 1970), p. 93.

¹⁰The actual working population.

¹¹Hertz, Danubian States, p. 98.

¹²Ibid., p. 49.

¹³See Table III.

Czechoslovakia, Rumania, Yugoslavia, and France; but in 1934, Germany also entered this group, while France moved into the neutral group. The neutral group consisted of Poland, the U.S., Switzerland, and England in 1933, and was joined by France in 1934.¹⁴

The following statistics, grouped in the above described fashion, reveals some interesting facts. While in 1933 Austria's foreign trade was fairly distributed in the friendly block (34.3 per cent import and 30.2 per cent export), the hostile block (28.7 per cent import and 22 per cent export), and the neutral block (23.3 per cent import and 29.1 per cent export); in 1934 the situation changed for the worse. Austria's foreign trade altered so that 45 per cent of its import and 34 per cent of its export depended on the hostile nations, 22.9 per cent import and 31 per cent export on the neutral nations, and only 15.2 per cent import and 14.2 per cent export on the friendly nations.

Austrian economic interests demanded a good political relationship with all of her trading partners, because even the smallest economic malfunction of the export-import trade would have created a grave crisis. The German tourist restrictions were intended to do just that.

Political Conditions

On March 9, 1933, Chancellor Dollfuss assumed "emergency power" and began to rule by decrees.¹⁵ He was thereby freed from a possible parliamentary

¹⁴See Table IV.

¹⁵The emergency power was granted by a law passed during World War I and had not been repealed since.

defeat,¹⁶ but he was still short of a mass support. The Nazi movement, due to the vigorous support of Hitler's Germany, became stronger and attracted many Pan-Germans, who formerly supported the government's policy. Receiving encouragement from Mussolini, Dollfuss banned the Nazi Party in Austria on June 19, 1933. The next year, in February, after receiving encouragement from Mussolini, he organized a show-down with the Social Democrats, who had received help from Czechoslovakia in the form of secret armshipments.¹⁷ On March 17, 1934, Austria, Hungary, and Italy together signed the Rome Protocol, which announced not only new commercial agreements between the three countries, but was designed to give some kind of guarantee against a German attempt of annexation. On May 1, 1934, Dollfuss announced a new constitution, fashioned after the Italian corporate state system. The ground work was laid down for a relatively sound course of Austrian consolidation.

The murder of Dollfuss and the unsuccessful Nazi coup created some unrest, but the government held firm and defeated the Nazi attempt. Mussolini's reaction proved to Hitler that it was more profitable for him to not continue the support of Austrian Nazis, and thereby avoid creating more disturbances.

When Schuschnigg took over the chancellorship after the murder of Dollfuss, Austria was dependent on the economic cooperation of the Little Entente states, of Italy, Hungary, and Germany. On the other hand, the Little Entente and Germany were sharp opponents of Austria on the political field, both fearing a possible restoration of the Habsburg Monarchy. This could have blocked Hitler's plans for the annexation of Austria, and could also have meant an

¹⁶He had only a slight majority if the Pan-Germans voted on his side. The Pan-Germans advocated a custom union and, if possible, a political union with Germany.

¹⁷C. A. Macartney and A. W. Palmer, Eastern Europe, p. 310. Also see Chicago Daily News, February 13, 1934, p. 2.

end for Czechoslovakia by drawing away the different national minorities from the support of the Czech state.

On the field of domestic policy, the two most aggressive opponents of the Austrian government, the Social Democrats and the Nazis, were defeated. The murder of Dollfuss spiritually united the Austrians so that Schuschnigg was in a unique position to select and pursue a foreign policy that would best serve the interest of Austria.

Alternatives for Austrian Foreign Policy

As I see it, the following main alternatives could have been pursued by Schuschnigg:

continuation of Dollfuss' policy, that is, the further strengthening of the relationship with Hungary and Italy; and maintaining friendly relations with Germany, though, firmly standing up against the Nazi Gleichschaltung plans. Also, at the same time, maintaining "cool" but correct economic connections with France, as well as with the Little Entente states;

start a new policy of appeasement with Germany and place Austria's independence at the grace of Hitler more than at the grace of the Rome Protocols;

completely change the traditional line and start a rapprochement and a closer cooperation with France, as well as with the Little Entente states, at the price of losing the support of Hungary and possibly of Italy.

Continuation of Dollfuss' Policy

Relations with Hungary

Relations with Hungary had been most cordial since the signing of the new commercial treaty and the Rome Protocols. However, Hungary alone did not offer too much of a security for Austria against the German danger. On his first visit to Hungary, Schuschnigg saw Horthy who said to him about the future political outlook of Austria: "For poor Austria, which I love and know

almost like my own fatherland, there is nothing left but to seek unification with the German Reich."¹⁸

Strangely enough, Schuschnigg did not record his own reaction to this statement. If there was a substantial number of people who thought along Horthy's line of thinking (and there was), then Hungary certainly did not represent a country of special value for Austrian independence.

There were other opinions in Hungary concerning the future of Austria, too, such as the conviction of Prime Minister Julius Gömbös. He had tried to introduce a Hungarian authoritarian system similar to Hitler's Germany, but considered a great Germany to be a dangerous neighbor, and therefore, had emphatically asserted his interest in Austria's independence.¹⁹ At the same time, he did not believe that the Anschluss could be prolonged forever.²⁰

A constant fear of an Austrian Habsburg restoration was noticeable not only in the Little Entente states, but also in Hungary. The Habsburg restoration question was the first that Schuschnigg had to explain during his visit in Hungary. There was a small Legitimist group in Hungary, not too great in number, but powerful and influential--the Catholic higher clergy, a good number of the aristocracy, and higher ranking army officers who in the past had served in the Kaiserliche und Königliche (KUK)²¹ Army. Horthy, himself, was an admirer of the Old Monarchy, and he had said to Schuschnigg, "If the old Empire were to be re-established, I would walk on my two feet, no matter how

¹⁸Schuschnigg, Austrian Requiem, p. 88.

¹⁹During his visit in Germany in June 1933. C. A. Macartney, October Fifteenth (2 vols.; Edinburgh: University Press, 1961), I, 312.

²⁰Wilhelmstrasse, Professor Bleyer's report to the German Embassy in Budapest, August 11, 1933, Doc. No. 13.

²¹Imperial and Royal

great the distance, to offer my services again."²² This kind of nostalgic statement, however, did not influence his realistic actions. Horthy was anxious not to violate the respective clauses of the peace treaty and the earlier decision of the victorious powers, because it could endanger the very independence of Hungary. As early as 1922, Horthy, himself, blocked the way of a Habsburg restoration in Hungary,²³ and in 1934 he believed a restoration was "no longer within the range of possibility. One cannot bring the dead to life again."²⁴

The new generation of Hungarian politicians and Prime Minister Gombós were strongly anti-restorationists. They wanted to modernize Hungary, and they saw the embodiment of a modern state in the Fascist and Nazi systems. Thus, a monarchist restoration would have blocked the realization of their plan. The German "solution" to the Austrian problem would efficiently forever block any Habsburg restoration attempt.²⁵

Schuschnigg declared to Gombós that "an active monarchist policy was nothing but romantic nonsense."²⁶ However, he also remarked that, privately and personally, he was a monarchist.²⁷ This statement seemingly satisfied Gombós--at least that was Schuschnigg's impression, although actually Gombós worked more diligently from then on for the "German solution," and especially

²²Schuschnigg, Austrian Requiem, p. 88.

²³For Horthy's description of these attempts see The Admiral Horthy Memoirs (New York: Robert Speller & Sons, 1957), pp. 116-127.

²⁴Schuschnigg, Austrian Requiem, p. 88.

²⁵Wilhelmstrasse, MacKensen to Neurath, Budapest, May 10, 1934, Doc. No. 24.

²⁶Schuschnigg, Austrian Requiem, p. 90.

²⁷Ibid.

when the German diplomacy obtained its first success in Yugoslavia and Rumania²⁸ in August 1934.

Hungary, therefore, represented a very weak ally for Austria as far as the independence of Austria was concerned. One reason for this was that the Hungarian fear of a Habsburg restoration in Austria also directed Hungary to Germany's side. Although Hungary would not have welcomed a strong Germany as her next door neighbor, it was, in Horthy's and Gömbös' eyes, less dangerous than a restoration. When Germany took a successful step in the Rumanian and Yugoslavian market, Hungary became frightened that she would lose Germany's support for Hungarian revisionism²⁹ and was willing to servilely follow Hitler's designs for Austria.

For Schuschnigg to follow Dollfuss' policy concerning Hungary would have been a naive and unrealistic policy. Although it was in Austria's interest to maintain friendly relations with Hungary in 1934, he had to realize that this friendship was a temporary one, and the most that could be expected from Hungary in case of a German-Austrian open conflict was neutrality. Even this neutrality was questionable, because Austria included (since the peace treaties) Burgenland--the former Hungarian territory, which was excluded from the Hungarian revisionist demands only temporarily.³⁰ Schuschnigg had to seek

²⁸Wilhelmstrasse, Conversation of Kánya with Hitler, Berlin, August 6, 1934, Doc. No. 25.

²⁹Ibid., Doc. No. 26, 27, 28, 83.

³⁰In this study I am using the words "revision" and "revisionism" in the following manner: "Revision" refers to the peace treaties that followed World War I. According to Article XV of the Covenant of the League of Nations, the decisions of the peace treaties concerning the newly drawn borders could have been revised by the unanimous vote of the Assembly to correct possible injustices. The revisionist states that demanded the application of that article were Germany, Hungary, Italy, Poland, and Bulgaria. "Revisionism" was the name of the movement pursuing the aim of revisions in each respective country.

security for Austria in other countries and had to change Dollfuss' policy.

Relations with Italy

Schuschnigg visited Mussolini in August 1934. Mussolini's reaction to the murder of Dollfuss and to the unsuccessful Nazi coup in Vienna seemed to be the best assurance for Austria's independence. However, Schuschnigg's "frank" answers to Mussolini's questions probably did not help to improve Austrian-Italian relations.

The first thing that Mussolini learned from Schuschnigg was the undesirability of Italian armed intervention in case of any Anschluss attempts of Hitler. "Actual military assistance within our borders would have been, quite frankly, out of the question. The presence of Italian troops on our soil would have rendered the position of the Austrian government unattainable."³¹ He also explained that in case of Italian intervention, the Czechs, as well as the Yugoslavians, would mobilize and possibly enter Austria.³² Therefore, "a demonstration of Italian military might"³³ would be satisfactory, even in the future. What he particularly asked of Mussolini was to intervene with Hitler in order to curtail Nazi propaganda in Austria. However, his dislike of the Italian military aid most probably forced Mussolini to think twice before taking any step against the Anschluss, especially since in July the French and British reactions were far weaker than the Italians'.

³¹Schuschnigg, Austrian Requiem, p. 99. Italian-Austrian antagonism existed in 1934 because of the Italian oppression of the Austrians in the former Austrian provinces awarded to Italy in the St. Germain Treaty.

³²See p. 74 of this study.

³³Schuschnigg, Austrian Requiem, p. 99.

Mussolini, on the other hand, expressed his belief that the strengthening of the Austrian and Hungarian armies, and the expansion of the commercial preference treaties (which would create almost a custom union between the three nations) would create a united block of 60-70 million people, which would undoubtedly have great political weight in Europe.

Just as in Hungary, so too in Italy the question of restoration arose. Mussolini declared that he was a monarchist, because "monarchy, as a stabilizing factor, was of the greatest value."³⁴ Schuschnigg explained his personal convictions and then went on to say that a restoration would endanger Austria's existence. Mussolini understood the problem, but was pushing questions in the same direction and even declared that Italy "would certainly not object"³⁵ to a restoration.

In the remainder of the conversation, Schuschnigg rejected Mussolini's idea that in case of a German attack on Czechoslovakia, Austria might incorporate southern Moravia and stressed the importance of peace for Austria. Mussolini, on the other hand, urged the speedy build-up of the Austrian armed forces and offered his help in it.

Having had this conversation after his Budapest visit, Schuschnigg needed to clearly see the following:

Mussolini whole-heartedly supported the ideas of the Rome Protocols and wanted to go even farther by creating a de facto custom-union between Italy, Austria, and Hungary, without "alarming"³⁶ everybody by open talks about it;

³⁴Schuschnigg, Austrian Requiem, p. 101.

³⁵ibid.

³⁶ibid., p. 100.

Mussolini and Gömbös were far apart in their judgment concerning the Habsburg restoration, as well as the necessity of an Anschluss;

Mussolini had doubted, and Schuschnigg enforced his doubt about the feasibility of using Italian troops in defense of Austria within Austria's borders;

Mussolini's support of Austrian independence was firm, but depended on the possible changes of Italian-German relations in the future.

Logically, the conclusion that Schuschnigg ought to have drawn from his negotiations in Florence was that for the present, Mussolini was Austria's best friend, but that this friendship would last only if a rapprochement would not develop between Italy and Germany. The best guarantee against such a rapprochement would be a French-Italian understanding. It was Austria's interest, therefore, to prepare the way for such an understanding by normalizing her own relations with France, with France's allies, and especially with Czechoslovakia. However, Austrian negotiations and negotiations with Czechoslovakia should not endanger the unity of the Rome Protocol and, therefore, should be led in harmony with the Italian and Hungarian foreign political designs. Due to the hard revisionist line of the Hungarian government, this seemed to be an impossible task, yet worth trying. These facts again suggested a change for the foreign policy of Austria.

Relations with the Little Entente

Austria had common borders with two Little Entente states--Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia--and while Yugoslavia was more concerned with Italy, Czechoslovakia's main interest focused on Germany. Of course, both states were equally cautious, first of all toward Hungary, and then toward Austria.

Czechoslovakia recognized the danger that Hitler's Germany represented, and Benes made every effort to also enlist the support of powers other than France for Czechoslovakia. He whole-heartedly supported Barthou's Eastern

Pact, and with less enthusiasm, the Balkan Pact; and at the same time, he prepared the way for the Czech-Soviet Assistance Treaty, which was finally signed in May 1935.

The greatest menace in the eyes of most Czech statesmen was Germany. It was their basic desire to lessen the German threat with these treaties. Therefore, they considered the independence of Austria to be in their own interest. The Rome Protocols, which created an uproar in Rumania and Yugoslavia, were interpreted in Czechoslovakia as a counter balance to the Anschluss, and therefore, was received with calm and even approval.³⁷ A real rapprochement, however, between Czechoslovakia and Austria was blocked because of several other reasons. Namely, Benes, "up to the time of the Second World War, was very much concerned with the danger--represented by Austria and Hungary--for Czechoslovakia. The ideological problems complicated matters even further. Benes seemed to detect something too rightist to his taste in the regime of Dollfuss."³⁸ Thomas G. Masaryk, President of Czechoslovakia, on the other hand, was more concerned with reality and expressed his conviction on September 27, 1933, to Ferdinand Marek, the Austrian ambassador to Prague, that a confederation of Austria, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary would give the necessary security for all three states. "If the three of us would unite again, it would be best for the whole of Central Europe. To put it concisely, it was necessary to create something like a new Austria-Hungary."³⁹ Even if Benes would have been willing to accept Masaryk's plan, Austria certainly could not have changed her foreign policy so radically without consulting her

³⁷ Adám, Hungary and the Little Entente, p. 62.

³⁸ Interview with Dr. Francis Schwarzenberg, Chicago, May 10, 1971.

³⁹ Quoted in Adám, Hungary and the Little Entente, p. 57.

allies (Italy and Hungary). Both countries, and especially Hungary, represented further obstacles in the way of such plans. First of all, there was the Hungarian revisionist policy, which was considered a real threat to the integrity of Czechoslovakia. Benes was very much afraid that Hungary could gain sufficient support from public opinion in England and France for a major revision of the peace treaty arrangements.⁴⁰ Because of the rigid conviction of Benes and Hungary, Austria would have to choose between Czechoslovakia's and Hungary's friendship. Since the signing of the Rome Protocols, Italy and Hungary represented the real friends for Austria. It would have been naive to give up this already-existing friendship for a "possible" Czech friendship. What the new Austrian government could have done was to assure the Czech leadership about the harmless character of the Hungarian revisionist aims, which were propagandized more for domestic purposes⁴¹ than for real foreign political purposes.⁴²

The second obstacle in the way of the Austrian-Czech understanding was the question of the Habsburg restoration. In Hungary, as well as in Rumania and Yugoslavia, the governments were very much opposed to the possibility of a Habsburg restoration in Austria and would have welcomed a declaration on the part of the Austrian government. This would have blocked Otto von Habsburg's chances to the Austrian throne forever. Interestingly enough, while the Austrian leaders never considered the restoration possible, they refused to make such a declaration.⁴³

⁴⁰ Interview with Gustav Hennyey, Munich, July 17, 1969.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Wilhelmstrasse, Hassel to Neurath, Roma, June 30, 1933, Doc. No. 9.

⁴³ G. E. R. Gedye, Betrayal in Central Europe (New York: Harper, 1939), p. 146.

The third obstacle was the question of Austrian Socialist émigrées, who enjoyed political asylum in Czechoslovakia and directed a strong propaganda campaign against Austria, not only on Czech soil, but also in Austria proper. They printed and smuggled in the Arbeiterzeitung, which was outlawed in Austria.⁴⁴

Czechoslovakia considered the independent Austria to be an important link in her own security. For Austria to have closer cooperation with Czechoslovakia was a risk that might have involved losing the support of Hungary and possibly Italy, unless an Italian-French rapprochement would pressure Czechoslovakia to remove some obstacles standing in the way of more friendly Austrian-Czech relationship, and unless Italy would pressure Hungary to change her revisionist foreign policy. Without an Italian-French and a Czech-Hungarian rapprochement, the continuation of Dollfuss' policy as a cold and correct political relationship seemed to be the best course, not only with Czechoslovakia, but also with the other members of the Little Entente in order to at least secure their economic cooperation.

Relations with France

A friendly relationship with France was a vital matter for Austria. France had a commanding role in the League of Nations, and Austria badly needed the help of this organization, not only politically (as a safeguard for Austria's independence by the virtue of its Covenant), but also financially. On June 9, 1932, the League of Nations' Commission⁴⁵ recommended that a loan of 300 million schillings be granted to Austria, and on June 30,

⁴⁴Gedye, Betrayal, p. 153.

⁴⁵Set up to deal with the economic problems of the Danube Basin.

1932, the Powers agreed.⁴⁶ However, because of technical difficulties, it was not put into effect until the summer of 1933.⁴⁷

During the following period, Dollfuss established his authoritarian regime, outlawed the Nazi Party, destroyed the Social Democratic Party,⁴⁸ and in 1934 attached Austria to the Rome Protocols. The first actions, naturally, did not improve Austria's image in France, and she was considered to be a member of the opposing group, which caused the failure of the Tardieu plan.

In February 1934, due to the changes in the French government,⁴⁹ Austria could hope for the sympathy of the French government, and the Three Power Declaration (February 17, 1934) was a positive sign of the improving relationship. However, it was clear that from the French point of view, the Little Entente was much more important than Austria. The French indignation during the Nazi Putsch (July 25, 1934), compared with the vehement reaction of Mussolini, indicated the reliability and value of a possible French patronage.

The rapprochement of Austria with France was a desirable goal, but only in concord with the Italian foreign policy. Continuing Dollfuss' foreign policy seemed to be a good solution.

⁴⁶J. D. Gregory, Dollfuss and His Times (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1935), p. 181.

⁴⁷England assuming one-third of the amount.

⁴⁸For a strong pro-Social Democratic description of these events see: Charles A. Gulich, Austria from Habsburg to Hitler (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1948), 2 vols. More objective, but still pro-Socialist is Gedye, Betrayal.

⁴⁹Doumergue, with Barthou as foreign minister.

Relations with Germany

Continuation of the Old Policy

The Nazi Putsch and the murder of Dollfuss changed the situation to the advantage of the Austrian government. As the German military attache pointed out in his report from Vienna, "The moral setback suffered by the aggressor is considerable, the initiative has passed to the other side."⁵⁰ The European reaction to the Nazi Putsch, and especially Mussolini's troop movements toward the Austrian frontiers,⁵¹ forced Hitler to abandon his annexation plans (at least for the time being). Hitler assured Schuschnigg through the newly appointed German ambassador, Franz von Papen, that he was "determined, for the sake of a detente in Europe, to respect Austria's formal independence . . . he also recognized Austria's right to settle her own internal affairs independently."⁵² In order to support these intentions with tangible proof, Hitler ordered the re-organization of some Nazi paramilitary groups in Austria (such as the Kampfring) as Relief Societies, and ordered them to be "concerned only with the cultural, social, and economic care of its members."⁵³ Austria could cooperate in the future with Germany, if the relations were to remain in good standing. As far as the Austrian economic grievances (tourist traffic) were concerned, it seemed wiser not to open the German-Austrian frontier for a while.⁵⁴ On the other hand, Papen asked Schuschnigg to allow exchange of ideas (newspapers), but Schuschnigg's reply was vague and emphasized

⁵⁰ DGFP, C, III, legation in Austria to Neurath, Vienna, July 26, 1934, Doc. No. 125.

⁵¹ Ibid., memorandum of Kordt, Berlin, July 27, 1934, Doc. No. 128.

⁵² Ibid., Papen to Bülov, Berlin, August 19, 1934, Doc. No. 167.

⁵³ Ibid., Hitler to Papen, Berlin, August 19, 1934, Doc. No. 165.

⁵⁴ Ibid., Papen to Bülov, Berlin, August 19, 1934, Doc. No. 167.

that he would not allow Austria to become a colony or province of the German Reich.

Dollfuss' policy seemed to be successful, and a good relationship with Germany seemed to appear on the horizon. The cornerstone of this relationship was not an Austrian-German mutual understanding, but rather an Italian-German disagreement.

A review of the international situation at the time of Dollfuss' death, as well as during the remaining months of 1934, did not indicate any reason for a drastic change in Austria's foreign policy. Italy stood firmly behind the Rome Protocol and unconditionally supported Austria's independence. His rapprochement with France was in the initial stage; his disagreement with Hitler seemed to be unbridgeable. Mussolini gave 100 per cent approval of the Austrian governmental system which was strong enough to repel the attacks of the opposition from the Left, as well as from the Right. Nothing suggested that Schuschnigg should start a new policy concerning Austrian-Italian relationships.

Germany suffered a moral defeat. The world reaction to the Nazi Putsch forced Hitler to give up his plans for the annexation of Austria. All his actions indicated that for the time being, he would respect Austria's independence. It was clear, however, that he did not abandon his plans altogether, and that he had enough sympathizers in Austria to stir up new dissatisfaction so as to try to overthrow the anti-Nazi government again in the future. A strong anti-Nazi domestic policy, coupled with a cautious foreign policy seemed to be the best solution to prevent the success of future Nazi attempts.

Hungary represented a friend of doubtful value. Though the Hungarian government was anxious to have Austria as a buffer state between Germany and

Hungary, the remarks of the regent, Horthy, indicated that in case of a new conflict, they would not be the strongest supporters of Austria. Hungary was strongly dependent on Mussolini's support for the revisionist policy. If Italy would give up this support, Hungary very likely would have been willing to seek support in Germany, which would have endangered Austria's rear in a new German conflict. The key to the right Austrian-Hungarian relationship was in the hands of Mussolini. Yet, another possibility existed, and that was to pave the way for a possible Czech-Hungarian understanding. It could have come about if the Czech government would have been willing to agree to a partial revision of the Czech-Hungarian border.⁵⁵ However, with Benes in control, it was not feasible, even though a change in the Czech government could have made this solution acceptable to both parties. This combination (suggested by Masaryk) of Austria, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary would offer the greatest security against a German aggression. A modification of Dollfuss' policy seemed to be justified along these lines.

Among the two Little Entente states, Yugoslavia did not represent a great problem until Italy was on Austria's side. Czechoslovakia, on the other hand, was equally concerned with the German expansion, as was Austria. As far as this question was concerned, she was Austria's natural ally. However, a rapprochement with Czechoslovakia would have necessitated too great a sacrifice: the abandonment of Hungary, the denunciation of the possibility for a Habsburg restoration, and the permission for the Social Democratic Party to function again. Two of the demands were not negotiable from the Austrian point of view, but the Habsburg restoration question was. It would not demand

⁵⁵Hungary demanded as a minimum the application of the National Self-determination principle on the Magyar-inhabited territories. See Map I.

too much sacrifice from Austria, and the gesture would prove a basis for a rapprochement. The basic condition was the better relationship between Czechoslovakia and Austria. The modification of Dollfuss' strong anti-Czech policy seemed to be justified.

The Western Democracies and the League of Nations were necessary friends for Austria, not only financially (loans), but also politically. The reaffirmation of the Three Power Declaration on September 27, 1933, concerning the independence of Austria, greatly improved her security. To continue a friendly policy was in the interest of Austria. Nothing indicated that a great change was necessary, but improvement of these relations could not have been pursued without the consent of Italy.

It seemed to be a good policy to continue along Dollfuss' foreign political lines, and slight modification of his policy was advisable only in the case of Hungary and Czechoslovakia.

Appeasement of Germany

There were many well-founded reasons why Austria should appease Germany. The economic interests of Austria demanded the normalization of trade relations; since Hitler still "kept the German borders closed for any Austrian export."⁵⁶ A great number of Austrians (those supporting the government and, even more so, the Nazis) agreed with Schuschnigg that the "Austrians were not only a German-speaking people, but actually a German people and as such, they could never accept an anti-German combine."⁵⁷ This romantic idealization of German loyalty never influenced Germany, neither in the times of Bismarck,

⁵⁶Schuschnigg, Austrian Requiem, p. 107.

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 100.

nor in the period of Hitler; but astonishingly enough, it seemed to be the right attitude for the Austrians to have. It is also true that a great number of Austrians were opposed to the Anschluss idea.⁵⁸ Strangely enough, the Nazis found allies in the disappointed Austrian socialist workers, who could never forgive the government for the February days. They sought revenge "in overalls or in brown shirts" against the regime that brought horror to them.⁵⁹ The Schuschnigg government's survival at home depended on the condition to find a modus vivendi with Germany, and thus eliminate the German interference in the domestic affairs of Austria. Hitler's response to this Austrian aim was very controversial. On August 6, 1934, he explained to the Hungarian foreign minister, Kálmán Kánya that "if the Austrian government was able and willing to prove that they constituted the absolute majority of the German people in Austria, then German resistance to cooperation with Austria would automatically wane."⁶⁰ It sounded like a threat to Austria, although in the same conversation he stated that "Germany did not aspire to the acquisition of territory through the Anschluss of Austria. Moreover, Austria's Anschluss with Germany would mean that Germany would have to take over all economic and financial commitments which today, as a 'poor Reich', she would not be in a position to do."⁶¹ It sounded like a renunciation of the possibility of the Anschluss, but it did not eliminate the future interferences in Austrian domestic affairs. Two weeks later Franz Papen, Hitler's special envoy to Austria said to Schuschnigg that Hitler was "not only determined to

⁵⁸Schuschnigg, Austrian Requiem, p. 100.

⁵⁹Gedye, Betrayal, p. 84.

⁶⁰DGFP, C, III, Lammers to Neurath, Berlin, August 7, 1934, Doc. No. 150.

⁶¹ibid.

respect Austria's formal independence, but he also recognized Austria's right to settle her own internal affairs independently."⁶² It sounded reassuring, although in the same speech Papen emphasized that the National Socialist ideological revolution "must, naturally, also have repercussions beyond the frontiers of Germany, especially in a country with the same culture, customs, language, and tradition. One could not hope to dam the ebb and flow of spiritual struggles by barricading the frontiers with police posts."⁶³ It sounded ambiguous. However, later Papen made himself absolutely clear with the following sentence: "If the present policy (of the Schuschnigg government) and the severe persecutions and sentences continued, fresh revolts might perhaps result."⁶⁴ This was a clear statement which left no doubt that Germany did not give up her idea of the Gleichschaltung. She wanted to continue to work for it, not necessarily through a forceful annexation, but rather through the "ideological revolution" and its "repercussions."

Schuschnigg knew the role of the German government and party organs in the Nazi Putsch from the results of the investigation of the murder of Dollfuss. After he had received this and other information about the real intentions of Hitler, he certainly had to realize that an appeasement policy toward Germany would not satisfy Hitler while Austria remained independent. Instead of an appeasement he, by all means, had to prepare to block the possible future attempts of Germany directed against the integrity of Austria. It was clear that to trust the independency of Austria entirely to the Italian goodwill would have been a gamble: The natural choice in the selection of

⁶² DGFP, C, III, Papen to Bülow, Berlin, August 19, 1934, Doc. No. 167.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

other guarantors had to fall on France and Britain. From the beginning of the Fall of 1934, Schuschnigg tried to enlist the support of these two great powers by trying to pave the way for a French-Italian understanding.⁶⁵

A rapprochement with Germany would have only endangered Austria's independence. To acquire greater security, Schuschnigg had to enlist Britain and France among the guarantors of Austrian independence. This probably would demand from Austria the creation of a better relationship with the Little Entente, which could lead to the alienation of Hungary and Italy, but which nevertheless was a possibility to be explored. If a common understanding were to be created between Italy and France, Austria would profit even more greatly.

Complete Change in Foreign Policy by Exchanging
Italy's and Hungary's Support for the Patronage
of France and the Little Entente

The Social Democratic Party, as well as the Communist Party of Austria, continued to work underground against the Austrian "totalitarian" regime after the February days. They enjoyed, if not the support of the majority of the Austrian workers, then at least the support of their sister parties in the free world. With their help, the Arbeiterzeitung, as well as the Communist Rothe Fahne, was printed in foreign countries and smuggled into Austria. The Social Democrats and Communist underground, with the help of sympathetic foreign newspapermen, tried to undermine the authority of the Dollfuss regime and used every occasion to discredit it in the eyes of foreign governments. It is no wonder that after the murder of Dollfuss, the British government recommended reconciliation for Schuschnigg (hoping that the French

⁶⁵Ulrich Eichstadt, Von Dollfuss zu Hitler (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1955), p. 82.

and Italian governments would do likewise) with the responsible elements of Pan-German Nationalists and the Socialists.⁶⁶ This step would have weakened Schuschnigg's power in that neither the Nazis nor the Socialists wanted a simple cooperation with the government. What they wanted was to oust Schuschnigg and establish their own power.⁶⁷ Therefore, to even try a reconciliatory policy would have demanded Schuschnigg to take a great risk. If for this price the great powers were willing to guarantee the independence of Austria, however, it certainly would have been worth trying. The Great Powers, on the other hand, did not offer anything other than "all possible moral support, should Germany make demands during Herr von Papen's negotiations or at other times."⁶⁸ The cooperation and support of the Little Entente states were connected with the same condition. It seemed that the Western democracies were demanding the right to interfere in the internal affairs of Austria. Schuschnigg had to choose between the danger of German and Western cooperation, because both demanded the same condition--the establishment of a regime to their own liking. At that point the government crisis was avoided successfully, thanks to the support of Italy. Without Italy, it was clear, both Britain and France were willing to give only moral support and only at a very high price.

The possibility remained that Schuschnigg could have resigned, handing over the government to a Social Democratic-Communist coalition, and it is worth analyzing how things would have changed in that case.

⁶⁶Her Majesty's Stationery Office, Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919-1939, Second Series (Oxford: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1958), VI, Sir W. Selley to Sir J. Simon, Vienna, August 3, 1934, Doc. No. 563. (Hereinafter referred to as DBFP.)

⁶⁷Gedye, Betrayal, p. 167.

⁶⁸DBFP, Ibid.

As far as the domestic political situation is concerned, most probably a bloody civil war would have erupted with the terror directed especially against the former supporters of the government, the clerics, and the Nazis.

The reaction of foreign governments to these internal situations is easily predictable. The Little Entente would have applauded the turn of events; Italy and Hungary would have turned hostile; Germany most probably would have taken more aggressive measures, and possibly an annexation attempt; while France and Britain would have morally supported the Austrian regime. In other words, the annexation of Austria, which did not happen until 1938, would have already occurred in 1935.

To follow such a drastic political change was an impossible task for Austria, because the end product of events promised the same tragic end anyway.

A complete turn-around of the Austrian foreign policy was not feasible, and it seemed best to follow Dollfuss' policy toward France and the Little Entente.

Effects of the Austrian Crisis on Barthou's Foreign Policy

The attitude and actions of the Little Entente states during and after the Austrian crisis revealed the "serious gaps of opinions within the French Alliance system concerning Austria's independence.⁶⁹ Austria's neighbors closed their borders to her with the exception of Germany and Yugoslavia. Hungary strengthened her border guards to carefully filter out the refugees who arrived from Austria."⁷⁰ Czechoslovakia alarmed her troops along the Austrian

⁶⁹RAA, Moellwald to Waldenegg, Paris, 21, 64/Pol., August 11, 1934, p. 610.

⁷⁰Le Temps (Paris), July 27, 1934.

border, as well as along the Hungarian border,⁷¹ and ordered the arrest of Austrian Nazi refugees.⁷² Yugoslavia moved seven battalions to the Austrian border,⁷³ gave asylum to the fleeing Austrian Nazis without even disarming them,⁷⁴ and declared that "they will act in accord with the Great Powers if the Austrian situation should become more serious."⁷⁵

The marching up of the seven Yugoslavian battalions was not, however, in accord with the desire of the Great Powers, nor was the Czech mobilization along the Hungarian frontier. Both events brought home to Barthou some important lessons: Austria's independence was not considered to be a vital interest of Yugoslavia if it meant the strengthening of Italy's influence in Central Europe. The asylum given to the Nazi refugees indicated that Yugoslavia was more concerned about this growing Italian influence than about a possible Anschluss. The Czechoslovakian reaction suggested that the Czechs were more afraid of a possible Italian-Hungarian occupation of Austria than of an Anschluss. Barthou's foreign political designs lay in ruins; France's security system proved to be practically worthless. Her allies simply rejected French leadership when their immediate interests demanded a different solution.

The French politicians in government circles, as well as in the camp of the opposition, did not fully understand these implication of the Austrian

⁷¹Ormos, Eastern Security, p. 323.

⁷²Le Temps (Paris), July 27, 1934.

⁷³Ormos, Eastern Security, p. 322.

⁷⁴ibid.; John F. Montgomery, Hungary, the Unwilling Satellite (New York: Devin Adair Co., 1947), p. 66.

⁷⁵Le Temps (Paris), July 27, 1934.

crisis. "They were shocked by the painful and disappointing experiences that France had had with Yugoslavia."⁷⁶ However, Barthou realized that a complete re-examination of his foreign policy was necessary along the following lines:⁷⁷

Was the Eastern Pact still a promising combination?

Was the independence of Austria more important for France than the unconditional support of Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia?

Was it possible to find a compromise in this question with Czechoslovakia and, or with Yugoslavia?

Was Mussolini's support worth more than that of Yugoslavia?

Was there any possibility for a compromise between Italy and Yugoslavia?

First of all, Barthou again found the reply to all these problems in the Eastern Pact. The French diplomacy renewed its efforts to convince the Polish government that it would be in their favor to accept the French designs. The strong French pressure on Poland resulted not in a reconciliation, but rather in further alienation. In August the Austrian ambassador reported that the French-Polish relation was "spoiled."⁷⁸ Incidents in Poland and in France, such as the arrest of the French directors of the Polish Textile Trust in Jirardow,⁷⁹ and the expulsion of sixty alleged Communist mineworkers from France⁸⁰ helped to deteriorate the relationship. The French ambassador, Jean Laroche, presented a strongly worded demarche in Warsaw demanding the release

⁷⁶RAA, Moellwald's report to Waldenegg based on the evaluation of his informer, Paris, 21, 64/Pol., August 1, 1934, p. 610.

⁷⁷Ibid.

⁷⁸Ibid., 67/Pol., August 20, 1934, p. 621.

⁷⁹Ormos, Eastern Security, p. 326; also RAA, Ibid.

⁸⁰RAA, Ibid.

of the French directors of the Textile Trust.⁸¹ The Polish government refused to intervene in the interest of the French directors and stated that they could not influence the juridicial procedure.⁸² The Polish reply was so offensively worded that Laroche wanted to leave Warsaw, and stayed only because of the strong advice of the French government.⁸³ Barthou threatened Alfred Chlapowski, the Polish ambassador, that he would stop supporting Poland economically, as well as politically, if Poland continued a German rapprochement policy. At the same time, Chlapowski declared that France "cannot free herself" from the mistakes of the previous French governments, which treated their allies as "vassals."⁸⁴

The situation ended in a hopeless deadlock, and the final break came soon after. Germany (on September 5, 1934) and then Poland (on September 27, 1934) refused to participate in the Eastern Pact.⁸⁵

Barthou had rescued what he could, but in the Little Entente, only Czechoslovakia paid divided attention to the German menace. Yugoslavia's main concern was Italy. Loosing the Polish support, and realistically evaluating the weight of the possible Soviet help, Barthou had to realize that the only rescue for France was represented in a stronger British support and a closer relationship with Italy. The British support was looked upon as being of doubtful value, and it is true that Baldwin openly stated in the House of

⁸¹RAA, Moellwald to Waldenegg, Paris, Z1, 67/Pol., August 20, 1934, p.621.

⁸²Ormos, Eastern Security, p. 326.

⁸³RAA, ibid.

⁸⁴ibid.

⁸⁵A more detailed description and analysis of the Polish-French disagreement lies beyond the frame of this study.

Commons, "When you think of the defense of England, you no longer think of the chalk cliffs of Dover; you think of the Rhine--that is where our frontier lies."⁸⁶ However, this statement did not mean that Britain was backing France's policy. She opposed Barthou's Eastern Pact designs; she recommended reconciliation with Germany; she did not prepare herself to live up to her promises. The British government had rejected the proposals for strengthening the British air force.⁸⁷ Logically, Barthou interpreted the Baldwin declaration, not as a guarantee of French security, but as a British design to use France's Rhine Frontier for the security of Britain. When the reaffirmation of the Three Power Declaration was published (September 27, 1934) concerning the independence of Austria, Barthou was already preparing a visit with Mussolini, first of all, to settle the problems existing between Yugoslavia and Italy.⁸⁸ The time was ripe as Mussolini, himself, wanted to have an understanding with France. In order to show his goodwill, he supported the French proposal to invite the Soviet Union into the League of Nations, while the Italian press conducted a strong press campaign against Germany.⁸⁹ The only conditions of an Italian rapprochement was the desire to avoid further alienating Yugoslavia, whose being displayed a growing pro-German sympathy.⁹⁰

⁸⁶Quoted in Arnold Wolfers, Britain and France Between Two Wars (New York: Norton & Norton, 1966), p. 229.

⁸⁷W. S. Churchill, The Gathering Storm (New York: Bantam Books, 1961), p. 101.

⁸⁸RAA, Moellwald to Waldenegg, Paris, 21, 79/Pol., September 25, 1934, p. 646.

⁸⁹Ormos, Eastern Security, p.329.

⁹⁰ibid.

To the problems created by the Austrian crisis, Barthou seemed to find the following answers:

The idea of the Eastern Pact proved to be impractical.

Austria's interest remained of primary interest to France.

Czechoslovakia was inclined to consider better relations with Austria.⁹¹

The rapprochement with Italy became urgent and seemed feasible, and there was a chance to find a compromise between Italy and Yugoslavia.

The League of Nations, with the Soviet Union included in it, would perhaps become a stronger instrument for France against Germany, as well as against any other attempt to modify the status quo.

Barthou did not have time to realize the new system which was a French-Italian alliance fortified by the Little Entente and the Rome Protocol, with a sympathizing Soviet Union against a German-Polish alliance and a hesitating England. In the time when he wanted to take his first step toward the realization of his new designs, he was cut down by an assassin's bullet with his guest Alexander, King of Yugoslavia, on October 9, 1934. The assassination created a new international crisis and put new leaders in the governments of France and Yugoslavia, who once again had to make a decision concerning the grand strategy of their respective states in relation to the rest of Europe.

The Problems of France After the Assassination

Doumergue left no doubt in the speech he gave at Barthou's funeral⁹² that he wanted to hold France's foreign policy along the already stricken lines. The appointment of Pierre Laval as foreign minister was the best manifestation

⁹¹See p. 61 of this study.

⁹²Le Temps (Paris), October 13, 1934.

of this desire, because Laval was known in the diplomatic circles as a "stern and energetic politician,"⁹³ who already during his minister-presidency,⁹⁴ wanted to create a close cooperation with Mussolini by personally visiting him.⁹⁵ At the same time, he was known as a man who was firmly convinced of Germany's war guilt, but "is not an enemy of the German people."⁹⁶

His first problem was represented by the Yugoslavian reaction to the regicide of Alexander. It first of all was so overwhelmingly bitter and aggressive against Hungary, that the French government circles were afraid that Yugoslavia would send "an ultimatum to Hungary following the pattern of the Austrian-Hungarian ultimatum of 1914."⁹⁷ Such an ultimatum could have led to similar developments as those in 1914.

Even more dangerous was the possibility that the Yugoslavian reaction toward Italy would once again raise the question for France: which does she consider to be more precious, the friendship of Yugoslavia or the friendship of Italy? France had to avoid this issue because she needed the friendship of both states. The best solution seemed to be to refer the problem to the League of Nations, try to steer the new Yugoslavian leaders toward moderation,⁹⁸ and secure the continuous friendly attitude of Mussolini. This, however was about all that Laval could do.

⁹³RAA, Moellwald to Waldenegg, Paris, 21, 83/Pol., October 15, 1934, p.656.

⁹⁴January 26, 1931-February 20, 1932.

⁹⁵RAA, Ibid., p. 656.

⁹⁶DGFP, C, III, evaluation of Ermansdorff, Berlin, February 14, 1935, Doc. No. 491.

⁹⁷RAA, Moellwald to Waldenegg, Paris, 84/Pol., October 17, 1934, p. 659.

⁹⁸Laval attempted to enlist Benes' support for that. RAA, Ibid., p. 659.

The new Yugoslavian leaders enjoyed the unanimous support of the population. This support strengthened their position, and at the same time demanded them to re-examine the international situation of Yugoslavia, revise the successes and failures of Alexander's foreign policy, and select a course after honestly answering the following questions:

Is it really the interest of Yugoslavia to remain faithful to her French patron?

Is Germany really the greatest enemy of the status quo?

Is it possible to serve Yugoslavia's interest better, if they follow a rapprochement policy with Italy?

France, not having common frontier with Yugoslavia, and not having vital economic influence in Yugoslavia could impress her own designs only through the goodwill of some Yugoslavian politicians and groups.

It was now Yugoslavia's turn to make an important decision, which was to influence the future of Yugoslavia, as well as the future of the whole existing French foreign political system.

CHAPTER III

THE SECOND CRISIS: THE ASSASSINATION OF KING ALEXANDER OF YUGOSLAVIA

Yugoslavian Situation Up to 1934

Minorities in Yugoslavia in 1934

When World War I ended, the little kingdom of Serbia found itself on the side of the victors. Due to this fact and due to the Wilsonian principles of self-determination, she was awarded with territories that formerly belonged to the Habsburg Monarchy, Hungary, and Bulgaria. The dream of the Serbian patriots was the creation of a nation-state. However, the statistics denied that the realization of this dream had any realistic basis. According to the census taken in January 1921, the Yugoslavians represented an overwhelming majority of the population with their 82.8 per cent.¹ Time proved, however, that these statistics were misleading for the 9,931,416 people who were called "Yugoslavians," were incorrectly identified. There was no such national group known in Central Europe or in the Balkans.

The census of March 1931 realistically acknowledged the differences and broke down "Yugoslavians" into their original nationality groupings. It listed 5,953,000 Serbians; 3,221,000 Croatians; 1,134,000 Slovenes; and 2,593,000 other non-Slavic minorities.² Yet, these numbers did not reflect

¹Quoted by Hugh Seton-Watson, Eastern Europe Between the Wars, 1918-1941 (New York: Harper Torch Books, 1967), p. 416.

²ibid.

the real situation either, because it did not list the numbers of the Macedonian minority, which, although representing the most militant opposition to Serbian patriotism, was included in the number of Serbians.

All these minority groups joined the ranks of the opposition to the government. Their numbers were overwhelming--some 7 million people against the 5,900,000 Serbians (if we disregard the Macedonians³). Even the most skillful party politician could not rule successfully amidst such conditions without grave compromises.

Political Refugees

The disregard for national minority interest that prevailed in the Versailles and connected peace treaties produced a great flow of refugees in Europe. From the territories of the dissolved Habsburg Empire, great numbers of Germans, Poles, Hungarians, and Bulgarians migrated, usually to their respective mother countries. These refugees did not represent any significant political force, with the exception of the Hungarians and Bulgarians who were able to convince their governments to adopt a strong revisionist policy.

A much greater problem was the case of ethnic groups that did not have an independent mother country, and thus had no place to migrate to. At the same time, their group was large enough to demand at least a certain degree of autonomy from the states in which they originally lived. In Yugoslavia there were two such ethnic groups: the Macedonians and the Croatsians. Their

³No statistics are available for Macedonians. The official government position was that "there was no such thing as a Macedonian, there were only Serbs." See: Robert Lee Wolff, The Balkans in Our Times (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1956), p. 145.

political leaders openly advocated federalism or even separatism; both of the solutions would have meant an end to the unified Yugoslavian nation state. Under these circumstances King Alexander saw no other alternative than to assume the role of a royal dictator⁴ on February 6, 1929. The separatist leaders of the Macedonian, as well as of the Croatian minority groups, had to face the alternatives of imprisonment or "voluntary" political exile.

The bulk of Macedonians took refuge in Bulgaria,⁵ the country which also held parts of the former Macedonia, but had not pursued a strong nationalistic policy against the Macedonians. As a matter of fact, the Bulgarian government did not even prosecute the members of the most militant Macedonian organization, the IMRO (Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization). The IMRO was formed in 1896 as a secret political organization with the purpose of liberating Macedonia from the Turkish rule. Up to 1912, the organization "was a spontaneous expression of the people's irrepressible will for freedom."⁶ However, after 1920 the IMRO directed its main activities against Yugoslavia, and under the leadership of Ivan Michailoff,⁷ chief of the IMRO from September 12, 1924, it piled up a long record of terrorism, assassinations, guerilla warfare, kidnappings and other underground activities. Beginning in 1931, the Bulgarian government became more and more dissatisfied with the IMRO involvements in domestic political questions and in the de facto existence of an IMRO state.

⁴The epithet "absolute king" or "enlightened despot" would have fit him better.

⁵Wolff, Balkans, pp. 87-88.

⁶Stoyan Christowe, Heroes and Assassins (New York: Robert L. McBride & Co., 1935), p. 257.

⁷Ibid., p. 267.

within Bulgaria.⁸ In the Spring of 1934 a successful coup in Bulgaria put a pro-Yugoslavian government into power. The new government began at once the liquidation of the IMRO forces in Bulgaria.⁹ Michailoff escaped to Turkey, and others found refuge in Italy or Germany where they continued their activities against the Bulgarian and Yugoslavian governments, though with less and less vigor and effectiveness.

The Croatian refugees, being more Western-oriented, looked and found asylum in almost every country of Europe. Their numbers were the greatest in France and Switzerland.¹⁰ They, too, organized an aggressive, militant organization, the USTASHE, whose members enjoyed the hospitality of Italy and Hungary--both governments hoping to use them for the promotion of their own designs concerning Yugoslavia.

As the Bulgarian-Yugoslavian rapprochement policy restricted the activities of the IMRO, similarly, a secret Hungarian rapprochement with Yugoslavia meant an end to the USTASHE movement in Hungary. The steps of this rapprochement were taken in 1933 by Nicholas Horthy, regent of Hungary, through his military attache in Belgrade. He hoped that Hungary would come to an understanding with her southern neighbor,¹¹ "thanks to the long common tradition and common fate" of Serbia and Hungary.¹² One obstacle to that understanding was the fact that Croatian refugees who received political asylum in Hungary

⁸Christowe, Heroes and Assassins, p. 267.

⁹F. B. Hoptner, Yugoslavia in Crisis, 1934-1941 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1962), p. 16.

¹⁰L. S. Stavrianos, The Balkans Since 1453 (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1966), p. 638.

¹¹Horthy, Memoirs, p. 141.

¹²Interview with Gustav Hennyey, Munich, July 17, 1969.

very often committed terrorist activities in Yugoslavia before their escape.¹³

In the summer of 1933, the Yugoslavians suggested a very unorthodox method of solving the Croatian refugee problem. The Yugoslavian chief of staff suggested to the Hungarian military attache that "it would do a great service to Hungary, as well as to the Hungarian-Yugoslavian rapprochement, if you would close your eyes for a night. During that night we would cross the border to Janka Puszta¹⁴ and would solve the Croatian emigrant problem."¹⁵ Instead of accepting this proposal, the Hungarian government sent the Croatian refugees to Lausanne,¹⁶ where Kvaternik¹⁷ organized their immigration to other European countries.

¹³Requete du Gouvernement Yugoslave: relative aux responsabilites encoures par les Autorites Hongroises dans l'action terroriste dirigee contre la Yugoslavie, Beograd, 1935, p. 51 passim. Though these documents certainly do not prove the preparation of the assassination by the Hungarian government, it proves the neglect as the Hungarian government handled the Croatian refugee problem, even though the Yugoslavian government frequently asked for cooperation.

¹⁴Janka Puszta was a farmhouse complex near the Yugoslavian border, owned and operated by Gustav Percec as an USTASHE refugee camp.

¹⁵Interview with Hennyey.

¹⁶C. A. Macartney, October Fifteenth, p. 146. Dr. Tibor Ekhardt, in his book Regicide at Marseilles (New York: The American-Hungarian Library and Historical Society, 1964), p. 30 says "at my request, the Hungarian Government had expelled the USTASHE's . . . from Hungary." Gustav Hennyey describes this expulsion as follows: "Gombos and Kanya agreed that the Croatian refugees should be sent out of Hungary in one way or other. We looked for feasible solutions and finally we agreed that we should give Hungarian passports to about thirty politically prominent Croatian refugees in order to send them away. It was not a very good solution, but we could not find a better one. We gave Hungarian passports to two, three Croatian emigrants every month. They went to Lausanne. General Kvaternik then collected their passports upon their arrival and sent the passports back to us. We sent the first group in September 1933 and the system worked without flaws for a whole year." The fact remains that the refugees were leaving Hungary.

¹⁷Kvaternik was working in the USTASHE organization under the leadership of Dr. Ante Pavelic.

Both the IMRO and the USTASHE lost ground in 1934 due to the skillful diplomacy of King Alexander. No wonder that both organizations looked on him as their most dangerous enemy. In 1929 both organizations had already agreed upon joint terrorist actions to liberate Croatia and Macedonia.¹⁸ It was time for them to again act in cooperation with each other for the assassination of King Alexander.

Effects of the Assassination

Question of Responsibility

It is not the aim of this study to go into the details of the regicide.¹⁹ However, there are certain events which need to be repeated and explained because they have a decisive effect on the foreign policy of Yugoslavia.

The assassination took place on October 9, 1934, at about 4:30 P.M. in Marseilles. The assassin who killed King Alexander and Barthou was caught by the police, severely injured, and died the same day. Later, he was identified as Vlado Gheorghieff Tchetnozemy. Although even the newest publications on the assassination describe him as an USTASHE, it has been proven beyond a doubt that he was a member of the Macedonian IMRO²⁰ and had come into contact with

¹⁸Macartney and Palmer, Independent Eastern Europe, p. 276.

¹⁹Books describing the assassination:

Allen Roberts, The Turning Point (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1970).

Tibor Eckhardt, Regicide at Marseilles (New York: The American-Hungary Library, 1969).

Vladeta Milicevic, Eight for the Croat State (Munich, 1960).

Vladeta Milicevic, Der Königsmord von Marseille (Bad Godesberg: Hochwacht Verlag, 1959).

Claude Eylan, La Vie et la Mort d'Alexandre (Paris: Bernard, 1935).

²⁰Christowe, Heroes, p. 218; Eckhardt, Regicide, p. 29.

the USTASHE'S only after 1931.²¹ His aides were captured a few days later. They were Croatians, and probably members of the USTASHE; their names were Kral and Pospishil. The French investigation discovered that their Czechoslovakian passports were forgeries. They traced the men's steps back to Lausanne, where they found out in the Hotel de l'Europe²² that the two men had registered there before with Hungarian passports.²³ The first results of the investigations directed every attention towards Hungary.

The final resolution of the League of Nations (December 10, 1934) stated that "certain Hungarian authorities may have assumed at any rate through negligence, certain responsibilities relative to acts having connection with the preparation of the Marseilles crime."²⁴ This paragraph referred to the undeniable fact that the Hungarian passports of the two Croatian terrorists were genuine and asked the Hungarian government to take appropriate punitive "action at once against any of its authorities, whose guilt could be established. They

²¹"The Croats actually borrowed the assassin from the Macedonians." Interview with Hennyey.

²²Hennyey refers to Hotel l'Europe, while Christowe, Heroes, p. 9 refers to Hotel des Palmiers. The latest work does not give any references, not even bibliography; and its statements, generally, are highly questionable.

²³According to the Hungarian-Kvaternik agreement, the refugees were not supposed to register with the Hungarian passports. However, Kvaternik arrived late on this one occasion; Kral and Pospishil became impatient. They registered in the hotel, left their baggage and went for a sight-seeing walk, returning only in the evening when they finally met Kvaternik. A week later they participated in the meeting which selected--by drawing lots--two emigrants for "an important assignment." Both of them drew the fatal card. They were selected as helpers of the assassin. Interview with Hennyey who learned this version of the story personally from Kvaternik in 1941.

²⁴League of Nations, Official Journal, December 1, 1934, pp. 1712-1728.

were told to report the result and agreed to do so."²⁵ With this resolution, the whole passport affair was forgotten and accepted as closed. The truth, however, was a little different. The Hungarian authorities really issued the passports, not only to Kral and Pospishil, but to some thirty other Croatian refugees (political), during the period September 1933 to September 1934.²⁶ Why did the Hungarian government risk such an operation? The reasons can be found in the Yugoslavian official and unofficial complaints concerning the Croatian refugees in Hungary. The Hungarian government selected a solution that was no more orthodox than the Yugoslavian solution, yet offered a way out of the dilemma.²⁷ Although the Hungarian government, and even the II. section of the general staff,²⁸ was innocent in the preparation of the regicide,²⁹ in such a tense situation the revelation of the Hungarian government's role in providing the passports could have created an embarrassing situation.

Reaction in Yugoslavia

King Alexander was succeeded to the throne by his son Peter II, who was a minor.³⁰ In his name, according to the King's will, a regency was to govern Yugoslavia until 1941. The members of the regency were Prince Paul, the cousin of King Alexander; Stankovic, minister of education; and Ivan Perovic, governor of

²⁵Anthony Eden, Facing the Dictators, 1928-1938 (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Co., 1962), p. 131.

²⁶See footnote 16 of this chapter.

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸Intelligence Department.

²⁹Interview with Hennyey.

³⁰He was only eleven years old.

Croatia.³¹ The most important persons after the regents were General Ziffkovic, Prime Minister Uzonovic, and Foreign Minister Yevtic.

General Ziffkovic was an ardent Serbian patriot, and at the beginning of the royal dictatorship he was prime minister and advisor to King Alexander.³² Later, he was appointed commander of the Royal Guard and was also chief of the Serbian secret military organization.³³ He felt that the assassination created a favorable condition for him to, on the one hand, restore his own importance against the civilians (especially against Yevtic who followed the moderate, reconciliatory foreign policy of the late King Alexander), and on the other hand to direct a mortal blow against the Hungarian revisionist policy. Though Yugoslavia had plans for the invasion of Hungary, these plans were worked out only in cooperation with the other Little Entente states.³⁴ The time seemed to be right now, to put that cooperation into effect.³⁵

Prime Minister Uzonovic, an equally ardent Serbian patriot, believed that the unity of Yugoslavia--created by the assassination--could be further strengthened by directing the attention of the Yugoslavians toward the external enemies of Yugoslavia, that is, against Italy and Hungary. Public opinion was especially hostile toward Italy, and there were demonstrations in front of the Italian embassy in Belgrade during the days following the murder. Uzonovic

³¹Hoptner, Yugoslavia, p. 25.

³²Ibid.

³³Montgomery, Hungary, p. 69.

³⁴Interview with Hennyey.

³⁵See the statement of the Little Entente ministers on October 19, 1934, in Belgrade, "we would insist with all possible force"-- wording is clearly a threat of a possible military showdown. Quoted in Eden, Facing Dictators, p. 122.

indicated on October 28, 1934, in his first speech as the newly reappointed prime minister that concerning the Marseilles assassination, he would demand the complete revelation of the guilty persons, that their responsibilities would be established, and the "indispensable sanctions applied."³⁶

Foreign Minister Yevtic could be considered the only realistic politician among them. While he was a good Yugoslavian patriot, and while he believed in the undisputed pre-eminency of the Serbians in the leadership of Yugoslavia, he recognized that the international situation--in case of hasty Yugoslavian action--could bring grave consequences to his country. He sought support for the solution not only from the point of view of the Little Entente and the Balkan Pact states, but from France as well, and was ready for compromises.

Prince Paul, the regent, seemed not to have too much influence on the foreign policy in these first days of his being in power. On October 23, 1934, the newly appointed government had among its members General Ziffkovic. This indicated a turn toward strengthening the royal dictatorship, while the release of Dr. Vladimir Macek--leader of the Croatian (Separatists) Peasant Party, who had been imprisoned by King Alexander--from the prison, suggested a reconciliatory tendency toward the Croatian minorities. Yugoslavian foreign policy was still undecided. Only one thing was certain: no matter what direction the Yugoslavian policy would take, satisfaction had to be found in the punishment of the criminals involved in the regicide.

Facts Behind the League of Nations Sessions

The investigation discovered that the assassination was planned by Ante Pavelic and Kvaternik who both escaped to Italy. Mussolini refused to

³⁶The use of the word "sanctions" indicated that he was after guilty nations and not only after guilty persons. This expertise is interesting, because the trial of the criminals did not begin until November. Eckhardt, *Regicide*, p. 119.

extradite them because the French had never extradited anyone who had organized an attempt against the Duce's life.³⁷ More and more signs showed that Italy might be more involved in the case than Hungary. A Little Entente press campaign began against Italy and Hungary,³⁸ the Czechoslovakian and Rumanian papers leading them. However, neither England nor France wanted to endanger the French-Italian rapprochement,³⁹ which since the assassination of Austrian chancellor Dollfuss, had reached very hopeful stages. Even French-Italian military cooperation against a German attack was worked out on the drafting boards.⁴⁰ On October 15, 1934, Pierre Laval was appointed successor to Barthou. In his inaugural speech he blamed Hungary, alone, by name, for the assassination.⁴¹ Unless the Little Entente states (among them Yugoslavia) wanted to create a breach with their patron, France, they would have to accept Laval's statement. The Laval-Yevtic negotiations led to an agreement. Prime Minister Doumergue, in his speech on the extraordinary session of the Chamber of Deputies on November 6, 1934, reported: "Being aware of the dangers, which are threatening Europe, it became necessary (for Yugoslavia) to harmonize its government's actions with the actions of the Government of the (French) republic . . . Le roi est mort. Sa politique continue."⁴² It became clear during

³⁷Hoptner, Crisis, p. 29, 11ⁿ.

³⁸Eden, Facing Dictators, p. 122.

³⁹ibid., p. 123.

⁴⁰la Gorce (de), The French Army, p. 256-57; also see Map 11.

⁴¹Eckhardt, Regicide, p. 120.

⁴²Journal Officiel, 1934, p. 2201.

the sessions of the League of Nations that Yugoslavian foreign policy was forced to fall in line with the French interests.⁴³

There was only one episode which could be considered an independent Yugoslavian action, and that is the deportation and expulsion of thousands of Hungarians from Yugoslavia. However, it proved to have been done without the blessing of the Yugoslavian government (an action of General Ziffkovic) and when Eden expressed his dislike to Jevtic, the expulsions ceased.⁴⁴

Hungary fought against the charges by every means available, and by revealing to Eden and Laval at a secret meeting the story of the passports as it really happened.⁴⁵ However, Benes and Titulescu went so far in their extreme accusations of Hungary, that the public revelation of the truth (excluding the responsibility of Italy) would have mortally damaged their authority and trustworthiness. A compromise solution was worked out at the suggestion of Eden, and the Council adopted the resolution without change.

Yugoslavian Foreign Policy

The Foreign Policy of King Alexander

The main principle of the Yugoslavian foreign policy was the maintenance of the status quo. This policy determined clearly her enemies and allies; Italy was her strongest enemy. Up to the Spring of 1934 the king relied on French support against Italian aims. Next in the row of enemies stood Hungary, Austria, and Bulgaria. Hungary was encircled by the Little Entente, she was weak economically and even weaker militarily. It was true that Hungary

⁴³Montgomery, Hungary, p. 69.

⁴⁴Eden, Facing the Dictators, p. 127.

⁴⁵Interview with Hennyey.

could not have threatened Yugoslavia unless in alliance with Italy, and only if Czechoslovakia and Rumania would not honor their obligations determined in the mutual assistance treaties.⁴⁶ However, what the Little Entente feared was not so much Hungary's military power as a possible Habsburg restoration⁴⁷ in Austria and Hungary, or even the coronation of any other person as king of Hungary. The common tradition of the peoples living in the Danube Basin, the long, though not always peaceful cooperation of the minority groups of the Habsburg Empire, the common problems of the economic crisis, and the great numbers of people living in the Little Entente states who secretly cherished their memories about the "good old days" made the idea of a Hungarian kingdom very attractive, even with an empty throne. With a king on the throne, a chain reaction could have been triggered which could have led to the dissolution of the successor states. Hungary and Austria were dangerous, not because of their military might or aggressiveness, but because of their aid and comfort to the Croatian refugees. At the same time, the Austrian activities concerning a possible Habsburg restoration were greatly exaggerated in the minds of the Little Entente leaders because of the misinformed reports they received from their ambassadors.⁴⁸ A rapprochement between Hungary or Austria and Yugoslavia seemed to be an impractical dream until they refused to modify their foreign political designs. Bulgaria, likewise a revisionist state, had represented a danger even more vivid than Hungary because of her support of the Macedonian revisionist and terrorist groups.

⁴⁶Mutual Assistance Treaties were signed between Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia on August 14, 1920, and between Czechoslovakia, Rumania, and Yugoslavia in April and July 1921. The formal creation of the Little Entente Pact was signed on February 16, 1933.

⁴⁷Hoptner, Crisis, p. 10.

⁴⁸Schuschnigg, Austrian Requiem, p. 90.

The fronts were sharply drawn: Italy, Hungary, Austria, and Bulgaria were the enemies; France, the Little Entente, and the Balkan Pact⁴⁹ nations were the allies. It was a simple foreign policy, easily understood by every Yugoslavian patriot.

In the field of economic interests, however, the international relations of Yugoslavia could not be directed according to nationalistic principles alone. The best buyers of Yugoslavian grain, meat, timber, etc., were Italy, Austria, Germany, and Hungary.⁵⁰ France, with her well-balanced economy, did not need Yugoslavian raw materials or food products, and among her other allies only Greece (food export) and Rumania (oil export) played any significant role.⁵¹ Thus developed a basic contradiction between the Yugoslavian political strategy and the realistic economic interests.

King Alexander realized the precarious position and took the first steps toward the harmonization of political and economic policy. As far as Italy was concerned, the king already had established secret negotiations with Mussolini in 1932.⁵² However, after two years Mussolini put an end to these negotiations by refusing to see Yevtic, who delivered to Rome a secret message from the king.⁵³ Concerning Bulgaria, the relationship changed with the coups and with the new Bulgarian government's crackdown on the IMRO, which was

⁴⁹The Balkan Pact was signed in Athens on February 9, 1934, by Greece, Rumania, Yugoslavia, and Turkey; and it aimed to guarantee the Balkan frontiers against a non-Balkan country acting alone: Italy, Hungary, or the Soviet Union.

⁵⁰Stavrianos, Balkans, p. 638.

⁵¹See Table II.

⁵²Hoptner, Crisis, p. 19; Montgomery, Hungary, pp. 245-261.

⁵³Ibid., p. 20.

followed by a personal meeting between King Boris of Bulgaria and King Alexander in Sofia in September 1934, and which further promoted a mutual understanding.⁵⁴ Communication lines were also opened secretly with Hungary, though seemingly without results.⁵⁵

This rapprochement policy of King Alexander was in harmony with French political designs; France sought a rapprochement with Italy against the growing danger of Germany.⁵⁶ A rapprochement between Hungary and Yugoslavia could have eased the tension between Italy and Yugoslavia, as well as promote a better understanding between France and Italy. This French policy made Czechoslovakia and Rumania suspicious; Prime Ministers Benes and Titulescu were working against such an understanding and successfully torpedoed Mussolini's Four Power Pact⁵⁷ to such a degree that the final text of the pact "pledged rather the maintenance of the status quo than the alteration of it."⁵⁸

In this confusing international situation was fired the shot at Marseilles on October 9, 1934, which killed Barthou and King Alexander, and which put the Yugoslavian foreign policy at the crossroads.

⁵⁴Seton-Watson, Eastern Europe, p. 251.

⁵⁵Interview with Hennyey; Horthy, Memoirs, p. 141.

⁵⁶See p. 43 of this study.

⁵⁷"Britain, France, Germany, and Italy were to pledge themselves to collaborate for the maintenance of peace by methods which were to include the realization by peaceful means, both of parity of armaments, for the ex-enemy states, and of revision of the peace treaties . . ." Macartney and Palmer, Eastern Europe, p. 307.

⁵⁸Ibid., p. 308.

How the Assassination Influenced Yugoslavia's Foreign Policy

The final resolution of the League of Nations and the whole handling of the assassination question taught Yugoslavia some very bitter lessons.

Their king was murdered, the real criminals--Pavelic and Kvaternik--escaped punishment, and Italy was not even mentioned among those who bore responsibility. The League of Nations proved to be an instrument in the chess game of the Great Powers. Yugoslavia's most trusted friend, France, forced them to close their eyes to the guilt of Italy in order not to disturb the possibility of a French-Italian rapprochement. Clearly, French interests were more important than the Yugoslavian interests and the truth. The Little Entente states, who at the beginning loudly stressed their sympathy and support, calmed down and were not willing to risk any move against the wish of the Great Powers. England and her representative, Eden, played a key role in the whole affair. Again, not Yugoslavia, but England's interests proved to be more important. Only one conclusion could be drawn: "Yugoslavia felt isolated both diplomatically and militarily . . . No country was committed by treaty to aid Yugoslavia in a war against Italy."⁵⁹ It became the primary aim of Yugoslavian diplomacy, then, to break out of this isolation.

From among the alternatives⁶⁰ open to Yugoslavia before the assassination, this bitter experience eliminated the possible adjustment of commercial treaties to the traditional foreign policy, and made even more desirable the adjustment of the foreign policy to the economic interests. A rapprochement with

⁵⁹Hoptner, Crisis, p. 28.

⁶⁰See pp. 97-105 of this study.

Italy, if Yugoslavia wanted to keep the friendship of France (and for the time being she certainly needed this friendship) became a necessary condition. A better relationship with Hungary, for the present, was out of the question; but it was clear, that in case of an Italian-Yugoslavian rapprochement, it could become a feasible policy. The Bulgarian-Yugoslavian relationship had not changed, while a closer relationship with Germany seemed to be a necessary security step in case France should be willing to sacrifice vital Yugoslavian interests in order to please Mussolini. It was clear that a compromise solution had to be found. A new ally presented itself during the sessions of the League of Nations: the Soviet Union.⁶¹ However, direct help from the Soviet Union depended on the willingness of Rumania to give permission to the Soviet troops (in case of war) to cross her territory. Rumania seemed unwilling to grant that permission, and therefore, that possible alliance with the Soviet Union represented only a moral support for Yugoslavia.

Alternatives for Prince Paul

Alexander's will appointed as First Regent, Prince Paul, who was disinterested in politics and who preferred to spend his time with his art collection. He was educated in England and felt more at home in London or Paris than in Yugoslavia. Yet, he now had to re-examine the domestic, as well as the international situation, and design a domestic and foreign policy which would best serve the interest of Yugoslavia and primarily Yugoslavia.

Domestic Policy

Yugoslavia seemed to be well unified under the royal dictatorship of Alexander, but in reality, the country was very much divided.

⁶¹Litvinov vigorously supported the Yugoslavian standpoint.

Yugoslav patriotism remained a phrase: Serbian and Croatian chauvinism survived; social discontent and political rivalries were repressed by force but were not removed.⁶² Hatred was only the more powerful for being driven underground.

Prince Paul could continue this policy. It would mean that the conditions of the country would not improve, that the revisionist foreign powers would be able to continue to use Croatian discontent to promote their aims, and that it would make the Croatian emigres some kind of heroes in the eyes of the Croats living in Yugoslavia. On the other hand, it would probably secure a reign without much disturbance and without greater crisis for the time being. In the long run, the continuation of this policy would undoubtedly lead to a greater alienation of the people, strengthen the opposition, and endanger the very existence of the Yugoslavian nation-state.

The assassination of King Alexander created an unexpected unified response on the part of every minority group in Yugoslavia.⁶³ The continuation of the oppressive policy would certainly destroy this unity again. This unanimous indignation, this unified Yugoslavian outcry offered another alternative for the direction of domestic policy--a domestic policy which would promote better understanding between political factions, and which would reconcile the alienated minority groups. This kind of program would certainly speed up the progress in the field of social and economic achievement and would strengthen the Yugoslavian state. The basic problem was represented by the Croatian minority. If they could be reconciled, then the Croatian emigres would lose their influence, the revisionist countries' propaganda efforts

⁶² Seton-Watson, *Eastern Europe*, p. 231.

⁶³ Ibid.

would become ineffective. Such a policy would enable the government to pursue its foreign political aims with more vigor and aggressiveness.⁶⁴

The possible disadvantages of such a reconciliatory policy was the demand of the Croatian minority for a greater share in the political life, even for autonomy. Compromise was possible, but even the smallest compromise would signal to the minorities that Prince Paul was willing to give up the idea of a Yugoslavian nation-state and was willing to accept the idea of federalism. Federalism undoubtedly would weaken the authority of the royal government. Some extremist groups would probably demand, not only autonomy, but complete separation, which would endanger the very existence of the Yugoslavian state. To give a greater voice to the people would possibly mean that Yugoslavia might have to take into consideration some changes in its traditional foreign policy.

Comparing the advantages and disadvantages, the reconciliatory policy had greater promises, but the pursuit of the policy had to be very cautious in order to avoid the greater dangers.

Foreign Policy

Following the traditional line of foreign policy--that is, friendship with France, the Little Entente, and the Balkan Pact states, while maintaining a strong pro-status quo attitude toward Austria, Hungary, Italy, and Bulgaria--was one of the alternatives that Prince Paul could select. Though he most probably did not know about the rapprochement attempts of King Alexander, he had to realize the existing contradiction between the foreign political

⁶⁴During the funeral of King Alexander, the German delegation, led by Goering, "noticed the spiritual unity of the people." DGFP, C, III, Heeren to Neurath, Belgrade, October 22, 1934, Doc. Nos. 263-64.

treaties and the commercial treaties of Yugoslavia. In case of an international crisis or war, the very existence of the Yugoslavian economy depended on the goodwill of hostile nations. To put an end to this dualism was the primary interest of Yugoslavia. The harmonization of foreign policy with the economic interests of the country would be pursued by:

adjusting the commercial treaties to the traditional foreign policy;

adjusting the foreign policy to the economic interests; or

finding compromise solutions if a radical solution would be impractical.

Adjusting the commercial treaties to the traditional foreign policy would be almost an impossible task. Yugoslavia simply could not find markets enough in the friendly countries. To find new markets in at least neutral countries would take a considerable amount of time. A hasty action most certainly would create an economic depression, if not a crisis. Such a crisis would sharpen the internal political conflicts, would destroy the unity created by the indignation over the king's murder, and therefore, would play into the hands of the enemies of Yugoslavia. This alternative was completely impractical for the present situation.

Adjusting the foreign policy to the commercial interests would demand a rapprochement with Italy, Bulgaria, Hungary, and Germany.

Rapprochement with Italy

Rapprochement with Italy would be possible because of the French-Italian rapprochement, already an open aim of France. It would give Yugoslavia two Great Powers as friends. The question was: what would Italy be willing to do to express her goodwill toward Yugoslavia? The primary requirement, on the part of Yugoslavia, was that Italy denounce her former revisionist policy and

pressure,⁶⁵ and Hungary should do the same. However, the events preceding the assassination of King Alexander point to the opposite direction. According to the French designs, it was Yugoslavia, and not Italy, who was expected to make sacrifices for a better understanding, sacrifices which Yugoslavia was willing not to make.⁶⁶ However, this French action made Yugoslavia skeptical toward the sincere friendship of France.⁶⁷ There were further drawbacks of such a rapprochement--it would create a sharp division of opinion within Yugoslavia. Italian support given to the USTASHE was an open secret, and Italy was not expected to change this attitude, which meant that the open interference of Mussolini with the Yugoslavian domestic political affairs would continue. The advantage of such a policy were great, but only if France could convince Mussolini to change his policy toward Yugoslavia. Finally, since the assassins of King Alexander were identified⁶⁸ as members of the IMRO and of the USTASHE, it was probable that the Italian government was involved. In that case, the Yugoslavian public opinion would simply not allow a rapprochement policy.

Rapprochement with Hungary

Rapprochement with Hungary would be an easier matter. The Hungarian government indicated her willingness to cooperate with Yugoslavia by liquidating the Croatian refugee organizations during the summer of 1934, but the revisionist policy of Hungary did not change. It was even more discouraging to know that during Barthou's visit in Belgrade in 1934, he displayed a great amount

⁶⁵Mussolini did not cease to demand the Dalmatian Coast promised to Italy during World War I but given to Yugoslavia in the Peace Treaty of 1919.

⁶⁶DGFP, C, III, p. 93, 5ⁿ.

⁶⁷Hoptner, Crisis, p. 24.

⁶⁸Eckhart, Regicide, p. 120.

of reserve in replying to a strong anti-Hungarian speech of Minister-President Uzonovic.⁶⁹ It was evident that France wished to moderate Yugoslavian hostility toward Hungary. However, even if Hungary would be willing to modify her revisionist aims, the rapprochement would endanger the friendship of Yugoslavia's natural allies. Czechoslovakia and Rumania would reconsider their policy toward Yugoslavia; both countries were strong militarily and presently represented real force on Yugoslavia's side. To exchange their alliance for the friendship of a militarily weightless⁷⁰ Hungary would be insane. Finally, too, Hungary might have been involved in the assassination of King Alexander. In that case a rapprochement with Hungary was out of the question.

Rapprochement with Bulgaria

The attitude of the new Bulgarian government was encouraging. Their attempted liquidation of the IMRO and the friendly visit of King Alexander of Yugoslavia⁷¹ improved the relationship of the two countries even further. This rapprochement did not oppose French interest and gave hopes that it would strengthen the Balkan Pact and would meet the approval of Rumania.

Rapprochement with Germany

During the funeral of King Alexander in Belgrade, the Yugoslavian public opinion and press displayed an unparalleled sympathy toward Goering and the German delegation.⁷² This was the second occasion that Yugoslavia openly

⁶⁹DGFP, C, III, Heeren to Neurath, Belgrade, June 27, 1934, Doc. No. 39.

⁷⁰Interview with Hennyey.

⁷¹DGFP, Ibid., Doc. No. 459.

⁷²Ibid., Doc. No. 263.

demonstrated her sympathies toward Nazi Germany.⁷³ Yugoslavia did not have a common border with Germany; Germany did not have territorial aims; Germany was the best business partner of Yugoslavia; and Germany did not exploit the Yugoslavian economy. She charged competitive prices and did not restrict the types of goods she sold.⁷⁴ Since the signing of the Three Power Declaration (February 17, 1934) by Britain, France, and Italy, and the signing of the Rome Protocols (March 17, 1934) by Italy, Austria, and Hungary, it was clear that Germany's interests were not the same as those of Italy and Hungary. In case of a German-Yugoslavian rapprochement, Germany could become a valuable ally, putting a break on Italian, as well as Hungarian ambitions--a relationship from which Yugoslavia would benefit greatly. On the other hand, Germany was the main enemy of France, and a Yugoslavian rapprochement would certainly not meet French approval. Therefore, "it would hardly be possible in the near-future pro-German sentiments to find expression in practical politics."⁷⁵ At least not as long as France remained the strongest power of Europe.

Rapprochement with Austria

The relationship with Austria was quite cold. The USTASHE'S operated from Austrian territory, too, and were successful in committing terrorist actions

⁷³After the death of Dollfuss, the Austrian army rounded up the Austrian Nazi brownshirts and the stormtroopers, with the exception of those who took their escape route through Yugoslavia. Yugoslavia accepted them as guests and later sent them by ship to Germany. They were feted as if they were friends and visitors. Montgomery, Hungary, p. 66.

⁷⁴Stavrianos, op. cit., p. 16.

⁷⁵DGFP, C, III, Heeren to Neurath, Belgrade, October 22, 1934, Doc. No. 264.

against Yugoslavia,⁷⁶ though without the knowledge of the Austrian government. On the other hand, Yugoslavia granted asylum to the Nazi terrorists after the murder of Dollfuss, an act which created hostility in the Austrian public and government. The successor of Dollfuss, Dr. Schuschnigg, was looked upon by the Little Entente as a person who, because of his pro-Habsburg convictions, might attempt a restoration and create with it the greatest possible threat for the integrity of the successor states. Austria enjoyed the patronage of Italy, a fact which even multiplied the dangers for Yugoslavia. A reconciliation seemed impossible.

The Nazi attempt to overthrow the Austrian government proved Hitler's great interest in the domestic and foreign policy of Austria. With a possible growth of German influence in Austria, the restoration of the Habsburg Monarchy in Austria would become improbable. Therefore, the reconciliatory policy was out of the question for the time being, and the help of Germany was needed for the neutralization of Austria.

In light of the above investigation, an extreme solution was not advisable. However, a compromise solution might include the advantages of one or two of the radical solutions without greater dangers.

The unchangeable facts which could not be altered by Yugoslavian politics were:

Yugoslavia needed the French patronage, as well as the alliance of the Little Entente.

Yugoslavia had to make smaller concessions to Italy in order to preserve the goodwill of France.

⁷⁶The terrorists planted time bombs in Austria in the wagons of the Intercontinental Express, and the bombs exploded after the train crossed over into Yugoslavian territory.

Yugoslavia did not have to and could not make concessions to Hungary because it would cause alienation of the Little Entente, as well as of the Balkan Pact, and so it would weaken the Yugoslavian position.

Yugoslavia's economic interest demanded a closer, more friendly relationship with Germany.

Evaluation of the Yugoslavian Policy

Many historians think that the times, problems, and challenges were too great for Prince Paul, and he just could not live up to his obligations as a statesman.⁷⁷ On pages 99-104 of this study I have discussed the alternatives for foreign policy. The comparison of the optimum alternative with the chosen policy, may give a more objective description of these qualities as a statesman and a diplomat.

Evaluation of the Domestic Policy

The analysis of the alternatives for the domestic policy suggested the following solution: a reconciliatory domestic policy (loosening of the royal dictatorship) with great caution in order to avoid the dangers represented by the autonomist, separatist movements of the minority groups, and especially of the Croatian.

Prince Paul took the first steps toward reconciliation. Dr. Macek was released from prison and expressed his hopes and desires for a better understanding with the government. In 1935, Yevtic, a strong Serbian chauvinist, was replaced as prime minister by Milan Stojadinovic, who belonged to the Radical Party,⁷⁸ but who held more liberal views than his predecessor. They released 10,000 political prisoners, moderated dictatorial methods and sought

⁷⁷Hugh Seton-Watson, Robert Lee Wolff, L. S. Stavrianos.

⁷⁸The Radical Party was the party of the Serbian patriots with a "Great Serbian" conviction.

an understanding with the Croatian Peasant Party.⁷⁹ The main obstacle to complete reconciliation and understanding lay in the Royal Constitution.⁸⁰ However, in this matter, neither Stojanovic nor Prince Paul entertained any serious plans for dramatic change.⁸¹

If someone were to judge these steps from a contemporary point of view, considering the knowledge that Prince Paul and his aides had about the general situation of Yugoslavia, there can be only one conclusion to make: in 1935 the regency tried to pursue the most promising and best domestic policy for the benefit of Yugoslavia.

Evaluation of the Foreign Policy

For the foreign policy of Yugoslavia, a compromise foreign policy seemed to be the most feasible. The regency followed such a policy--she strengthened her friendship with France and the Little Entente by cooperating with them during the investigation of the Marseilles crime and did not accuse Italy, and by this action, leaving a door open for a possible Italian-Yugoslavian rapprochement. The regency made a firm stand against Hungary, thereby forcing the Hungarian government to tone down the revisionist policy and propaganda, as well as forcing her to follow a stricter line concerning the Croatian refugees. She expressed sympathy to Germany and in this manner paved a way to better economical relations, as well as political relations, doing so in order to harmonize her foreign policy with her economic interests.⁸²

⁷⁹Stavrianos, Balkans, p. 630.

⁸⁰A simple majority won in the popular elections awarded the victorious party with two-thirds of the seats in the Skuptsina (parliament).

⁸¹Stavrianos, Ibid.

⁸²DGFP, C, III, Heeren to Neurath, Belgrade, October 22, 1934, Doc. Nos. 263, 264.

Those historians who argue against this solution, argue in the knowledge of the later developments. However, neither King Alexander, Prince Paul, nor the Stojadinovic government had a crystal ball to see into the future. The actions, or rather inactions of the Western Powers, the failure of the Eastern Pact, and the French-Italian rapprochement all brought home only one lesson to Yugoslavia: her interests were only secondary in the eyes of her allies and protectors. With a sane mind, the leaders of Yugoslavia had to look (which gives them credit) and did look for alternate solutions and selected the one, which, in their time, seemed to serve best the interests of Yugoslavia.

A small power seldom has a chance to decide her foreign policy independently from the great nations. Yugoslavia could and did make such a turn toward Germany, which meant that the interested Great Powers acted completely against her interests or--as was the case in the Yugoslavian situation--paid no attention to the developments in Central Europe or the Balkans.

I feel that the regency selected the best foreign policy for Yugoslavia. Prince Paul indeed lived up to the challenges of the contemporary situation and the historians who condemned him⁸³ have disregarded the simple fact that he could not see in advance the developments which followed in the later years and which are well-known today to every college freshman.

The assassination of King Alexander at Marseilles was a terrible crime. However, it was more than that from the point of view of Europe. It speeded up the regrouping of the European nations; it weakened the confidence of the small powers in the great champions of the status quo; it opened the hemisphere

⁸³Seton-Watson, Eastern Europe, p. 232; Stavrianos, Balkans, p. 629.

for the German economic penetration which naturally led to a growth of German political influence; it signaled the beginning of a race in Central Europe and on the Balkans for the goodwill and grace of Germany; and it undermined the solidarity of the Little Entente and questioned the real value of the mutual assistance treaties. These were the consequences from the point of view of Central Europe and the Balkans.

CHAPTER IV

THE THIRD CRISIS: HUNGARY'S DILEMMA

Hungary Before 1934

There is very little known about the twentieth century history of Hungary, due to the limited number of scholarly works written in a language other than Hungarian, and even in Hungarian a thorough, objective history has yet to be written. The books available in English, German, or French are mostly the products of political emigres, most of them having had no professional historical training, yet all of them possessing a fairly strong political bias. In order to understand any period of the post-World War I Hungarian history, one needs to be familiar with the conditions created by the war, as well as by the Peace Treaty of Trianon. For the purpose of this study it is necessary to describe only the most important consequences.

The Aristocratic Governments, 1919-1932

Domestic policy

The Peace Treaty of Trianon (June 4, 1920) and the reaction of the victorious powers, especially of France, to the Socialist revolution and to the following Communist regime in Hungary marked out the road of future politics. This reaction helped the aristocracy to regain power in Hungary. Then, the aristocratic governments helped themselves to retain this power by introducing a new election law in 1922, which limited the suffrage and introduced open ballots for the rural areas. This election law ab ovo secured the election for

the governmental party, which "was not a real political party, but a collection of individuals of proved loyalty and usefulness to the regime."¹

The opposition was made up of three parties. The Independent Smallholder party represented the medium peasants' interest. The Liberal Party's membership came from the ranks of the democratic intellectuals. The Social Democratic Party limited its activities to the industrial workers. Thus, the landless peasants and agricultural workers had no real representatives in the parliament. At the same time, 55-60 per cent of Hungary's population was employed in agriculture.²

With the help of the League of Nations and other foreign loans, the Bethlen government³ was able to lead the country toward prosperity in the second half of the 1920's, although the economic crisis of 1929 wiped out these results. The orthodox financial policy described for Hungary by the League of Nations⁴ indebted the peasantry and caused high unemployment for the industrial workers.

Foreign policy

The main features of Hungarian foreign policy following the period of the Trianon Treaty were revisionism and a hope or fear of a Habsburg restoration in Hungary or in Austria. The Treaty of Trianon shocked the Magyar population of Hungary. Out of 325,000 kilometers,² only 93,000 kilometers² were left for

¹Seton-Watson, Eastern Europe, p. 191.

²The Cambridge Economic History of Europe (6 vols.; Cambridge: University Press, 1965), VI, Part II, 609.

³Istvan, Count Bethlen, prime minister of Hungary.

⁴C. A. Macartney, Hungary: A Short History (Chicago: Aldine Publ. Co., 1962), p. 221.

them.⁵ The population of the former 21 million was reduced to 8 million.⁶ It is true that of the territories incorporated in Czechoslovakia, Rumania, and Yugoslavia, the Hungarians were in the minority; yet, their number was considerable (745,431 in Czechoslovakia; 1,463,311 in Rumania; and 467,652 in Yugoslavia⁷). This great number of Hungarians living in the successor states of Central Europe provided a chance for friction within, as well as between the states.⁸ "The number of pure Magyars placed by the treaty under Czech, Rumanian, and Yugoslavian rule was so large as to cause legitimate bitterness to any Hungarian."⁹ This "legitimate bitterness" not only recommended but demanded that every Hungarian government keep revisionism in its program in order to command the loyalty of the masses.¹⁰ Thus, revisionism became the first important axiom of contemporary Hungarian foreign policy. It determined--sometimes openly, sometimes candidly--the role of Hungary on the stage of international politics. She sought friendly relations with the nations opposing the status quo and displayed hostility toward the countries which were for the status quo.

⁵Seton-Watson, Eastern Europe, p. 414.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid.

⁸For further study of the minority questions see Ibid.; C. A. Macartney, National States and National Minorities (Oxford, 1934); Problems of the Danube Basin (Cambridge, 1942); Robert Lee Wolff, The Balkans in Our Times (Cambridge, Mass., 1956).

⁹Seton-Watson, Eastern Europe, p. 343.

¹⁰Ádám, Juhász, and Kerekes, eds., Allianz Hitler-Horthy-Mussolini (Budapest: Akadémia ed., 1966), p. 14 (hereinafter referred to as Allianz) states that the ruling classes kept the revisionist propaganda alive to turn away the population's attention from the domestic problems. This statement suits the requirement of Marxist history writing but distorts the truth. Not only the government party, but also the opposing parties advocated revisionism in order not to lose popular support.

The Habsburg restoration question, instead of uniting Hungary as did revisionism, divided it. The aristocracy and the Catholic Church wanted a Habsburg restoration, because they hoped that the monarchial form of government would be their best security to keep their power and privileges. The democratic intellectuals, as well as the great majority of the peasantry, which still respected and admired the Kossuth tradition of 1848,¹¹ opposed the Habsburg restoration. Regent Horthy and his followers opposed it only because of realistic political reasons, and would have welcomed a restoration if circumstances would have allowed it.¹² Finally, the young generation of intellectuals who were strongly Nationalists, and anti-Communists, and believed in a strong authoritarian government organized on the example of Mussolini's government, opposed a possible Habsburg restoration because of their socialistic ideas, their dislike of aristocracy and their dislike of unrestricted capitalism.

Thus, the question of a Habsburg restoration made the aristocratic government's foreign policy friendly toward England, and even toward France in 1921.¹³ After that they remained admirers of England, followed a more cautious policy toward France, and were very cool toward the Austrian and German republics. The desire for revision pushed them toward Italy and sharply separated them from the Little Entente states.

¹¹Lajos Kossuth was the president of the first Hungarian Republic during the freedom fight of 1848-1849.

¹²Horthy, Memoirs, p. 116-127.

¹³King Charles IV first return attempt was encouraged by French diplomatic circles.

The Gömbös Government, 1932-1933

Gyula Gömbös was appointed as prime minister on October 1, 1932. Regent Horthy appointed him with a certain "hesitation," because he could not agree with some of Gömbös' political convictions. Horthy, however, did not have any other choice. The economic crisis and the severe measures introduced to fight against it produced great dissatisfaction among the small farmers, unemployed civil servants, and jobless university graduates.¹⁴ The discontent took the form of a Radical Right movement and the leader of that Radical Right was Captain Gömbös.

The ideology of the Radical Right was a mixture of nationalism, socialism, anti-Habsburg feeling, anti-semitism, and authoritarianism. All of these convictions had a well-founded basis.

Nationalism was fed by the decisions of the peace treaties and prevailed in an ardent, aggressive cult of the glorious Hungarian past, as well as in revisionism. Its most devoted followers came from the ranks of intellectuals who fled to Hungary from territories annexed by the other successor states.

Socialism became popular due to economic hardship and was considered as an alternate solution to the Marxist Socialism attracting the young anti-Communist intellectuals, as well as the small peasants. Their devotion was not accidental. Hungary was a land of large estates owned by a group of aristocrats, bankers, rich businessmen and the Church. The statistics of 1935 give us some hints:¹⁵

¹⁴Macartney, Hungary, p. 221-222.

¹⁵Calculated on the basis of Seton and Watson, Eastern Europe, p. 121.

<u>Category of holdings</u>	<u>Per cent of total number of owners</u>	<u>Per cent of the total land</u>
0-5 hold ¹⁶	72.6	10
5-50 hold	25.7	35.2
50-1,000 hold	1.6	24.8
1,000 and over	0.1	30

These statistics indicate that 72.6 per cent of the peasants did not have enough land to support their families and had to rent additional land from the great landowners or had to hire themselves out as laborers. On the other hand, 30 per cent of the land was in the possession of the big landlords representing only 0.1 per cent of the whole number of owners.

While Hungary's neighbors introduced land reforms right after the war, Hungary's land reform plans¹⁷ projected the distribution of only a small portion of the great land estates (7.5 per cent of the total land), and even this reform had no real benefits for the landless peasants. It was allotted in plots of 1.6 hold onto 298,000 peasants out of nearly 3 million.¹⁸

Anti-Habsburgism

Anti-Habsburgism also found its roots in these conditions. Gombös and his followers really believed that the Hungarian people were the victims of the former Habsburg aristocracy, and in order to improve social conditions, they wanted to destroy the aristocracy's power.

Anti-Semitism

Anti-Semitism also had some practical reasons. Under the economic pressures, the Hungarian bourgeoisie and intellectuals became much more interested

¹⁶One hold = 1.412 acre.

¹⁷Macartney, Hungary, p. 218.

¹⁸Ibid.

in industrial and commercial life, as well as in the free professions after World War I. Yet, the 54 per cent of the merchants, 48 per cent of the commercial personnel, 46 per cent of the physicians, 41 per cent of the veterinarians, 41 per cent of the factory owners, and 34 per cent of the newspapermen were Jews.¹⁹ "The domination of the economic life of the nation by an alien element became a subject of increasing resentment."²⁰ The fact that the overwhelming majority of arrested Communists were Jews²¹ gave added impetus to the anti-Semitism.

Authoritarianism

Authoritarianism and an admiration for it was created by the impression of Mussolini's Fascism, as well as Mussolini's support of Hungary's revisionist aims. In 1927, Hungary already had signed a friendship treaty with Italy, directed against Yugoslavia.²² In order to give strength to that treaty, Mussolini gave a hand to Hungarian rearmament providing a credit of thirty million liras through the Banca d'Italia. The first shipment of arms (ten car loads) arrived in Hungary at the beginning of January 1933, but the rest of the shipment (forty car loads) was discovered in Austria at Hirtenberg creating a

¹⁹Odon Malnási, A Magyar Nemzet Oszinte Története, "The Honest History of the Hungarian Nation" (München, Mikes ed., 1969), p. 149.

²⁰Seton-Watson, Eastern Europe, p. 291.

²¹Magyar Országos Levéltár, Horthy Miklós Titkos Iratai (Hungarian National Archives, "The Secret Documents of Nicholas Horthy"), ed. by M. Szinai and L. Szücs (Budapest: Kossuth Publ. Co., 1965), Doc. No. 16. The arrests were made during the Spring of 1931.

²²The interpretations differ on this point. C. A. Macartney accepts on the basis of evidence that the friendship treaty was directed more against Germany than against the Slavs (October Fifteenth, Part 1, p. 136, footnote 3), while J. F. Montgomery saw it as an instrument "to strengthen Italy's bargaining position toward Yugoslavia. Adám, Juhasz, and Kerekes definitely state that "This alliance was directed first of all against the common opponent "Yugoslavia." Allianz, p. 15.

smaller international crisis.²³ The friendly gestures of Mussolini naturally attracted the admiration of Hungarian nationalists. While having these ideological considerations, Gömbös, as prime minister, was not able to realize his plans at once. He did not have real power to do anything. Regent Horthy "censored his list of ministers, and also refused him permission to hold new elections, so that he had to govern with a parliament mainly composed of Bethlen's adherents."²⁴

In foreign policy, however, Gömbös was able to gain command and more control.

The Foreign Policy of Gömbös

Situation in 1932-1933

As in the other European countries, so too in Hungary the economic crisis represented the main concern of the government. Hungary needed markets for her agricultural products and needed industrial products to satisfy the needs of the population. The denunciation of the Trade Treaty by Czechoslovakia marked the beginning of the end of the prosperity created by the Bethlen government.²⁵ Czechoslovakia bought 16.8 per cent of Hungary's total export, while the Czech products represented 21 per cent of the total import in 1930. These figures fell to 4.2 per cent in export and 9.2 per cent in import in 1931.²⁶ On March 31, 1932, Austria denounced her commercial treaty with Hungary. It was again a heavy blow as Austria carried 30.1 per cent of Hungary's

²³Pál Nándori, A Hirtenbergi Fegyverszállítás in Hadtörténelmi Közlemények, "The Armshiptment of Hirtenberg" (Budapest: Publications of Military History, 1968), XV, 636-57.

²⁴Macartney, Hungary, p. 223.

²⁵Seton-Watson, Eastern Europe, p. 193.

²⁶Macartney, October Fifteenth, Part I, p. 90, 5ⁿ.

exports and 15.5 per cent of her imports. In a personal letter written to Hitler on April 22, 1933,²⁷ Gömbös requested Germany's urgent help in that situation. His expectations were not in vain as Germany's share in Hungary's exports grew from 11.2 per cent to 22.2 per cent by the next year.²⁸ As a result of the German trade, unemployment decreased and industrial production was revitalized.²⁹

At the same time, due to heavy borrowing by the Bethlen and Károlyi governments Hungary was indebted to the League of Nations, as well as to private banking interests in Britain, France, and the U.S. It was urgent to give to these circles some security that Hungary would not initiate Nazism servilely. Gömbös moved swiftly in that direction to the great surprise of the Hungarian Right. Gömbös initiated negotiations³⁰ with the representatives of the Jewish Neolog³¹ community and concluded an agreement on which the Jewish leaders "recognized and approved Gömbös' progressive policy," while Gömbös announced that he had "revised his views on the Jewish question."³²

We may conclude that at the end of 1933, Gömbös had a relatively united country behind him as far as his domestic policy was concerned. His economic policy, on the other hand, tied Hungary closer to Germany, but kept the U.S. and England friendly. With the declining external and internal pressures at

²⁷ Wilhelmstrasse, Schnurte to Neurath, Budapest, February 12, 1935, Doc. No. 31.

²⁸ Macartney, October Fifteenth, p. 141.

²⁹ ibid., p. 142.

³⁰ ibid., p. 112.

³¹ The Hungarian Jews had two Churches: the modernized Neologs and the traditional Orthodox group. The Neologs were the more numerous.

³² Macartney, October Fifteenth, p. 112.

the turn of the year, he was relatively free to select the foreign political moves which would serve Hungary's interest the best.

Alternatives Open for Hungarian Foreign
Policy at the End of 1933

Gömbös' basic political convictions partially promoted and partially opposed the foreign policy of the preceding aristocratic governments. He enthusiastically accepted the revisionist program, but rejected the possibility of a Habsburg restoration not only for the time being, but forever. These two principles already put some limitations on his choices for alternative solutions on the field of foreign policy.

Equally important was the influence of Regent Horthy³³ and his foreign minister, Kálmán Kánya. Regent Horthy never lost his admiration for the seas and considered the great naval powers as unchallengeable. He openly expressed this conviction several times to Montgomery, U.S. ambassador in Budapest (1933-1941). "What was true in the last war is no less true this time, namely that sea power will win the war." Not only in government circles, but also in the wide public opinion of Hungary, it was well known that Horthy was an Anglophile. Though legally he had no authority³⁴ to interfere with the foreign policy of Hungary, his position gave him the chance to influence the mind and decision of Gömbös to at least display a certain caution not to alienate England.

Kálmán Kánya was the ambassador of Hungary in Berlin from 1925 until his appointment by Gömbös (February 4, 1933) to the post of foreign minister.

³³Montgomery, Hungary, p. 47.

³⁴According to the laws, the regent was actually a figure head. He could not make any foreign political decisions. The real power was in the hands of the prime minister and foreign ministers who acted upon the approval of the Crown Council.

"He knew exactly what he wanted for Hungary, which was all the revision he could get for her."³⁵ Because he was free from the influence of any ideology, he had no scruples concerning diplomatic morality of loyalty. "Infinitely circumspect and profoundly cynical, Kánya trusted no man further than he could see."³⁶ His basic aim was to secure for Hungary a free hand, that is, not to ally Hungary with the victors. His aggressive character impressed even Gömbös and moderated his enthusiasm for Hitler, as well as for Mussolini.

Taking into consideration the discussed factors (revisionism, anti-restorationism, Horthy's Anglophile sympathies and Gömbös' own authoritarian admirations), one may see the following alternatives open for foreign policy at the end of 1933:

Continuation of Bethlen's foreign policy, i. e. toning down the revisionist claims, becoming firm allies with Italy, and trying to find a modus vivendi with the other European countries, including the Little Entente;

Start a more aggressive foreign policy creating political and military alliances with the other revisionist states (Italy, Germany, Poland, Austrian, and Bulgaria) and trying to realize revision by force if necessary;

Accept the status quo, give up revisionism and drift into the camp of France and the Little Entente; and

Reject every rigid line of foreign policy and pursue revisionism whenever the conditions favor it.

Continuation of Bethlen's Foreign Policy

Developments in Germany, as well as the effects of the economic crisis (cancellation of the Czech and Austrian trade agreements) made this line of foreign policy obsolete. Before 1933 Germany had accepted the Versailles

³⁵The best, most sympathetic characterization of Kánya is written by Macartney, October Fifteenth, Part I, p. 108-110.

³⁶ibid.

Treaty at least as far as her western borders were concerned in the Locarno Treaty, October 16, 1925. She had been a member of the League of Nations, was economically weak, had been cooperative and peaceful in international politics, and was insignificant militarily. By 1933, however, Germany's policy had become aggressive and openly revisionist. She began to play a more important role from the military point of view, and economically she was a desirable trading partner for every nation, and especially for the countries of Central Europe and of the Balkan.

These changes in Germany's conditions made the Little Entente, especially Czechoslovakia, nervous; and it gradually turned the attention of France toward the problems of Central Europe. To discount the role of Germany would have been impractical from the Hungarian point of view, especially since the economic well-being of Hungary to a great degree depended upon her trade relations with Germany. The alliance with Italy, however, remained just as important as before and needed to be incorporated in other diplomatic designs.

The Start of a More Aggressive Foreign Policy

This would create a political and military alliance with the other revisionist states, that is, with Italy, Germany, Poland, Austria, and Bulgaria. Here again the events already cancelled out some of the realistic possibilities: Bulgaria gave up her loud revisionist policy and began to cooperate with the pro-status quo Balkan states.³⁷ Austria was completely alienated from Germany because of the German supported anti-government propaganda in

³⁷The Balkan Chamber of Commerce and Industry was set up at Istanbul in 1931, the Oriental Tobacco Office was set up in 1933, and the Balkan Entente was well under negotiations at the end of 1933 (signed in February 1934) with Bulgarian participation. Seton-Watson, Eastern Europe, p. 373.

Austria, as well as because of Germany's financial pressure tactics.³⁸ Long and hard diplomatic negotiations were needed to stop Dollfuss from continuing a rapprochement with the French sponsored group.³⁹ Italy was not less determined at that time to stop the growing German influence in Austria, and Mussolini openly expressed his displeasure over Gömbös' visit to Hitler.⁴⁰ The only improvement of relations within the anti-status quo camp was achieved by the German-Polish rapprochement.

Also in Hungary there existed a great dislike of the idea of a closer cooperation with Germany. First, the public opinion, especially the university students, were utterly disappointed because of Hitler's demands concerning the rights and privileges of the German minority group in Hungary⁴¹ and organized demonstrations against Germany.⁴² The majority of the Hungarian press attacked not only Germany, but also Gömbös because of his visit to Hitler. They commented on the visit as an unfortunate step "in a time when Germany was going to be completely isolated."⁴³ A too radical and open pro-German policy could have created a problem, even a government crisis since

³⁸Kurt Schuschnigg, Im Kampf gegen Hitler (Wien, Fritz Molden Verlag, 1969), p. 142-143.

³⁹Wilhelmstrasse, Conversation of Kopke with Mazirevich, Berlin, July 14, 1933, Doc. No. 10.

⁴⁰Ibid., Hassel to Neurath, Roma, June 30, 1933, Doc. No. 9. The visit took place June 17-19, 1933.

⁴¹Ibid., Doc. Nos. 4, 8, 13. Also see: Gömbös' conversation with Hitler, Budapest, June 16, 1933, Allianz, Doc. No. 3.

⁴²Ibid., Bleyer to Schoen, Budapest, August 11, 1933, Doc. No. 13.

⁴³Ibid., Schoen to Neurath, Budapest, June 21, 1933, Doc. No. 8.

Gömbös' followers were in a minority within the government party,⁴⁴ and he did not possess the unconditional support of Horthy.

From the economic point of view, a closer cooperation with Germany was certainly a requirement. Germany was to carry 20.35 per cent of Hungary's total foreign trade in 1934.⁴⁵ The friendly or hostile attitude of Germany would have made Hungary economically more dependent on friendly or hostile nations. If Germany was friendly, Hungary's trade was to depend on friendly countries for 54.22 per cent and only for 13.77 per cent on the hostile countries. A hostile Germany would have forced Hungary to depend for only 33.87 per cent of its trade on friendly nations⁴⁶ and for 34.12 per cent on hostile nations.

The policy to ally Hungary with the block of anti-status quo nations for the time being lacked all realism since no such block existed. However, if such a block were to be created in the future, economic, as well as revisionist political considerations recommended that Gömbös join the block.

Rejection of Revisionism and Joining with the Camp of the Pro-Status Quo States

This was Daladier's suggestion to Kánya, when he visited the French capital between September 15-18, 1933. Daladier noted that France would welcome a more friendly attitude on Hungary's part concerning the proposals of Benes.⁴⁷

⁴⁴Nandor A. F. Dreisziger, Hungary's Way to World War II (Toronto: Hungarian Helicon Society, 1968), p. 34.

⁴⁵Germany made the trade agreement with Hungary on the basis of a quota system on July 22, 1933. Macartney, October Fifteenth, p. 141.

⁴⁶See Table IV.

⁴⁷Benés held out the prospect of trade benefits for Hungary in return for the renunciation of revisionism. Wilhelmstrasse, Doc. No. 14.

Kánya's answer was that "any Hungarian government would fall at once if it would accept such suggestions."⁴⁸ Was Kánya right in his reply?⁴⁹ Already the aristocratic governments accepted revisionism as their political platform in order to gain popular support. Even the leaders of the opposing parties agreed with the government on that point. Tibor Eckhardt, leader of the Smallholder Party, the stongest opposing party, was no less revisionist than Gömbös himself⁵⁰ and, was the vice-president of the "Hungarian League for Revision."⁵¹ Pál Auer, one of the strongest opponents of unrestricted Hungarian nationalism and of Gömbös felt it necessary, during his private conversations with Benes, to emphasize the disadvantages of the annexation of Hungarians by Czechoslovakia, and recommended to him a peaceful revision of borders following the ethnic lines.⁵²

Hungarian school education, as well as the parental education did not cease to nurture revisionist sentiments in the younger generations and in that way secured a continuous mass-support for revisionism throughout the decades

⁴⁸Wilhelmstrasse, Doc. No. 14.

⁴⁹The official historical interpretation of revisionism is accepted by every present-day Hungarian historian living in Hungary without argument. It prevails in the following stereotype sentence: "The Hungarian ruling classes did not want the diminution of differences, but rather the continuation of them because by these means they could turn the bitterness of a great majority of the population against the dictates of Trianon and against the neighboring states. Their bitterness was actually caused by their misery." Allianz, p. 10.

⁵⁰Seton-Watson, Eastern Europe, p. 189.

⁵¹Eckhardt, Regicide, p. 96.

⁵²Pál Auer, Fél évszázad, "Half a Century" (Washington: Occidental Press, 1971), p. 111.

between the two wars.⁵³ Kánya was right in asserting this fact, and Daladier, himself, understood that the realization of anti-revisionist policy was an impossible task.⁵⁴ This policy was not feasible from the Hungarian point of view, nor was it feasible from the foreign political point of view either. The only advantage that Daladier had offered to Kánya for Hungary's renunciation of revisionism was a support of Hungary's rearmament demands in the Little Entente states. What Hungary had needed at that time was, first of all, a helping hand in her economic situation. However, no such offer was made, because France herself was not in a position economically to help Hungary. A renunciation of revisionist policy could have resulted in loss of trade with Germany and Italy. Without French guarantees for the replacement of that loss the acceptance of such an offer would have been a naive, unrealistic policy.

Rejection of All Rigid Lines of Foreign
Policy and Pursuit of Revisionism
Under Favorable Conditions

This policy had to take into consideration all possibilities, such as:

Revision through war;

Revision through the League of Nations and review of the peace treaties (Article XIX of the Covenant);

Revision through agreements reached with the Little Entente;

Revision through agreements reached with the individual successor states;

Revision forced upon the individual successor states through the decision of the Great Powers (Britain, France, Germany, and Italy).

⁵³I was born in "Trianon"-Hungary, but learned the meaning of that expression from my uncle and his children of my age living in Czechoslovakia while we visited each other once or twice a year. In the whole public school I do not remember a student who would not react emotionally to the questions connected with the Trianon Treaty.

⁵⁴Wilhelmstrasse, Köster to Neurath, Paris, September 18, 1933, Doc. No. 14.

We may dismiss at once this first alternative. Hungary's military-geographic position excluded any chance for success in case of an armed conflict with any of the Little Entente states. It would have been different if their Entente were to be dissolved, for then Hungary could have pursued a more aggressive policy against these states, and even then only against one of them. The aim of such a policy for the time being ought to have been directed, therefore, against the unity of the Little Entente, as well as against the understanding between France and the Little Entente.

Revision through the League of Nations

This alternative promised even less success. France and the Little Entente states were able to block not only the attempts directed toward the revision of the treaty in the League, but were successful in preventing the League from fulfilling its obligation as guardian of the minority rights.⁵⁵ However, for the sake of international publicity and for propaganda purposes, it seemed to be wise to seize every opportunity in the League of Nations to stress Hungary's grievances.

A revision through agreements with the Little Entente had depended upon the possibility of finding at least one acceptable basis to start more friendly diplomatic relations. This basis was created by the attitude of the Little Entente states toward the Habsburg restoration problem. King Alexander of Yugoslavia had said that he would have preferred a German-Austrian custom union to a possible Austrian-Hungarian-Italian one.⁵⁶ Benes expressed his views in the following words: "I prefer an Anschluss to an Austrian-Hungarian

⁵⁵Eckhardt, Regicide, p. 58-59; also Macartney, October Fifteenth, p. 143.

⁵⁶DGFP, C, I, Albert Dufour to the Foreign Ministry, Belgrade, June 1, 1933, Doc. No. 279.

union."⁵⁷ Benes felt that a restoration would endanger the security of Czechoslovakia, but he was not afraid of the Germans, with whom the Czechs had had a cordial neighbor relationship for centuries.⁵⁸ Also, Titulescu had no objections against a possible Anschluss, but he remarked that "in case of an Austrian-Hungarian unification, Rumania will order mobilization."⁵⁹

The Little Entente and France approached Hungary already in 1932 to take part in the Tardieu Plan,⁶⁰ which envisioned the establishment of tariffs on the basis of the most favored national principles among the Danubian states (Austria, Hungary, and the Little Entente), and then the creation of an economic block, a kind of custom union under French tutelage. The plan failed, not because of the Hungarian, but because of the German, Italian, and British opposition to it.⁶¹ The plan, however, was also unacceptable from the Hungarian point of view because it would have demanded as a pre-condition the renunciation of Hungary's revisionism.⁶²

Unless Hungary was ready to denounce revisionism, there was no hope to find any solution for reconciliation with the Little Entente states as a block.

Hungary was not ready to and could not take such a step. The Hungarian political leaders in the government, as well as in the opposing camp could

⁵⁷DBFP, Second Series, V, Doc. No. 273. Also, interview with Pál Auer.

⁵⁸Auer, Half a Century, p. 100.

⁵⁹DGFP, Memorandum by Neurath, London, June 21, 1933, Doc. No. 328.

⁶⁰A. Basch, The Danube Basin in the German Economic Sphere (New York: Columbia University Press, 1943), p. 160.

⁶¹Dreisziger, Hungary's Way, p. 61; Magda, Hungary and the Little Entente, p. 53.

⁶²Wilhelmstrasse, Negotiations of Kánya and Göring, Budapest, October 11, 1936, Doc. No. 14.

work only on some kind of alternative compromise. The idea was to renounce at least part of the revisionist demands against one country, but keep the demands intact against the other countries.

Reconciliation with Yugoslavia

In Horthy's judgment the country that was the best choice for a friendship was Yugoslavia. He had frequent private contact with King Alexander through Admiral Prika, with whom Horthy served in the KUK Navy, and who was now the adjutant-general of the Yugoslavian king.⁶³ It was even more important that the Yugoslavian minister of foreign affairs, Yevtic, shared Horthy's views concerning the necessity of rapprochement between Hungary and Yugoslavia. He said to Hennyey, the Hungarian military attache, during the presentation of his credentials: "I am convinced that you will have a good time in our country, because there are no real differences between the two people."⁶⁴

Not only sentimental and personal emotions suggested a rapprochement with Yugoslavia, but also realistic considerations. Yugoslavia had the smallest group of Hungarians,⁶⁵ and the political refugees escaping from Yugoslavia to Hungary were mainly Croats and not Hungarians. Furthermore, Yugoslavia and Hungary had mutually important trade relations.⁶⁶ There were signs of mutual goodwill on both parts. For example, early in 1933 the chief of staff of the Yugoslavian army objected to the presence of Croatian refugees in Janka Puszta. Hungary began to send away the Croatian refugees, not only from Janka Puszta,

⁶³Interview with Hennyey.

⁶⁴Ibid.

⁶⁵382,000 according to the census of 1921. Seton-Watson, Eastern Europe, p.343.

⁶⁶See Table IV.

but also from Hungary. The private information that Horthy had received gave him "every reason to believe that King Alexander would, as soon as circumstances permitted, accept the proffered hand of friendship."⁶⁷ This friendly hand was offered as early as the first days of May 1933. Dudic, the Yugoslavian ambassador in Budapest, paid a visit to Kánya and expressed the friendly feeling of Yugoslavia toward Hungary, and he suggested the creation of an Italian-Hungarian-Yugoslavian alliance against the threat of an Anschluss.⁶⁸ At the same time, the publicly known relationship of the two countries seemed to be hopelessly hostile, and this hostility prevailed not only in newspaper articles,⁶⁹ but also in actions, which the two countries had taken in form of complaints at the League of Nations.⁷⁰ These actions and press attacks, however, did not play too important a role. In Yugoslavia, the press was firmly under the government's control, and it could change the tone of articles from one day to another. In Hungary, only the government press published extreme revisionist articles, while the opposing press followed a more liberal line and advocated a pro-French and pro-reconciliatory policy.⁷¹ So there was also no problem, and if the stopping of the press campaign was in the interest of the governments, both could have done so with ease.

Reconciliation with Czechoslovakia

On September 27, 1933, President Masaryk made his interesting remarks about the possibility of a Czech-Austrian-Hungarian union, but he added the

⁶⁷Horthy, Memoirs, p. 141.

⁶⁸Wilhelmstrasse, Schoen to Neurath, Budapest, May 9, 1933, Doc. No. 5.

⁶⁹Interview with Hennyey.

⁷⁰Adám, Hungary and the Little Entente, pp. 62-63.

⁷¹Interview with Pál Auer, Paris, June 25, 1971.

condition to it that "The probability is very small that the Hungarians will come to their senses. If Hungary would follow a realistic policy we could discuss--no doubt with positive results--some kind of border revisions."⁷² (italics mine) The wording of this proposal certainly was not apt to awaken Hungarian sympathies. The substance of it even less: it projected a coalition of the three states who were the members of the former Habsburg Monarchy, in which Hungary for centuries (before the compromise of 1867) played second fiddle to the other two. The proposal reminded Gömbös of the possibility of a Habsburg restoration, and that alone was enough to elicit his opposition to the plan. The attitude of the Czech government toward the Hungarian minorities also did not promote a possible better understanding.¹¹ There were the usual complaints, often justified, about insufficient educational facilities, the impossibility of entering the civil service, and the tactless behaviour of officials in the majority nation in purely Magyar districts."⁷³ It was natural for the population living in such districts to turn to the Hungarian government for protection; and this provided a constant chance for hostility between Hungary and Czechoslovakia.

Reconciliation with Rumania

This seemed to be the least desired and least possible alternative because Rumania held the greatest part of former Hungarian territories with the greatest Hungarian population: 1,354,000 according to the Rumanian census and 1,900,000 according to the Hungarian census.⁷⁴ The greatest number of political refugees living in Trianon-Hungary were represented by those escaping from

⁷²Quoted in Adam, Hungary and the Little Entente, p. 58.

⁷³Seton-Watson, Eastern Europe, p. 344.

⁷⁴Ibid., p. 343.

Transylvania. These refugees were politically the most active and influential (Bethlen, himself, was a Transylvanian), working for revision. Titulescu, the Rumanian foreign minister, on the other hand, was one of the strongest anti-revisionist statesmen, whose activities were instrumental in the torpedoing of the Four Power Pact,⁷⁵ as well as in the preparations of the anti-revisionist Balkan Entente.⁷⁶

The success of any of these alternatives depended entirely on the consent of Italy and Germany. Hungary could not afford to lose Italian sympathies what with Mussolini being the only statesman who openly supported Hungary's revisionist aims.⁷⁷ Also, Hungary could not afford to lose Hitler's goodwill, the Hungarian foreign trade being greatly dependent upon the export-import business with Germany. It was important to learn their attitude and harmonize Hungary's foreign policy with them.

Gömbös learned about the convictions of Germany and Italy during his visits. In Berlin (June 17-19, 1933) he learned from Hitler that Germany could not support the Hungarian revisionist requests directed against Rumania and Yugoslavia,⁷⁸ but he could count on Germany's cooperation against Czechoslovakia.⁷⁹ Furthermore, Hitler expressed his dissatisfaction with Dollfuss. Gömbös had asked Hitler if a more moderate policy would not be possible vis a vis

⁷⁵See Macartney and Palmer, Eastern Europe, p. 308.

⁷⁶Stavrianos, The Balkans, pp.738-739.

⁷⁷Since 1928, Seton-Watson, Eastern Europe, p. 347.

⁷⁸Ibid., p. 59.

⁷⁹Adám, Hungary and the Little Entente, p. 58.

Austria,⁸⁰ but the reply was disappointing.⁸¹ The Hungarian leadership, however, sympathized with Hitler's conceptions and did not want to get involved in that "fratricidal struggle."⁸² Nobody could have expected Hungary "with a sane mind to take the side of Germany in the Anschluss question," wrote Kánya after the Berlin visit.⁸³

A revision with the help of all the Great Powers did not seem to be feasible after the experiences with the Four Power Pact and after the Kánya-Daladier negotiations.⁸⁴ Yet, the attitude of England created some slight reasons for hope. With the enlistment of Lord Rothermere to support the Hungarian revisionist aims, at least the Hungarian public was led to believe that the support of the English public opinion could be secured.

Therefore, Hungarian revisionist propaganda was strengthened in the Western world, and especially in Britain and France, but it created greater response in Central Europe. The Little Entente feared that Hungary might convince the Great Powers that they were very unjust to Hungary during the peace negotiations.⁸⁵ As a result, Benes and Titulescu nipped in the bud every French idea of a possible revision and led in their respective press a continuous anti-revisionist propaganda campaign, which proved to be more successful than the Hungarian one.⁸⁶

⁸⁰Allianz, negotiations of Gömbös with Hitler, Budapest, June 16, 1933, Doc. No. 3.

⁸¹Ibid., Gömbös to Mussolini, Budapest, June 24, 1933, Doc. No. 4.

⁸²Wilhelmstrasse, Schoen to Neurath, Budapest, June 21, 1933, Doc. No. 8.

⁸³Quoted in Ormos, Eastern Security, p. 240.

⁸⁴See p. 124 of this study.

⁸⁵Interview with Hennyey.

⁸⁶Seton-Watson, Eastern Europe. p. 347.

During the last months of 1933, as well as in January 1934 there were rumors about the possibility of a German-Little Entente Non-Aggression Pact.⁸⁷ Gömbös asked Germany for clarification, and finally he wrote a letter to Hitler, himself, but after a while Germany decided not to give any reply.⁸⁸ These actions of Germany were just as disturbing as Hitler's attitude toward the German minorities question in Hungary,⁸⁹ all of which recommended to Gömbös a cautious rapprochement with Germany.

Gömbös learned about Mussolini's designs during his visit in Rome (July 25-28, 1933); Mussolini repeated to Gömbös his formerly explained designs⁹⁰ concerning Central Europe. The kernel of this plan was a "tight cooperation between Austria and Hungary,"⁹¹ which should be realized on the commercial, as well as on the political fields. At the same time, Mussolini assured Gömbös that Italy remained "in strong opposition to a Habsburg restoration."⁹² In the second state of this policy the Austrian-Hungarian agreement, strongly supported by Italy, should be extended to the neighboring states, and first of all to the Little Entente and to Germany.⁹³

⁸⁷DGFP, C, II, memorandum by Köpke, Berlin, December 1, 1933, Doc. No. 95; memorandum by Bülow, Berlin, January 11, 1934, Doc. No. 175; memorandum by Neurath, Berlin, January 18, 1934, Doc. No. 192; memorandum by Bülow, Berlin, January 24, 1934, Doc. No. 216.

⁸⁸Ibid., Gömbös to Hitler, Budapest, February 14, 1934, Doc. No. 252; Dr. Lammers to Neurath, Berlin, February 28, 1934, Doc. No. 288; Dr. Lammers to Neurath, Berlin, March 29, 1934, Doc. No. 371.

⁸⁹Wilhelmstrasse, Doc. Nos. 16, 18, 19, 20.

⁹⁰See Mussolini's letter to Gömbös on July 1, 1933, Allianz, Doc. No. 5.

⁹¹Ibid.

⁹²Ibid.

⁹³Ibid.

The effects of Hitler's and Mussolini's plans on all the alternatives of the Hungarian foreign policy were disastrous. Germany wanted an Anschluss, and Italy opposed it. Germany wanted a close cooperation with Hungary for the dissolution of the Little Entente and the destruction of Czechoslovakia, and Mussolini wanted a reorganization of the whole Danube Basin through reconciliation and understanding with France. Both Germany and Italy opposed a possible Habsburg restoration. None of the mentioned alternatives was feasible without alienating one or another Great Power. Consequently there remained only one remote chance to promote the Hungarian foreign political aims--the creation in the future of an understanding between Hitler and Mussolini. Until that time only one road was left open for Hungary: to try to retain her freedom of action without offending either of the two powers.

The preceding analysis hopefully proved what the Communist-controlled Hungarian writers of history were not allowed to say before 1968-1969,⁹⁴ but was accepted as "historical fact" by many prominent experts in the free world as early as 1945;⁹⁵ that is that Gömbös did not bind Hungary to unconditionally follow the Italian, or German political lines. Gömbös and Kánya saved Hungary's freedom of action to follow a policy which would serve Hungary's interest the best. As we shall see in the following chapter, they kept this point of view throughout 1934 and were ready to play the two powers against each other if they believed that such an immoral, blackmailing, double-crossing policy would benefit Hungary.

⁹⁴The first new interpretations may be found in Ádám, Hungary and the Little Entente; also Ormos, Eastern Security.

⁹⁵Seton-Watson, Eastern Europe; also Macartney and Palmer, Eastern Europe.

Events of 1934

The German-Polish Non-Aggression Pact (January 26, 1934)

The official relationship of Hungary and Poland was correct, but very cool following World War I. Though the two countries had friendly connections for centuries before the war, and the two peoples mutually cherished the memories of old times,⁹⁶ the peace treaties placed the two countries into opposing camps. Poland's rebirth was the work of the Versailles Treaties, while the Trianon Treaty mutilated Hungary.⁹⁷ The result of this was that the old friendly relations were manifested only in negative actions: Poland had not ratified the Trianon Treaty and did not participate in any designs of the French or Little Entente diplomacies, which were directed against Hungary. Hungary, on the other hand, did not see any practical value of a closer Polish-Hungarian cooperation in such circumstances.⁹⁸ These circumstances began to change with the increasing Polish-German tensions in 1931-1932, and the tensions created by German revisionist aims and propaganda concerning the Danzig corridor.⁹⁹ Mussolini indicated in his conversation with Avenol, the secretary of the League of Nations, that he would welcome an eastward shift in German expansion, because this direction would be the least threatening for Italy.¹⁰⁰ The Four Power Pact earned the unconditional opposition of Poland

⁹⁶A detailed description of Polish-Hungarian relations is out of the frame of this study. I intend to describe them in my planned book in a separate chapter.

⁹⁷Andras Hóry, A Kulisszák Mögött, "Behind the Scenes" (Wien: author's edition, 1965), p. 15.

⁹⁸ibid.

⁹⁹Lipski Papers, p. 64.

¹⁰⁰ibid., p. 64.

and could have strengthened her relations with the Little Entente.¹⁰¹ During his visit to Prague, Beck discovered, however, that the smaller states of Central Europe with their "ultra-submissiveness to the Great Powers"¹⁰² represented an obstacle to the formation of a solid anti-Four Power Pact front. Pilsudsky believed that the only alternative left for Poland under such circumstances was direct negotiation with Germany as early as April 1933.¹⁰³ This negotiation led to the successful closing of the Non-Aggression Pact.

Parallel with these negotiations, Beck tried to establish personal contact with the Hungarian government,¹⁰⁴ but his visit was cancelled because of the protest of the Yugoslavian government.¹⁰⁵ The Czech government was alarmed, too, and began to look at Poland with suspicious eyes. After the signing of the Non-Aggression Pact the Czech general staff considered Poland as one of her main enemies.¹⁰⁶ From the Hungarian point of view the Non-Aggression Pact could have meant one more ally against Czechoslovakia.¹⁰⁷ Therefore, the Gombös government sent a committee to Warsaw "to renew the friendly relations,"¹⁰⁸ but the visit did not promote political negotiations and Polish-Hungarian relations remained unchanged. Marshall Pilsudsky rejected the idea of a Hungarian-Polish

¹⁰¹Lipski Papers, p. 64-65.

¹⁰²Ibid., p. 66

¹⁰³Ibid., p. 71.

¹⁰⁴Ibid., p. 66. Hóry mistakenly writes that the initiation for the revival of Polish-Hungarian friendship came on the part of Hungary. Hóry, Behind the Scenes, p. 15.

¹⁰⁵Lipski Papers, p. 66.

¹⁰⁶Interview with General Flipo.

¹⁰⁷Poland claimed the territory of Teschen from Czechoslovakia since the creation of the two states after World War I.

¹⁰⁸Hóry, Ibid., p. 15.

alliance, but he promised "never to make war on Hungary, and to do his best to restrain Rumania."¹⁰⁹ Polish policy did not influence Hungarian foreign policy during the course of 1934. However, from that time on Hungary looked upon Poland as a probable ally against Czechoslovakia.

The Rome Protocols (March 17, 1934)

The German-Polish Non-Aggression Pact created a certain degree of alarm in France, and the new government was anxious to show a united front of Great Powers against the possible renewal of German aggressiveness in Austria. This anxiety produced the Three-Power declaration regarding Austrian independence on February 17, 1934, signed by Britain, France, and Italy. With this declaration the mood changed, and France turned its attention toward the planned Eastern Pact. Italy seemed to have firm control over Austria and Hungary, especially since the three states planned to further regulate their relationship in a formal treaty.¹¹⁰

Yet, there were certain signs which indicated that the supposed Italian influence was not so strong in Hungary as in Austria. Hungary signed a new German-Hungarian commercial treaty on February 21, 1934. This treaty put Hungary, from the economic point of view, into the German orbit,¹¹¹ the latter holding 20.35 per cent of Hungary's foreign trade. However, Gömbös did not feel that this would mean that because of that he would sink to an inferior position. On February 14, 1934, he thanked Hitler in a personal letter¹¹² for

¹⁰⁹Macartney, October Fifteenth, I, 144.

¹¹⁰The preliminary negotiations of the Rome Protocols had already begun in January.

¹¹¹See Table V.

¹¹²Wilhelmstrasse, Doc. No. 19.

the "attention" of the German trade delegation, but at the same time he re-asserted his own political independence. While stressing the common revisionist interest of Germany and Hungary, he asked Hitler to order the German minorities in Czechoslovakia, Rumania, and Yugoslavia to cooperate with the Hungarian minorities and not to take, under any circumstances an anti-revisionist position. He had demanded also the discontinuance of the German Nazi propaganda and financial "support of the German minority groups in Hungary."¹¹³

(italics mine) The German reaction to this letter may be best seen in the mirror of the negotiations between Kánya and Hans Georg von Mackensen, the German minister in Hungary. Kánya told him that while Hungary would not participate in any agreement directed against Germany, the Hungarian government would watch with great concern the alienation of Germany and Italy because of the Austrian question.¹¹⁴ Kánya also added that if because of the Austrian-German problem an open conflict would break out between Germany and Italy, "the Hungarian government would be forced to follow a brutal Hungarian policy."¹¹⁵ (italics mine)

This expression is certainly vague. However, it made the impression Kánya had hoped for: the German ambassador understood it as a possible threat,¹¹⁶ a Hungarian-Italian cooperation against Germany. Though there is no reason to suppose that Mussolini did not have any knowledge about this German-Hungarian

¹¹³Wilhelmstrasse, Doc. No. 19.

¹¹⁴ibid., Mackensen to Neurath, Budapest, February 26, 1934, Doc. No. 20.

¹¹⁵ibid.

¹¹⁶ibid., Mackensen to Neurath, Budapest, February 28, 1934, Doc. No. 21.

negotiation,¹¹⁷ Mussolini felt it necessary to send his political director, Fulvio Suvich, to Hungary.¹¹⁸ Suvich found reassuring and disheartening forebodings. Hungary followed Mussolini's recommendation and Gömbös, against the advice of Horthy, established diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union.¹¹⁹ Hungary was ready to fully cooperate with Austria and Italy on the field of trade, but she expressed her desire to keep out of an anti-German formation.¹²⁰ Kánya seemed to be unmoved by Suvich's statements about the growing nervousness of Mussolini.¹²¹ These controversial actions indicated that Gömbös, though trying to maintain Mussolini's goodwill, started a new, more independent foreign policy. What was exactly the main idea of that new foreign policy was explained by Gömbös, himself, for while accepting the invitation of Mussolini, the two statesmen held an eye-to-eye conversation in the closing negotiations of the Rome Protocols.¹²² Dollfuss, while present at the signing of the protocols was not invited into that conversation.¹²³

During that meeting Gömbös explained to Mussolini the following basic axiom of his foreign policy: "Hungary feels her calling is to practice a particular policy, relying on Italy for the area south of the Danube and on

¹¹⁷Sorrowfully enough, the Hungarian-Italian documents were not available to me, but it can be safely concluded by knowing the personal friendship of Mussolini and Gömbös that Gömbös informed him just as well as he had informed Hitler about the state of affairs of Hungary with Italy.

¹¹⁸The visit took place on February 21-23, 1934.

¹¹⁹Wilhelmstrasse, p. 73, 5ⁿ.

¹²⁰Ibid., Mackensen to Neurath, Budapest, February 26, 1934, Doc. No. 20.

¹²¹Ibid.

¹²²Allianz, p. 115, 8ⁿ.

¹²³Ibid.

Germany for the area north of the Danube."¹²⁴ (*italics mine*) This statement left Mussolini speechless. It sounded like a declaration of independence, and truly that is what it was! Then Gömbös expressed his doubts concerning the trustworthiness of Dollfuss, who wanted to keep the door open for an understanding with France and the Little Entente, and wanted to keep "his connections with us only apparent."¹²⁵ Gömbös did not hide his dissatisfaction over Dollfuss' Habsburg policy,¹²⁶ and remained doubtful even when the Duce expressed his opinion that the restoration was not timely for the present.¹²⁷ Gömbös stressed that Hungary was happy with the present situation and a restoration in Austria would find the Hungarian government strong enough "to defend its position."¹²⁸ Mussolini argued that even the Hungarian interest demands the preservation of an independent Austria. Gömbös agreed, but stated that Hungary needed Germany's cooperation against Czechoslovakia.¹²⁹ For that reason, he asked the Duce to keep the Rome Protocol an open treaty, allowing

¹²⁴Allianz, Gömbös' note for negotiations with Mussolini, Rome, March 13, 1934, Doc. No. 6.

¹²⁵Ibid. Gömbös stated that he had received this information from Theodore Hornbostel, who was the political secretary-general of the federal chancellery of Austria. Hornbostel explained that "Austria was disappointed with the Rome Protocols because they did not include any statement of guarantee concerning the inviolability of Austria's territorial sovereignty. Dollfuss, keeping the door open to France, wanted to pressure Italy and Hungary to include such a statement in the Protocols, but could not succeed." Interview with Theodore Hornbostel, Vienna, July 12, 1971.

¹²⁶Dollfuss, though he, himself, was not a monarchist favored the Austrian legitimists, because "they were for sure anti-Nazis." Interview with Hornbostel.

¹²⁷Allianz, Ibid.

¹²⁸Ibid.

¹²⁹Ibid.

for other powers to join it.¹³⁰ Mussolini agreed, and Kanya (on March 20, 1933) hurriedly instructed the Hungarian ambassador in Berlin to call the attention of the German government to that article of the Rome Protocols. He hoped that Hitler would agree and the protocols would be transformed to a wider cooperation of Austria, Italy, Hungary, and Germany.¹³¹

Gömbös' foreign political conceptions were triumphant and created a new, more advantageous position for Hungary. In this position Hungary continuously enjoyed the support of Italy against Yugoslavia and Rumania, while being permitted to cooperate with Hitler against Czechoslovakia. At the same time, Gömbös worked himself up to the position of mediator between Italy and Germany. The revisionist policy had no realistic chances before as the military-political evaluation of the Hungarian chief of staff stated on June 10, 1933, "Hungary was unable to wage a war against the Little Entente to realize her revisionist aims."¹³² In the League of Nations Hungary had the legal right, according to Article 19, to ask for the revision. However, the reconsideration of the treaties could come only through the unanimous decision of the assembly,¹³³ which meant never. However, Gömbös had created a situation, which hopefully could lead to some kind of revision, because now Hungary enjoyed the support of both Italy and Germany. While securing this support, Gömbös was able to avoid any commitments which could have alienated one or both of them,

¹³⁰Allianz, Gömbös' note for negotiations with Mussolini, Rome, March 13, 1934, Doc. No. 6.

¹³¹Ibid., negotiations of Kanya and Coloma, Budapest, February 21, 1933, Doc. No. 2.

¹³²Tibor Hetés and Mrs. Tamás Morvai, Csak Szolgálati Használatra, "Strictly Confidential" (Budapest: Zringi Military Book ed., 1968), Doc. No. 76.

¹³³Auer, Half a Century, p. 68.

or could have secured the right for them to interfere in the domestic affairs of Hungary.

As far as the Habsburg problem was concerned, Gömbös received assurance from Mussolini that a restoration was "not timely," and thus provided an opportunity to reach a better Austrian-Hungarian understanding.

Gömbös' triumphant feeling disappeared during the summer. The Hitler-Mussolini meeting (June 14-15, 1934), instead of creating a favorable atmosphere for the promotion of a Rome-Berlin-Budapest-Vienna understanding, brought disaster. While Mussolini sympathized with Hitler's revisionist policy, he firmly asserted his opposition to an Anschluss,¹³⁴ at the same time Hitler expressed his views that an Austrian-German reconciliation could not take place until Dollfuss held power in Austria.¹³⁵

The fatal blow to Gömbös' designs was given by consequences of murder of Dollfuss.

Nazi Putsch in Vienna (July 25, 1934)

Gömbös' anxiety grew during the summer, because of conditions in Austria. All the European papers reported the frequent Nazi terror actions and their effects on the Austrian politics. Dollfuss sought a reconciliation with the moderate social democrats to strengthen his own position against the Nazis.¹³⁶ There were violent disagreements within the government over the possibility of including legitimists in the government,¹³⁷ and finally news circulated in the

¹³⁴DGFP, C, III, Hassel to Neurath, Rome, June 21, 1934, Doc. No. 26.

¹³⁵Ibid., circular of Neurath, Berlin, June 16, 1934, Doc. No. 10.

¹³⁶DGFP, C, III, Doc. No. 17; also Joseph Buttinger, Am Beispiel Österreichs (Köln: Verlag für Politik und Wirtschaft, 1953), pp. 206-07.

¹³⁷DGFP, C, III, memorandum of Ritter, Berlin, June 16, 1934, Doc. No. 9.

most diverse circles of Austria about the possibility of a government crisis.¹³⁸ Gömbös also learned about a coup d'état in preparation against Dollfuss¹³⁹ and tried to warn him about the danger,¹⁴⁰ but without success.

In Gömbös' judgment, the Nazi Putsch and the murder of Dollfuss represented a severe setback to his political designs. The vehement reaction of Mussolini and the hostile press campaign in Italy;¹⁴¹ the bellicose mood in Yugoslavia,¹⁴² which ran parallel with the fact that the Yugoslavians opened their borders for the Nazi escapees;¹⁴³ and the resurgence of anti-German feeling in Hungary¹⁴⁴--all of these phenomena signalled the collapse of his plan concerning an Italian-German-Austrian-Hungarian cooperation. From Hungary's point of view, the danger could come from two directions--from the powerful Germany, as next door neighbor, or from Italy, in the form of a new French rapprochement policy. The threat of a strong Germany was eliminated by the swift actions of Mussolini. Hitler, at least for the time being, gave up the idea of an Anschluss. Yet, an Italian-French detente seemed to be closer than ever before.

¹³⁸DGFP, C, III, memorandum of Ritter, Berlin, June 16, 1934, Doc. No. 9

¹³⁹ibid.

¹⁴⁰E. R. Stahræberg, Between Hitler and Mussolini (London, 1942), pp. 114-15; also Macartney, October Fifteenth, p. 146, 1ⁿ.

¹⁴¹DGFP, Hassel to Neurath, Berlin, October 25, 1934, Doc. No. 132.

¹⁴²ibid.

¹⁴³See p. 74 of this study.

¹⁴⁴The Hungarian newspapers between July 27-August 1, 1934, strongly hinted the German involvement in Austria.

Mussolini had already indicated in the summer of 1933 that he would like to see a reconciliation with France. Gömbös did not believe that this reconciliation was possible on the part of Italy without giving up the support of Hungarian revisionism, while Mussolini believed that he could convince France to give up the support of the Little Entente and win her consent to some kind of revision.¹⁴⁵

Barthou's visit in Rumania and Yugoslavia in June 1934, his speeches in the two capitals, and his final declaration upon his arrival in Paris proved, in Gömbös' eyes, that a French-Italian rapprochement would mean the end of Hungarian revisionist hopes. Barthou said:

My travel has underlined the importance of the Little Entente, which is more united and stronger than ever before. Benes, Titulescu, and Yevtic demonstrated their solidarity with us, with the League of Nations, and with the peace. The respect for the existing treaties seems for all of us to be the right precondition of peace. The revisionist policy is not only unjust and contrary to the desires of peoples, but also magnifies the danger and carries the germs of war.¹⁴⁶

The French papers celebrated the fifteenth anniversary of the Versailles Treaty in long editorials and stressed that though the treaty was denounced by Germany, nevertheless it served the European peace in the last 15 years.

Both manifestations gave the impression that France and the Little Entente were strongly united and Mussolini's designs were in need of realistic foundations.

Then, on July 6, 1934, Barthou contradicted himself by stating that revision was possible according to Article 19 of the Charter of the League of

¹⁴⁵Ormos, Eastern Security, p. 242.

¹⁴⁶Le Temps (Paris), June 29, 1934.

Nations, and if the international conditions were right, "France is ready to cooperate."¹⁴⁷

Then came the Austrian crisis. Yugoslavia openly turned against France's will, and Czechoslovakia and Rumania supported her. The chief of staff of the Hungarian army, General Vilmos Röder, evaluated the situation for the government and stressed that in case of an Anschluss, the Little Entente would not follow the French leadership.¹⁴⁸ Czechoslovakia made military preparations against Hungary instead of against Germany.¹⁴⁹ Röder supposed that in case of aggressive German action in Austria, the Little Entente would act in harmony against Hungary according to their military plans¹⁵⁰ and would not follow the French advice concerning moderation. From the military-political point of view the Hungarian general staff demanded the diplomatic preparation¹⁵¹ of a Hungarian military action in case of an Anschluss--for the reoccupation of Burgenland.¹⁵² As far as the direction of the Hungarian foreign policy was concerned, the general staff recommended a much closer cooperation with

¹⁴⁷Ormos, Eastern Security, p. 312.

¹⁴⁸Hetés and Morva, Strictly Confidential, No. 78.

¹⁴⁹ibid.

¹⁵⁰"I had a chance to see these strategic plans in detail. They were prepared for only a coordinated action. None of the Little Entente states considered an attack on Hungary alone." (italics mine) Interview with Hennyey.

¹⁵¹To gain the consent of the Little Entente. The general staff did not expect any German objection and did not feel it necessary to receive Germany's consent. Hetés and Morva, Strictly Confidential, No. 78.

¹⁵²Burgenland, a Hungarian territory, was given to Austria according to the resolution of the Trianon Treaty.

Italy.¹⁵³ To make this cooperation possible, Röder ordered his military attache in Rome to make the following statements:¹⁵⁴

Hungary will never use the arms received from Italy against Italy.

The Hungarian army will never communicate military information received from Italy to Germany or to any other state.

Hungary will never participate in an anti-Italian, German block.

A misunderstanding of German policy on the part of Italy may push Germany into the "arms of the Little Entente." Therefore, Hungary recommends negotiations to create a mutual understanding.

In conclusion, the general staff recommended that Gömbös reassure Mussolini's support, and at the same time keep the door open for a German-Hungarian understanding, because instead of the fast political retreat of Germany,¹⁵⁵ the Austrian question had not yet been closed.

Gömbös, who was a former professional army officer, accepted this evaluation. The Italian friendship was already secured and it did not suffer any setbacks during the Austrian crisis, but the German situation became very delicate. While Gömbös did not want to see a great Germany as his next door neighbor, there were other signs which suggested a better understanding with Hitler. These signs, ironically enough, came from Yugoslavia. During Barthou's visit, King Alexander revealed to Barthou that he preferred a German-Yugoslavian rapprochement in order to secure his country against Italy, to a Italian-Yugoslavian reconciliation, as Barthou suggested to him.¹⁵⁶ The

¹⁵³Hetés and Morva, Strictly Confidential, No. 78.

¹⁵⁴Ibid., No. 79.

¹⁵⁵Ibid., No. 78; also see p. 65 of this study.

¹⁵⁶Ormos, Eastern Security, p. 313.

negotiations ended in a deadlock concerning Barthou's desire to gain the diplomatic recognition of King Alexander for the Soviet Union.¹⁵⁷

A German-Yugoslavian understanding would have meant a diminution of chances for revision against Yugoslavia. However, the same effect would have been created by an Italian-Yugoslavian rapprochement. The Hungarian foreign policy, therefore, decided to demonstrate to Italy the importance of Hungary over Yugoslavia¹⁵⁸ and did the same concerning the German-Yugoslavian rapprochement.¹⁵⁹ Kánya went so far as to demand Hitler's gratitude for Hungary's opposition to the Danubian Pact.¹⁶⁰ At the same time he strove to convince Hitler to give up his plans directed against Austria.¹⁶¹ To this Hitler gave controversial replies. While he stressed that "his friendship with Mussolini did indeed matter more to him than the whole of the Austrian state."¹⁶² On the other hand, he could not "see eye to eye with Austria where foreign policy was concerned."¹⁶³ Among such circumstances, a stronger pro-German policy would have been unwise to follow.

Concluding the effects of the Austrian crisis, we may safely say that while Gömbös did not give up his hopes for the realization of an Italian-German-Austrian-Hungarian block, he became more cautious and strengthened his

¹⁵⁷Ormos, Eastern Security, p. 313.

¹⁵⁸Hetés and Morva, Strictly Confidential, p. 342.

¹⁵⁹Wilhelmstrasse, conversation of Kánya and Hitler, Berlin, August 6, 1934, Doc. No. 25.

¹⁶⁰Ibid.

¹⁶¹Ibid.

¹⁶²DGFP, C, Lammers to Neurath, Berlin, August 7, 1934, Doc. No. 150.

¹⁶³Ibid.

relations with Italy. He still pursued an independent policy, but he stood much closer then to Mussolini than before the Austrian crisis.¹⁶⁴

Assassination at Marseilles

Threads of the investigation led toward Italy, Germany, and Hungary. To finish the investigation with the result that Italy, and particularly Mussolini was guilty, ran contrary to the interest of France, even if Mussolini was guilty.¹⁶⁵ To find Germany to be guilty¹⁶⁶ was against the interest of not only Germany, but also Yugoslavia because of economic relations, as well as because of political considerations. However, the uproar of the Yugoslavian press and public opinion made it clear to everyone that nobody could hush up the question of responsibility, and if they could not name the real criminals, they would have to find a convenient scapegoat. This scapegoat was found, on the basis of superficial evidence, in Hungary. The manifestations of the different governments no doubt influenced Gömbös' foreign policy to a great degree.

France openly took the side of the Little Entente and Yugoslavia, and Laval secretly tried to moderate the Yugoslavian aggressiveness.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁴The reaffirmation of the Three Power Declaration of February 17 on September 27, 1934, undoubtedly also influenced Hungary to take a more pro-Italian position.

¹⁶⁵Vladeta von Milicevic, Der Königsmord von Marseille (Bad Godesberg: Hochwacht Verlag, 1959), pp. 24-26.

¹⁶⁶Germany's involvement is discussed in ibid., pp. 43-46; also in Adám, Hungary and the Little Entente, p. 85.

¹⁶⁷Interview with Hennyey.

Germany unconditionally took the side of Yugoslavia, and the German press hinted at Hungary's responsibility.¹⁶⁸ Göring's declarations concerning the German attitude toward Hungarian revisionism¹⁶⁹ disappointed the Hungarians; and when Gömbös had learned that the German government judged an anti-revisionist political rapprochement feasible with Rumania,¹⁷⁰ he sent his ambassador to the German foreign minister, Constantin von Neurath, with a real ultimatum. "If Germany did not abandon her friendly relations with Yugoslavia soon, Hungary, together with Czechoslovakia and Austria, would form a Danubian confederation and close the Danube Basin to us."¹⁷¹ The German reply was brusque: the Hungarians could do what they wanted, but Neurath did not want to discuss these matters any further.¹⁷² Gömbös, not being able to do anything else, retaliated by delaying the realization of his promises concerning the schooling of German minorities in Hungary.¹⁷³

Italy, on the other hand, stood firmly behind Gömbös during the whole Marseilles crisis. Mussolini assured Gömbös during their meeting on October 7, 1934, in Rome that if the Yugoslavians were to invade Hungary, he would mobilize

¹⁶⁸ DGFP, C, III, memorandum of Neurath, Berlin, October 25, 1934, Doc. No. 269.

¹⁶⁹ ibid., Doc. No. 305.

¹⁷⁰ ibid., Doc. No. 284.

¹⁷¹ DGFP, ibid., November 17, 1934, Doc. No. 336.

¹⁷² ibid.

¹⁷³ Wilhelmstrasse, Mackensen to Stieve, Budapest, November 30, 1934, Doc. No. 29. The original promises held out the prospects for the "B" type schools for the German minorities. In the "B" type schools geography, history, civil rights and duties, writing and reading, mathematics, and physical education were instructed in the mother tongue and in Hungarian, while the foreign language, ecology, chemistry, home economics, drawing, and handiwork were instructed only in the mother tongue.

the whole Italian nation and would cross the Yugoslavian border with his troops."¹⁷⁴ Suvich very actively mediated between Laval and Eckhardt,¹⁷⁵ and Mussolini without hesitation offered political asylum to the one remaining Croat refugee in Hungary to save Hungary from further embarrassment.¹⁷⁶

It was good to know that Italy protected Hungary with such fervor. Yet, it was disquieting to see that France and Italy became such close friends. It was also discouraging to learn that Yugoslavia again returned to the French side and servilely followed Laval's advice. Finally, Eden's friendly attitude¹⁷⁷ suggested to Gömbös a possible regrouping of the Great Powers, unifying Britain, France, and Italy on the one hand and isolating Germany. The circumstances and interests clearly demanded Hungary's siding with this group and Gömbös followed this alternative. His neutral, independent policy had failed. He had ended up where he had begun: Hungary's only friend was Italy and the realization of the revisionist demands seemed to be farther away than ever since he had taken office. Yet, Gömbös did not give up hope and patiently waited for the opportunity to again promote his favored dream, that is, the creation of a Berlin-Rome friendship, which would benefit Hungarian revisionism. Those were trying days for Gömbös. Laval took the initiative and surprised the world by announcing his visit to Rome in the beginning of January 1935. This visit could have led to a possible French-Italian rapprochement,

¹⁷⁴Quoted in Ádam, Hungary and the Little Entente, p. 68, 137ⁿ.

¹⁷⁵Eckhardt, Regicide, p. 211; also interview with Hennyey.

¹⁷⁶The last refugee was transported by airplane. The pilot lost radio contact in the stormy weather over the Karst Mountains, and it was feared that he would mistakenly go to Yugoslavia. After a long, sleepless night, the Hungarian foreign ministry had learned that the pilot had made a crash landing in Italy. Both the refugee and the pilot escaped harm. Interview with Baron Anton Radvánszky, Paris, August 10, 1971.

¹⁷⁷Interview with Hennyey.

which again posed the question to Gömbös: which is most in the interest of Hungary?--to promote or to sabotage that rapprochement. His attitude depended on the results of the Laval-Mussolini meeting.

CHAPTER V

FRENCH FOREIGN POLICY UNDER LAVAL

Laval Takes the Initiative

The assassination at Marseilles created a domestic political crisis in France, and the Doumergue government resigned. The new government of Pierre Etienne Flandin obtained the confidence of the Chamber on November 13, 1934, although the Right accused his cabinet of "murdering the national unity,"¹ and the Left believed that his cabinet was "too far on the Right."² The government could only rely on the majority of those deputies who believed that the new ministers were the "defenders of the strict republican orthodoxy."³

The most important change concerning personalities occurred in the post of the war minister, in which General Maurin replaced "Old Marshal" Pétain. Pierre Laval, the successor to Barthou in the Doumergue government, retained his post within the new cabinet.

The Flandin government began its activities successfully. The new military budget submitted by General Maurin received unanimous approval⁴ (a phenomena which had been absent in the Chamber for a long time) on November 24, 1934, and Laval's foreign political expose was accepted on November 30, 1934.⁵

¹Edouard Bonnefous, Histoire Politique de la Troisième République (6 vols.; Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1962), V, 304.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid., p. 308.

⁵RAA, Moellwald to Waldenegg, Paris, ZI, 96/Pol., December 2, 1934, p. 687.

The government, as well as Laval, himself, stressed its conviction that in the field of foreign policy, they would continue the work of Barthou.⁶ They expressed their hope that "France and Italy, with England in reserve"⁷ would be able to solve many of Europe's problems with mutual agreement. However, this statement, alone, proved that they did not completely share Barthou's political views, or at least not in the judgment of priorities. Barthou had worked anxiously to keep the friendship of the Little Entente, to convince England of the necessity of a more active participation in continental affairs, to enlist the support of the Soviet Union against the growing German menace, and to secure the cooperation of Mussolini. It was this last aim that Laval considered most important for success. By arranging this list of priorities, he proved to be a more realistic diplomat than his predecessor. He was anxious to avoid hurting France's relationship with the Little Entente by emphasizing that his projected negotiations with Italy "would not correspond with the spirit of his aims, if it would not guarantee, at the same time, a rapprochement between Italy and the Little Entente, especially Yugoslavia."⁸ The assassination of King Alexander, however, created such a public uproar in Yugoslavia that this goal was hardly satisfactorily attainable for both Italy and Yugoslavia. Laval valued the Italian friendship more, and with the help of Eden, settled the problem without offending Italy, while at the same time leaving the door open for a Yugoslavian reconciliation.

Laval used a more moderate approach toward Germany by assuring Hitler that "contrary to the lately published interpretations, the French-Soviet preliminary

⁶RAA, Moellwald to Waldenegg, Paris, Z1, 94/Pol., November 18, 1934, p. 683.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Ibid., 96/Pol., December 2, 1934, p. 687.

agreement for mutual assistance is not intended to be a two-sided agreement,"⁹ and he expressed his hopes that Germany would find it possible to join the Eastern Pact "as one among equals."¹⁰ Concerning the expected outcome of the Saar plebiscite, Laval declared that "France will recognize the result of the plebiscite as binding and unalterable."¹¹

He commented very favorably on Baldwin's speech,¹² which had expressed the British disapproval over German rearmament plans and had concluded that "now the English government agrees with France in the principles of preservation of peace in Europe."¹³

Everything seemed to work in Laval's favor. His declarations and activities even impressed the Germans, and Hitler, himself, found some signs in Laval's activities pointing toward a détente in the German-French relations.¹⁴ Members of the Polish government thought that "they went too far with Germany" because France, in spite of her difficulties, "is and will remain a military and financial factor which should not be underestimated."¹⁵

Laval went ahead now with full speed, to realize the rapprochement with Italy. On December 14, 1934, he learned that Mussolini was anxious to see him "as soon as possible."¹⁶ Four days later in a speech in the French Senate, he

⁹RAA, Moellwald to Waldenegg, Paris, Z1, 96/Pol., 1934, Doc. No. 2, p. 690.

¹⁰ibid.

¹¹ibid.

¹²In the House of Commons on November 28, 1934.

¹³RAA, 1934, p. 690.

¹⁴DGFP, C, III, unsigned memorandum, Berlin, without date (November?), Doc. No. 358.

¹⁵RAA, Paris, Z1, 94/Pol., November 18, 1934, p. 684.

¹⁶RAA, Paris, Z1, 100/Pol., December 14, 1934, p. 699.

expressed his confidence in the success of the upcoming negotiations with Italy,¹⁷ and almost at the same time, he learned that Germany disliked his designs concerning Italy and the Eastern Pact.¹⁸ It was natural to expect that Germany would try to thwart a French-Italian rapprochement, and it was natural for Laval to visit Mussolini before the Germans could succeed. The visit to Rome was announced on January 2, 1935, and took place on January 4-8, 1935.

In order to appreciate fully the importance of the Laval-Mussolini meeting, it is necessary to analyze the advantages Laval hoped for and the risks involved.

Advantages and Risks on the Part of France

The basis for the negotiations was given by the common interest of France and Italy in the preservation of Austria's independence. However, the Austrian crisis had already proved that a bilateral agreement between France and Italy could not be respected by Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia, and they were not willing to "accept a factual protectorate of Italy in Austria."¹⁹ Thus, the differences existing between Italy and France played a secondary role. Laval's primary concern was the preservation of the goodwill of her client states, while reaching an agreement with Mussolini. However, it would have demanded concessions only on the part of Italy, and why should she give such concessions? Mussolini had his own problems with Austria and Hungary. Schuschnigg flatly rejected the idea of having foreign troops on Austrian soil in defense of Austria. Since the Treaty of Trianon, Hungary had feared the realization of

¹⁷Journal Officiel, 1934, pp. 1396-98.

¹⁸DGFP, C, III, memorandum by Köpke, Berlin, December 20, 1934, Doc. No. 399.

¹⁹RAA, Moellwald to Waldenegg, Paris, 21, 94/Pol., November 18, 1934, p. 699.

²⁰Interview with Theodore Hornbostel.

Benes' dream concerning the creation of a corridor on Austrian or Hungarian territory in order to make direct communication possible between Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia,²¹ even though Yugoslavia's participation in the guarantee of Austria's independence could have led to that very situation. To disregard completely the sensitivity of Austria and Hungary would have meant the loss of influence in Central Europe for Mussolini. Laval had to offer a very alluring compensation in order to gain his approval for such a design.

On many occasions in history it has happened that statesmen and diplomats, obsessed by their own designs and plans, have misinterpreted the real interests of their respective nations. In the case of Laval and Mussolini, we shall see in the following analysis that both statesmen evaluated the interests of their countries very objectively. Therefore, it was clear from the beginning that both Laval and Mussolini were ready for compromises only on points not involving their own national interest. If we keep this principle in mind, the solution of the problem is more easily discerned.

France's interest was to gain the friendship of Mussolini, not only for the sake of Austria's independence, but also for France's own interest! The French Army Council had already concluded in May 1933 that the French army could not face the German and Italian forces without grave risks.²² A rapprochement with Italy would secure France's rear in case of a conflict with Germany, and though the French army had great shortcomings, it still contained 577,000 men.²³ Adding this number to the tremendous defensive strength of the Maginot line, it was more than a match for the German army, which was in a

²¹ Interview with Theodore Hornbostel.

²² La Gorce (de), The French Army, p. 255.

²³ Gamelin, Servir, II, 148.

stage of transformation, projecting the strength of its army in 300,000 men.²⁴ From the strategic point of view, the rapprochement with Italy was a question of primary importance for France. It is interesting to note that the critics of Laval's foreign policy, as well as his defenders²⁵ failed to point out what perhaps is the most important aspect of the French-Italian rapprochement.

In my judgment the security of France was worth the risk involved, that is, the further alienation of Yugoslavia. However, this alienation of Yugoslavia was risked only if Laval were to give in to the revisionist demands of Mussolini. The recognition of the righteousness of revisionism would have led to the alienation of not only Yugoslavia, but the whole Little Entente; but even that would not have been too high a price to pay for the security of France. Laval, however, skillfully avoided that danger.²⁶

Laval's visit was, according to my judgment, an immense success for the French diplomacy. The agreements comprised of a general declaration, worded in such a way that it could not offend anybody; a proces verbal concerning Austria's independence, which projected consultations in case of a new Austrian crisis; a protocol concerning disarmament, which condemned unilateral rearmament; a treaty on Africa concerning territorial revisions and special rights secured for both parties in Tunisia; and, an exchange of letters about Abyssinia.²⁷

²⁴DGFP, C, III, memorandum by Neurath, Berlin, November 27, 1934, Doc. No. 356.

²⁵For a very good bibliography of works written about Pierre Laval see: Hubert Cole, Laval: a Biography (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1963), pp. 301-304.

²⁶DGFP, C, III, Hassel to Neurath, Rome, January 2, 1935, Doc. No. 405.

²⁷For the official French text see: Le Temps (Paris), January 13, 1935; also DGFP, C, III, Hassel to Neurath, Rome, January 8, 1935, Doc. No. 417.

The most important results of the Rome Agreements were:

the harmonization of French, Italian, Yugoslavian, and Czech stand points concerning the independence of Austria; and

the secret military clause which secured for France not only the chance to strengthen her German frontier, but also the cooperation²⁸ of the Italian army and air force in case of war against Germany.

The details of this military cooperation were worked out not only between France and Italy, but also between these two Great Powers and the Little Entente.²⁹ This military plan represented a sharp deviation from the existing French strategic principles of strictly defensive operations. It renewed the old conception of the cooperation of French-Italian-Czech forces against Germany, known as the Foch Plan, at the time of the Versailles peace negotiation.³⁰ However, the changed political situation made several alterations necessary. These alterations did not change the basic idea, but made the execution of the plan more difficult.³¹

To avoid a possible clash between the Italian and Yugoslavian forces, it became necessary to insert between them a French army corps. The objective of the Yugoslavian, French, and Italian right flank was the occupation of Vienna in cooperation with the Czech forces.³²

²⁸Gamelin, Servir, II, 168-69.

²⁹Ibid.; also see Map II.

³⁰la Gorce (de), The French Army, p. 166-68.

³¹I have learned the following details from a French authority who prefers to remain anonymous until the respective French documents are open for research.

³²Gamelin, Servir, II, 169, as well as my anonymous source clearly stated the projected participation of the Czech army, while General Flipo denied the existence of any Czech offensive plans.

This simple change in the original Foch plan created numerous difficulties: it delayed a swift reaction to German aggression because of the long transportation route involved (cca. 350 miles from the French border); and since the French army was not motorized, the march-up was planned by using the railroads. The French military trains would have crossed the transportation lines of the Italian army, causing many possible chances for delays and confusion. The supplying of the French army corps with ammunition, should the operations have dragged on, would have represented new problems. Transportation from France was difficult, while supplies in Yugoslavia were not at hand in satisfactory amounts. Supplies from Italy were not feasible because of the differences of weapons.

The march-up of the Italian army corps to the right flank of the French army projected much fewer difficulties since their routes did not cross the French transportation lines, and since the army corps was mainly comprised of air force units with the assignment to operate over the territories of southern Germany.

The plan seems to be too complicated and difficult. Yet, it was feasible in 1935, since Germany was not satisfactorily armed even at the time of the Rhineland occupation in 1936. The plan was good in its conception, but its success depended on future political decisions that the two governments might possibly make.

With these political and military agreements, France again became the commanding power of Europe. What concession had Laval given for such a great success? As Mussolini put it, "nothing but a desert in Africa."³³ The free hand given to Mussolini in Abyssinia cost even less. France had no essential

³³Cole, Laval, p. 60.

interest in that country,³⁴ "and Mussolini agreed with Laval to expand by peaceful means."³⁵

The French public opinion, as well as the Chamber and the Senate, was pleased with the results.³⁶ The success of the Rome Agreement concerning Central Europe, however, depended to a great degree on the approval of other states, such as Germany, Hungary, and the Little Entente. They expressed certain scepticism, as we shall see, but Laval and Mussolini hoped that their objections would be overcome in the Danubian Pact.³⁷

³⁴Gamelin, Servir, II, 172.

³⁵Cole, Laval, p. 60.

³⁶Le Temps (Paris), January 13-14, 1935.

³⁷RAA, Moellwald to Waldenegg, Paris, ZI, 18/Pol., February 6, 1935, p. 52.

Reaction in Europe to the Rome Agreements

The announcement of the Laval-Mussolini meeting created nervous reaction in Central Europe. Neither Hungary, Czechoslovakia, nor Yugoslavia had unconditional confidence in their own patrons.

The Hungarian Budapesti Hirlap published a comment which, without doubt, wanted to calm down the nervousness of the revisionists. It stated, "The Hungarian revisionist aims will not suffer any setback in Rome because the mutual non-interference treaty will guarantee only the independence of the states, but not their borders."³⁸ Yugoslavia, having expressed her confidence in Laval, expected that "Mussolini will try to further reduce the role of the Little Entente in Central Europe."³⁹ Titulescu felt it necessary to call an extraordinary meeting of the Little Entente Council.⁴⁰ Czechoslovakia proved to be the most optimistic, as the diplomatic circles in Prague expected Italy to realize that the support of Hungarian revisionism would harm her own interest. "If Italy would sign this agreement, she would notice that instead of loosing something, she would gain a great deal in the future through a friendly cooperation with the Little Entente. The agreement would furthermore promote a rapprochement of the Danubian states."⁴¹

³⁸ Budapesti Hirlap, "Pester Lloyd" (Budapest), January 1, 1935.

³⁹ Le Temps (Paris), January 1, 1935.

⁴⁰ Ibid., January 3, 1935.

⁴¹ Ibid., January 5, 1935.

It is noteworthy to compare these expectations of the Danubian states with the aims of France and Italy. Both states wanted to secure the independence of Austria, France wanted to strengthen her military-strategic position against Germany,⁴² and Italy wanted to gain a free hand concerning Abyssinia.⁴³ What the Danubian states felt important remained to be unimportant in the eyes of Laval and Mussolini. Yet, an agreement depended on the approval of these small states, unless Laval or Mussolini or both were willing to give up their influence in the Danubian Basin. It seems that Laval was the more faithful patron, as he constantly consulted the three Little Entente states, "whilst Italy had merely kept Hungary informed in general terms without consulting her."⁴⁴ Gömbös sent warnings to Mussolini: "If the Laval-Mussolini agreement would guarantee the present borders in Central Europe, and this kind of guarantee would be against Article 19 of the League of Nations charter, Hungary would be forced to change her policy and place her confidence in the future in Germany instead of Italy."⁴⁵ At the same time, Czechoslovakia expressed great satisfaction that "Italy will not be the enemy of the Little Entente in Central European affairs anymore."⁴⁶

The official text⁴⁷ was published on January 13, 1935, and was celebrated by the French press as a great victory for Laval. Without question, it was his victory, for the official text included not only the guarantee of independence

⁴²Gamelin, Servir II,

⁴³DGFP, C, III, Hassel to Neurath, Rome, January 8, 1935, Doc. No. 417.

⁴⁴Ibid., January 2, 1935, Doc. No. 405.

⁴⁵Le Temps (Paris), January 9, 1935.

⁴⁶Ibid.

⁴⁷Ibid., January 13, 1935.

of the Danubian states, but also recommended a Danubian Pact in which the participating states would have accepted the mutual obligation to respect each other's national frontiers.⁴⁸

The upcoming Saar plebiscite⁴⁹ from that time on held the attention of Western Europe, and very few statesmen paid attention to the comments of the Hungarian semi-official paper: "The success of the Danubian Pact depends on the joining of Germany and Hungary, but that is questionable."⁵⁰ (italics mine)

The Danubian Pact

The Italian-French communication of January 6, 1935, recommended to "the States which are most interested,"⁵¹ the conclusion of a non-interference treaty. The participants were to oblige themselves not to interfere in the domestic affairs of other countries and "not to stir up or support any action which was directed against the territorial integrity or against the political and social order of any of the contracting countries."⁵² This agreement was to be concluded between all the neighbors of Austria (with the exception of Switzerland) and Austria, herself, and also left the door open for France, Poland, and Rumania to join.

⁴⁸Le Temps (Paris), January 13, 1935.

⁴⁹The Saar plebiscite was held in January 1935 according to the conditions of the Versailles Treaty. The result was a great victory for Germany: 2,124 votes were cast in favor of remaining with French and 477,000 in favor of re-joining Germany. Bonnet, Quai d'Orsay, p. 119.

⁵⁰Budapesti Hirlap, "Pester Lloyd" (Budapest), January 14, 1935.

⁵¹RAA, Moellwald to Waldenegg, Paris, ZI, 4/Pol., January 11, 1935.

⁵²Ibid.

The treaty was to provide future consultations among the participating states "in case Austria's independence and integrity should be menaced."⁵³

The Danubian Pact was to be based on the cooperation of Austria, Czechoslovakia, Germany, Hungary, Italy, and Yugoslavia. It was strange to expect that these states would join in a single pact. It was wishful thinking on the part of Laval, as well as Mussolini, to hope that it would work. However, that cooperation was to them the most feasible solution to satisfy the demands of particular French and Italian interests.

On France's part it was an attempt to create an alternative plan for some of her allies, namely Poland, Rumania, and Yugoslavia, who bitterly opposed the Eastern Pact. Their opposition was directed against those articles of the Eastern Pact that wanted to secure the right for the Soviet troops to pass through their territories. The Danubian Pact left out the Soviet Union and thereby eliminated the reasons for that opposition. By this very same act it was made easier for Germany to join. Yet, the projected non-interference treaties provided a means to stop not only Nazi propaganda in Austria, but also the support of revisionist propaganda among the Hungarian minorities of the Little Entente states. In other words, the Danubian Pact was an alternate plan to secure the status quo in the Danube Basin. Italy's participation in it created the impression that France gave up her claims of influence in that region; but in reality, the pact assured for her the preservation of this influence indirectly--through the cooperation and consent of Italy. It was even more important from the military point of view that the reorganized French army⁵⁴

⁵³ RAA, Moellwald to Waldenegg, ZI, 4/Pol., January 11, 1935.

⁵⁴ It began in December 1934 with the vote of credits for armaments, aviation program, a new phase of naval constructions, and further expansion of the Maginot line. See Flandin's speech in Lyon on March 6, 1935 in Le Temps.

could have launched an attack on Germany with hope of success, if the bulk of the German army was to be engaged with the Italian troops.⁵⁵

Italy

Italy was hoping that the Danubian Pact would secure the independence of Austria even better than the Three Power Declaration by eliminating Yugoslavia's jealousy and creating an atmosphere of cooperation within the Danube Basin. Mussolini still very strongly opposed a possible Anschluss, and on February 13, 1935, he wrote a long article in the Popolo d'Italia, in which he analyzed the history of Austria and concluded that Austrian independence was a "particular Italian problem, but not exclusively Italian, for it is also a European problem."⁵⁶ The Danubian Pact, in Mussolini's mind, was the best solution for Austria, and certainly a better solution than his alternative plan; that is, if the European powers would not be willing to limit Hitler's expansionist schemes, then the German expansion should be directed toward Poland instead of toward Austria.⁵⁷ Receiving the green light from Laval for the "peaceful solution" of the Abyssinian conflict,⁵⁸ the Danubian Pact seemed to secure Italy's influence in Central Europe, even if Italy were to turn her full attention toward Africa.

Britain

On February 1-3, 1935, shortly after the Rome Agreement was made, Laval visited London to inform the British government about the agreement and to

⁵⁵Gamelin, Servir, II, 165.

⁵⁶Quoted in full by Zara de Philippe, Mussolini Contre Hitler (Paris: Fernand Sarlot, 1938), pp. 111-115.

⁵⁷Lipsky Papers, Ibid., p. 64.

⁵⁸Cole, Laval, p. 60.

harmonize its reply concerning the probable continuation of an aggressive German policy. The British government cordially greeted the Rome declaration and congratulated the conclusions of the Rome accord concerning Central Europe.⁵⁹ For Western Europe, they had suggested an air agreement with Britain, France, Italy, Germany, and Belgium "to act in harmony against an aggressor of any of these nations."⁶⁰

Germany

Germany received the Danubian Pact plan with less hostility than she received the Eastern Pact. Hitler thought that "a settlement could be reached in spite of considerable difficulties with the problem of the definition of intervention."⁶¹ What made Hitler more conciliatory toward the Danubian Pact was the absence of the Soviet Union,⁶² because under no circumstances was he willing to sign a treaty of mutual assistance in relation to Russia.⁶³ On the other hand, the preservation of the status quo and the principle of non-interference was still unacceptable to Germany. Hitler had not flatly rejected the Danubian Pact; he only expressed his reservations and demanded further clarifications.⁶⁴ These demands were phrased in general terms, yet they clearly expressed that Germany was not enthusiastic about the following points

⁵⁹Le Temps (Paris), February 5, 1935, published the official text of the French-British negotiations.

⁶⁰RAA, Moellwald to Waldenegg, Paris, ZI, 18/Pol. February 6, 1935, p. 53.

⁶¹Lipski Papers, Lipski to Beck, Berlin, March 16, 1935, Doc. No. 38.

⁶²Adam, Hungary and the Little Entente, p. 70.

⁶³Lipski Papers, Ibid.

⁶⁴DGFP, C, III, memorandum by Bulow, Berlin, January 4, 1935, Doc. No. 410, enclosure.

of the Danubian Pact:⁶⁵ the strengthening of ties of Austria with other states, especially with Italy; and the creation of sort of a Italian-French protectorate over Austria. The required clarifications, such as the inclusion of Switzerland and Britain, the precise definition of the idea of non-intervention, and finally the clarification as to whether or not the pact would be concluded within the framework of the League of Nations⁶⁶ hardly camouflaged Hitler's desire to make the Danubian Pact prove to be abortive.

The Soviet Union

The Soviet Union naturally saw in the Danubian Pact an attempt to exclude her from the European affairs. The Russians realized that they would become dispensable from the French point of view if the Danubian Pact were to be a success. However, it was a delicate situation. Potemkin⁶⁷ and Litvinov had to frustrate the French plans in order to gain the closer cooperation of France. Very skillfully they did not openly oppose the Danubian Pact, but only expressed scepticism. Potemkin thought that "the Rome accords had only relative values, and that the Little Entente would not join the Danubian Pact without stipulations."⁶⁸ He guessed that the Little Entente would demand the connection of the Rome Agreement with the Eastern Pact and with the Balkan Pact.⁶⁹ Furthermore, he did not see any possibility for the realization of the Danubian Pact because of the unstable political conditions of Yugoslavia, where General

⁶⁵Lipski Papers, Lipski to Beck, Berlin, February 5, 1935, No. 35.

⁶⁶Germany had not been a member since October 14, 1933.

⁶⁷Soviet ambassador to France.

⁶⁸RAA, Moellwald to Waldenegg, Paris, Z1, 6/Pol., January 15, 1935, p. 23.

⁶⁹Ibid.

Ziffkovic seemed to have much greater influence within the government than Yevtic, himself. If this was true, then there was no hope for a Hungarian-Yugoslavian reconciliation.

At the same time, both Litvinov and Potemkin pushed for a separate French-Soviet mutual assistance agreement, and they concluded their negotiations with Laval on May 2, 1935. It was stated:

In the event of France or the U.S.S.R. . . . being the object, in spite of the genuinely peaceful intentions of both countries, of an unprovoked attack on the part of a European state, the U.S.S.R., and reciprocally France shall immediately give each other aid and assistance.⁷⁰

With this French-Soviet Non-Aggression Treaty, the French diplomacy overplayed its hand for security. It exchanged the Eastern Pact for the Danubian Pact; that is, it exchanged Soviet cooperation for Italian cooperation, and then after securing the friendship of Mussolini, Laval returned to the old formula, alienating Mussolini and completely confusing the small Central European states.

The Little Entente

The Little Entente states made clear their attitude concerning the Danubian Pact in a common declaration agreed upon at their Laibach Conference. The basic tone of the declaration was not the same as before, that is, only compliments for France.⁷¹ On the contrary, they stated their conditions⁷² like an ultimatum before they would join the Danubian Pact. They demanded the exemption of the question of Habsburg restoration from the general operation of the

⁷⁰Quoted in Desmond Donnelly, The Cold War, 1917-1965 (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1965).

⁷¹RAA, Moellwald to Waldenegg, Paris, 21, 6/Pol., January 15, 1935, p. 23.

⁷²Adam, Hungary and the Little Entente, p. 72.

non-intervention principles; they were more anxious to keep the status quo concerning Hungary. They demanded the renunciation of revisionism by the Hungarian government as a price of recognition of Hungary's right to rearm; they demanded the Hungarian government to give up its protection of Magyar minorities on their territories; they wanted the firm pledge of Hungary against a possible Habsburg restoration; and finally they wanted Hungary to sign with them, not only a non-aggression, but a mutual assistance treaty.⁷³ Perhaps the strongest opposition of the Little Entente was expressed in their desire to see France promote the Eastern Pact over the Danubian Pact. The most desperate was Yevtic. He demanded the connection of the Danubian Pact, not only with the Eastern Pact, but also with the Balkan Pact. Yevtic remarked that "France forces Yugoslavia to follow her own interest like Poland does."⁷⁴ At the same time, Yevtic also presented Mussolini with conditions that were rejected. However, Mussolini was thinking of making some kind of gesture of peace toward Yugoslavia to overcome that opposition.⁷⁵ The success of the Danubian Pact was doomed by the naive belief of Laval that the Little Entente would unconditionally follow the demand of France.

Austria

Schuschnigg protested against the exclusion of Austria from the French-Italian negotiations.⁷⁶ He rejected the consultation article of the projected Danubian Pact and desired to see a more positive mutual assistance treaty. In February 1935, however, Schuschnigg decided to act according to

⁷³ Adam, Hungary and the Little Entente, p. 72 quotes these demands from Russian sources.

⁷⁴ Quoted in Ormos, Eastern Security, p. 348.

⁷⁵ DGFP, C, III, Hassel to Neurath, Rome, January 11, 1935, Doc. No. 423.

⁷⁶ Ormos, Ibid.

the resolutions of the Rome Agreement. He visited France "to save Austria's existence as an independent state."⁷⁷ Schuschnigg described the visit as friendly, and he received the impression that Laval understood the Austrian position. Yet, in the Danubian Pact question Laval was not willing to force his allies further for the benefit of Austria, while Schuschnigg was not willing to give a formal pledge that Austria would not restore the Habsburgs to the throne.⁷⁸ The outcome of his visit to London was not much better. Sir John Simon, the British Foreign Secretary (1931-1935), assured him that "England's attitude concerning Austria's independence had not changed and would never change."⁷⁹ Simon asked him about the possibility of a plebiscite concerning the Anschluss problem, after having abandoned the democratic form of government. Schuschnigg found the plebiscite idea, as well as the abandonment of the Austrian-type Fascist government impractical. As it happened in France, so in England positive support was not available for Austria because of ideological differences.

The envisaged Danubian Pact of Laval and Mussolini disregarded the economic considerations. Due to the German trade activities, the influx of German products grew from 20.3 per cent in 1934 to 22.2 per cent in 1935, while the German market of Central European products grew from 18.3 per cent to 24.7 per cent.⁸⁰ The analysis of the individual states prevails the following

⁷⁷ Schuschnigg, Austrian Requiem, p. 124.

⁷⁸ Schuschnigg, Ibid., p. 133.

⁷⁹ Schuschnigg, Ibid., p. 140.

⁸⁰ Johann Wüesch, Jugoslawien und das Dritte Reich (Stuttgart: Seewald Verlag, 1969), p. 83.

conditions: Germany became the first best trading partner of Yugoslavia,⁸¹ Czechoslovakia,⁸² and Rumania,⁸³ and the second best trading partner of Hungary.⁸⁴

The percentage of German participation in the trade of these countries was so high⁸⁵ that the smallest economic pressure or restrictions on their trade on the part of Germany would have produced catastrophic consequences. These trade relations, on the other hand, were so insignificant with Italy and with France that these two countries could not extort any political concessions using economic pressure.⁸⁶ France faced the same problem as did the Eastern Pact of Barthou: her allies were much more independent than France thought, and they would follow the French political designs, only if they believed that these designs would also serve their own interests.

Hungary

The official text of the Rome Agreement very much disappointed the Gömbös government. Instead of a hard defense of the Hungarian revisionist aims, Italy conceded to the demands of Laval and the Little Entente and undersigned the text which guaranteed not only the integrity of the Danubian states, but also their national frontiers. The plans for the Danubian Pact signaled the coming of further trouble. The demands to cease revisionist propaganda, the

⁸¹Morini-Comby, Les Échanges, p. 54.

⁸²Ibid., p. 25.

⁸³Haas Ernst, Die Aussenhandelspolitik der Ehemaligen Republik Österreich während der Weltwirtschaftskrise bis zum Anschluss (Würzburg-Aumühle: Konrad Triltsch Verlag, 1939).

⁸⁴Morini-Comby, Ibid., p. 30.

⁸⁵The lowest in Rumania, 7 per cent; the highest in Yugoslavia, 18.7 per cent.

⁸⁶See Table II.

non-intervention treaty, and the opposition of Germany to the Danubian Pact indicated that Italy and Germany were once again on a collision course. Gömbös' dream about the Italian-German-Austrian-Hungarian block seemed to be farther from reality than before. Hungary once again had to examine her own realistic interests before joining or opposing the Danubian Pact.

On the field of domestic policy, the Gömbös government gained respect and popularity because of the successful maneuvers during the Marseilles affair. In the second half of January 1935 the Rákosi⁸⁷ trial began. It created a Communist scare and further strengthened the population's support, as well as the position of the Rightist, anti-Communist-Revisionist forces. At the same time, the outcome of the Saar plebiscite raised the hopes for the realization of Hungarian revisionism.

These successes encouraged Gömbös to dissolve the Parliament on March 6, 1935, and declare the holding of new parliamentary elections.⁸⁸ The elections were held in April and gave further indication to Gömbös which of the foreign political alternatives was the most popular in Hungary. The Gömbös party, with a strong Revisionist program, gained an overwhelming majority.⁸⁹ Not only the districts with open ballots, but also the districts with secret ballots gave their unconditional support to his policy.⁹⁰ The government press emphasized

⁸⁷ Mathias Rákosi was People's Commissar in Hungary during the 1919 Communist regime. After the fall of the regime he escaped to the Soviet Union. In the Fall of 1934 at Stalin's orders, he returned to Hungary to organize an underground Communist Party. In Hungary he was promptly arrested for his crimes committed in 1919, as well as for his illegal entry, and was put on trial in 1935.

⁸⁸ Budapesti Hirlap, "Pester Lloyd" (Budapest), March 7, 1935.

⁸⁹ Mussolini requested Hungary to stop emphasizing the necessity of revision. Adam, Hungary and the Little Entente, p. 71.

⁹⁰ Budapesti Hirlap, Ibid.

as an important success the setback suffered by the Legitimist (Habsburg restorationist) Party.⁹¹

Gömbös then had to select the course of the foreign policy of Hungary from the following alternatives:

give up revisionism and unconditionally join the Danubian Pact;

moderate revisionist aims and while relying on Italy, continue to live day by day hoping for the best;

change Mussolini's support for the possible support of Hitler;

try again to bring about a reconciliation of Italy and Germany and make the old dream come true, that is, Hungary's dominating Central Europe in cooperation with Germany north of the Danube and with Italy south of the Danube.

The results of the elections cancelled out the feasibility of the unconditional acceptance of the Danubian Pact.⁹²

The reliance on Mussolini's sole support seemed to be a dangerous course. It would have demanded Hungary's adherence to the Danubian Pact. However, the projected Danubian Pact contradicted Hungary's desires. The whole Laval-Mussolini cooperation indicated to Gömbös that Mussolini was willing to bargain, not only with Laval, but also with the Little Entente to secure the independence of Austria, and during this bargaining he was susceptible to forgetting the Hungarian interests.⁹³ Equally important from his point of view was learning that Mussolini's attention concerning Central Europe as a whole was declining, and the Italian-French agreement "was an important problem, which could not have been postponed any longer . . . because of Italy's

⁹¹Budapesti Hírlap, "Pester Lloyd" (Budapest), April 10, 1935.

⁹²Ibid., April 9, 1935.

⁹³Knowing Gömbös' political conviction, we may safely say that Gömbös would not have chosen this alternative anyway because of his own political convictions.

interests in Abyssinia."⁹⁴ Neither Horthy nor Gömbös saw the Italian friendship as an eternal one and judged it as only a necessity created by circumstances.⁹⁵

Hungary needed and welcomed Italy's support during the Marseilles affair, but soon the danger was over. In order to continue the Hungarian foreign policy of revisionism, Gömbös needed the support of a Great Power. If Italy was not available anymore, he would have to turn again to the other revisionist power--Germany.

Gömbös tried to keep the door open to a renewal of German-Hungarian friendship. He began to change his tough attitude⁹⁶ and to use a reconciliatory tone as early as January, and he ordered his Berlin ambassador to call the attention of the Germans to "the fact that the (Rome) agreements were obviously directed against Germany, and therefore the Hungarian government has the gravest doubts about them."⁹⁷ (italics mine) However, this rapprochement of Gömbös was not received with great enthusiasm in Germany. The Germans tried to gain special privileges for the German minorities in Hungary, which Gömbös refused to grant them.⁹⁸ The German minority of Hungary entered its own candidates in the Hungarian parliamentary election opposing Gömbös' program, and Gömbös practiced the same "terror" against them that he used against the other

⁹⁴Wilhelmstrasse, Mackensen to Stieve, Budapest, April 6, 1935.

⁹⁵Report of the Hungarian ambassador in Rome (Baron Frigyes Villáni) quoted in Ormos, Eastern Security, p. 351.

⁹⁶see p. 130 of this study.

⁹⁷DGFP, C, III, memorandum by Bülow, Berlin, January 4, 1935, Doc. No. 410.

⁹⁸Wilhelmstrasse, Ibid.

opposing candidates.⁹⁹ Hungary sharply protested against maps drawn by pro-Hitler youth groups in Hungary, on which the German borders were marked just north of Lake Balaton.¹⁰⁰ Hitler still did not answer Gömbös' friendly letter sent a year before¹⁰¹ and found Gömbös' plan to visit Germany "untimely."¹⁰² The greatest obstacle to a German-Hungarian rapprochement was the German-Yugoslavian rapprochement,¹⁰³ which tended to curtail not only Hungary's revisionist aims, but--in case of a German-Yugoslavian alliance--threatened Hungary with the possibility of being sandwiched in between two unfriendly nations. To servilely follow the German line was clearly against the interest of Hungary. To gain Germany's goodwill was necessary to make revisionism feasible against Czechoslovakia. The old dilemma had not changed as Hungary clearly needed the support of Mussolini, as well as of Hitler.

The success of Gömbös' conception concerning the role of Hungary in Central Europe¹⁰⁴ depended on a rapprochement between Italy and Germany. The obstacle to this cooperation was the Austrian question. The differences between Germany and Italy were even more exaggerated by the Danubian Pact. As Gömbös recognized, in order to bring about any rapprochement, it was necessary to

⁹⁹Wilhelmstrasse, Mackensen to Stieve, Budapest, April 5, 1934, Doc. No. 33.

¹⁰⁰Wilhelmstrasse, Ibid.; also see Map I.

¹⁰¹Ibid., February 14, 1934, Doc. No. 19.

¹⁰²Ibid., Neurath's note, Budapest, January 12, 1935, Doc. No. 30.

¹⁰³It began with Göring's visit to Belgrade for the funeral of King Alexander. Already at that time Germany had begun to play the role of Yugoslavia's protector against Hungarian revisionism. DGFP, C, III, memorandum by Neurath, Berlin, October 26, 1934, Doc. No. 273; Snurre to Köpke, Budapest, November 6, 1934, Doc. No. 305; memorandum of Neurath, Berlin, November 17, 1934, Doc. No. 336; memorandum by Bülow, Berlin, November 23, 1934, Doc. No. 349.

¹⁰⁴See the last alternative on p. 172 of this study.

torpedo the pact without openly offending Mussolini. Gömbös then began double-dealing. He tried to prove to Mussolini that Hungary was willing to accept Mussolini's suggestion concerning the need of only a peaceful revision,¹⁰⁵ while he began to asseverate to Hitler that Hungary was a more worthy ally than Yugoslavia.¹⁰⁶

These were the considerations that made Gömbös state the demands that were looked upon by Hungary as preconditions of her joining the Danubian Pact:

the closing of the Marseilles affair;¹⁰⁷

recognition of Hungary's right to rearmament;

securities for the bettering of the Hungarian minorities' conditions in the Little Entente states;

the rejection of the mutual assistance treaties;¹⁰⁸ and

the adherence of Germany to the Danubian Pact.¹⁰⁹

Evaluation of Gömbös' Foreign Policy

Mussolini wanted "to secure calmness in Central Europe, for the period of 'possible military operations' in Abyssinia¹¹⁰ with the help of the Danubian Pact. This desire of Mussolini made him touchy concerning the Hungarian demands. "The Hungarians forget," he complained, "that they cannot count on Germany for support of their revisionist policy. They also forget that Hungary

¹⁰⁵ DGFP, C, III, Hassel to Neutrath, Rome, January 11, 1935, Doc. No. 423.

¹⁰⁶ Gömbös' speech in Budapesti Hirlap, "Pester Lloyd" (Budapest), January 25, 1935.

¹⁰⁷ The League of Nations' investigation ended with the December 10, 1934, resolution, but the criminal procedure continued in the French courts until February 12, 1936. Milicevic, Königsmord, p. 81.

¹⁰⁸ Adam, Hungary and the Little Entente, p. 75.

¹⁰⁹ Ormos, Eastern Security, p. 349.

¹¹⁰ Quoted in Ormos, Ibid., p. 363.

needs Italy and there is no way around it."¹¹¹ Yet, slowly he gave in to the Hungarian demands, especially when he experienced the same rigidity on the part of the Little Entente.¹¹² Gömbös' foreign political plans worked successfully vis a vis Mussolini.

Hitler step by step realized his plans without serious objection on the part of the pro-status quo powers.¹¹³ At the same time, he loosened his grip on Austria and welcomed Schuschnigg's opinion that "there are strong possibilities for an Austrian-German cooperation."¹¹⁴

Britain

After expressing her approval of the Danubian Pact, Britain published the White Paper on Defense,¹¹⁵ and then tried to learn the convictions of the Great Powers through the visits of Simon and Eden to Moscow, Warsaw, and Prague. The Stresa Conference (April 11-14, 1935) impressed the world with the unity of England, France, and Italy; and shortly after, the Anglo German Naval Accord (June 18, 1935) demonstrated the disunity of the same powers. The publication of the Oxford Peace Ballot¹¹⁶ forced the British government to be even more compromising than before.

¹¹¹Quoted in Ormos, Ibid., p. 362.

¹¹²Budapesti Hirlap, "Pester Lloyd" (Budapest), June 13, 1935 reported that according to Mussolini, nothing more could be expected from the Danubian Pact.

¹¹³Reintroduction of conscription and abrogation of Part V of the Versailles Treaty.

¹¹⁴Budapesti Hirlap, Ibid., January 12, 1935.

¹¹⁵It justified increased military expenditures in Britain on the plea of German rearmament. Albrecht-Carrié, Diplomatic History, p. 478.

¹¹⁶The Oxford Union passed a resolution saying, "that this House will under no circumstances, fight for its king and country." The ballots were taken on February 9, 1933, and were publicized on June 27, 1935. The votes were: 275 for and 133 against. Albrecht-Carrié, Ibid., p. 482, 28ⁿ.

France

After the original success of her new Italian policy, France bitterly recognized that her hands were tied because of the resoluteness of her allies. She vacillated between the old¹¹⁷ and the new¹¹⁸ foreign political line, and finally gave up the hope to realize the Danubian Pact¹¹⁹ after the September 30, 1935, resolution of the Little Entente.

Czechoslovakia

Czechoslovakia signed a mutual assistance treaty with the Soviet Union on May 16, 1935, and though at the beginning openly supported Laval's Danubian plans, soon began to withdraw and sided more strongly with her Little Entente partners.¹²⁰

Rumania

Rumania continued her traditional policy of by-passing the existing obligations concerning France, the Little Entente, and the Balkan Entente and tried to establish direct contacts with Germany, Italy, and the Soviet Union.¹²¹

Yugoslavia

Yugoslavia openly opposed the Danubian Pact and drew closer to Germany because of her fear of Italy; and though she officially opposed the Anschluss, she "emotionally had no objections against it."¹²²

¹¹⁷French-Soviet Pact of Mutual Assistance was signed on May 2, 1935.

¹¹⁸The new French-Italian proposals for the Danubian Pact were published in July 1935.

¹¹⁹Adam, Hungary and the Little Entente, p. 74.

¹²⁰Ormos, Eastern Security, p. 359.

¹²¹ibid., p. 358.

¹²²ibid.

Hungary

Hungary could look back to her diplomatic activities with satisfaction. Gömbös had successfully preserved his freedom to continue the revisionist policy, he had successfully moderated the dispute between Austria and Germany, and had prevented the complete alienation of Hitler and Mussolini. He was able to keep the goodwill of Mussolini "south of the Danube" and obtained Hitler's cooperation "north of the Danube." However, there were defeats on the balance, too. The Yugoslavian-German, and Yugoslavian-Italian rapprochements were certainly not in Hungary's interest, but nothing irrevocable happened..

Gömbös was equally successful to curtail German influence in Hungary, and using his anti-German resistance as a propaganda weapon, he was able to keep the sympathy of Britain,¹²³ as well as the U.S.¹²⁴

The only Power with which Hungary could not make and wished not to make closer relationships was France because of her strong support of the Little Entente's anti-revisionist attitude. This French support of Hungary looked less and less important. France's international authority declined, and even the French alliance system existed only on paper, as the events of 1935 had demonstrated.¹²⁵

Gömbös' foreign policy served Hungary's interests well. This foreign policy enjoyed the support of the masses and secured a unique position for Hungary among the small states of Central Europe. She remained uncommitted and could continue to change her policy as the realistic interests demanded.

¹²³Budapesti Hirlap, "Pester Lloyd" (Budapest), April 10, 1935 May 2, 1935 and May 16, 1935.

¹²⁴Montgomery, Hungary, p. 77; also Ibid., June 2, 1935.

¹²⁵Ormos, Eastern Security, p. 359.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS

In my introduction I wrote that the purpose of this study is to explain the reasons behind the diplomatic decisions of the three small states. By this method I hoped to shed light not only on the history of these Central European states, but also to answer the crucial question of who was really responsible for not checking the growing danger that Germany presented, and who was responsible for allowing the unchallenged German domination of Europe to come about. Looking back on my investigations, one may clearly see two distinct periods.

From 1920 to 1934 the French alliance system controlled Europe without challenge. However, in 1920 the French leadership was accepted on the basis of superior strength not only ideologically and economically, but also militarily. The Versailles Treaty and other connected treaties were signed with the supposition that France would always remain strong enough to preserve the new status quo in Europe. Conditions, however, destroyed this French superiority. French political leaders quarreled endlessly over the question of priority of whether the resources of France should be used to improve the domestic conditions, and economic and social situation, or whether they should be used to sustain the military strength, and through it the international position? Sorrowfully enough, the French leaders did not realize that the posing of this question in an "either-or" form was already a mistake. When economic and social conditions deteriorate, then, too, the military capacity declines. Also, on the stage of international politics, no nation, even with the most progressive economic and social system, can stand up if its military strength is not ready to defend

that system against outside aggressions. The bitter struggle over "either-or" hindered the development of both social-economic and military strength, and put France in an inferior position well before 1934.

I found the second reason for the disappearance of the French leadership in Europe in the abuse of democracy. Until this democracy stood alone in Europe as the form of government of the strongest European country, every nation respected it and more or less accepted it as the most workable political system. Up until 1933 the existing two totalitarian systems (the Soviet Union and Italy) did not command the admiration of other countries. Even the Yugoslavian royal dictatorship of King Alexander was regarded only as a temporary emergency measure. However, in 1934 the situation changed. The unrestricted number of political parties in France made even the coalition governments unproductive, and the political arena of "free democracy" tragically performed a show that more resembled a demagoguery anarchy, than democracy. Even the British and American two-party systems seemed to be restricted political organizations compared to the happy French democracy. However, the great masses within, as well as outside of France, did not value or condemn the political systems by the degree of political freedom alone! They also passed their judgment by considering the number of unemployed, the rising prices, and the deteriorating wages. As a result, in the minds of millions of common men in Europe, Fascist Italy, Nazi Germany, and the Soviet Union began to appear as better political systems.

The resultant force of the above-mentioned three factors were speeded up by the world-wide economic crisis, which reached its peak in 1934 when not only France herself, but also her allies and all of Europe recognized her weakness.

Of course, France did not completely adjust her foreign political aims to the changed conditions. What she could not longer do alone she tried to do

with the help of new allies. The whole Eastern Pact, as well as the Danubian Pact negotiations, were aimed at securing the political status quo, although the economic, social, and military situations were against it. The French designs of the Eastern and Danubian Pacts revealed to allies and foes, as well as to the uncommitted nations that France sunk from being a leader to a position where she could no longer command without a strong ally.

Looking for an ally, the ideologically determined French policy found the solution first in the Eastern Pact through the help of the Soviet Union. It never occurred to France that the aid of the Soviet Union was militarily useless, and that Stalin might follow realistic considerations more than ideological sympathy.

In 1935, with Laval as foreign minister, France tried a more realistic line. The buying of Mussolini's cooperation with a "piece of desert" was unquestionably a great French diplomatic success. The projected Danubian Pact would have created such a strong Central Europe that Hitler would not have dared to risk any further aggressive actions, being dependent on Central Europe for food, oil, and other important raw materials (such as aluminum). However, this beautiful French design lacked realistic foundations as it did not take into consideration the changed economic condition or the national interests of the Little Entente or of the enemies. This neglect and ignorance of the French diplomacy actually paved the way for Hitler's future successes.

Austria

Among the three states analyzed, Austria was the weakest, but yet was seemingly the center of the political interest of every nation. Dollfuss and Schuschnigg both realized that their country was unable to withstand the pressure of the Great Powers. The opportunities of joining Germany, and later Hungary or Czechoslovakia were missed before 1934 due to the objections of France,

England, and Italy. In 1934 the interests of these Great Powers still demanded an independent Austria, and she was saved for the time being. With the decline of this interest in 1934 and further decline in 1936, Austria found herself deserted. It is a credit to the Austrian statesmanship, and especially to Schuschnigg, that he realized the situation and tried to do his best to secure Austria's independence using some means other than subservient obedience.

In January 1936 Schuschnigg visited Czechoslovakia to discuss economic problems¹ concerning the two countries, but at the same time the Austrian foreign minister, Baron Berger-Waldenegg, hoped for a possible friendship treaty with Czechoslovakia.² This latter possibility caused great anxiety in the Hungarian government circles.³ The new Czech prime minister, Hodza, received Schuschnigg with real friendliness and fulfilled as much of the economic requests of Austria as he could.⁴ However, even he could not overcome the deep hostility of the Czech population toward Austria, and his friendly gesture of presenting Schuschnigg with the statue of Field Marshall Radetzky (kept in a basement since 1919) failed because of the opposition of the City Council of Prague (which was the legal owner of the statue).⁵ Thus, his visit did not bring positive political results. The repercussions of the visit in Hungary, Italy, and Yugoslavia, on the other hand, created alienation and hostility.

¹Schuschnigg, Austria Requiem, p. 143.

²Hóry to Kánya, Warsaw, January 16, 1936, in Diplomáciai Iratok Magyarországnak Külpolitikájához, 1936-1945 (Diplomatic Documents to the Foreign Policy of Hungary, 1936-1945), (4 vols.; Budapest: Akadémia Publ., 1962), I, Doc. No. 6.

³DFPH, I, reports of the Hungarian ambassadors from Prague, Belgrade, and Vienna, January 16-25, 1936, Doc. Nos. 6, 7, 9, 13, 15.

⁴Schuschnigg, Ibid., p. 146.

⁵Interview with Schwarzenberg.

The German diplomacy used this visit very skillfully. Mackensen, German ambassador to Budapest, warned Foreign Minister Kánya that Schuschnigg had made unfriendly remarks to Benes about the Hungarian revisionist aims.⁶ Hungary, while still regarding Austrian independence in the interest of Hungary,⁷ began to diplomatically prevent the realization of an Austrian-Czech rapprochement.⁸ Prince Paul of Yugoslavia expressed his opinion that the independence of Austria was not the vital interest of his country.⁹

When Mussolini expressed his views that he did not think it was time for him to interfere as mediator¹¹ in the Austrian-German disagreement, Schuschnigg and the Austrian government felt it necessary to explain their position concerning their policy toward the Little Entente, and to regain the goodwill of Italy by stating that Austria would not seek closer connections with the Little Entente without the consent of Italy and Hungary.¹²

Thus, Schuschnigg's efforts to try a new, broader foreign policy than that of Dollfuss¹ had failed. Austria remained completely dependent on Italy and when the Ethiopian War weakened Mussolini's influence in Central Europe,

⁶DFPH, I, conversation of Kánya and Mackensen, Budapest, February 12, 1936, Doc. No. 31.

⁷DFPH, I, Kánya to Sztojaj, February 27, 1936, Doc. No. 53.

⁸DFPH, I, conversation of Kánya with Mackensen, Budapest, February 25, 1936.

⁹DFPH, I, Alth to Kánya, Belgrade, February 16, 1936.

¹⁰DFPH, I, Uillein-Reviczky to Kánya, Zagreb, February 19, 1936.

¹¹DFPH, I, conversation of Kánya and Neustadter-Stürmer, Budapest, March 9, 1936.

¹²DFPH, I, Wettstein to Kánya, Prague, March 16, 1936.

Austria's only chance for remaining independent lay in the goodwill of Hitler. As we know today, the appeasement policy also failed.

If we want to draw any worthy conclusions concerning the causes of the failure, we would have to analyze the possible errors in Schuschnigg's diplomacy. If he wanted to continue along Dollfuss' line of thinking, rather than in the field of domestic policy, Schuschnigg had to follow the course that he did: strengthen the government forces, and fight against Nazism, as well as against the Social Democrats. However, this domestic policy limited his foreign political alternatives to the Rome Protocol. The independence of Austria was based on the theory that the Italian-German misunderstanding would never be resolved.¹³

If Schuschnigg wanted to be consistent, he should not have considered the Italian-German differences to be eternal either. Rather, a sharp turn in Austrian foreign policy from the Rome Protocols to the Western democracies and to the Little Entente would have had great consequences, not only internationally, but also domestically in July 1934.

In 1934 the situation was different. Britain, France, and even Czechoslovakia displayed a great understanding for Austria's domestic problems.¹⁴ The reoccurring obstacles for a better understanding with these countries were two-fold: (a) Schuschnigg's stubborn refusal to renounce the possibility of a Habsburg restoration; and (b) his unwillingness to participate in any combination of states directed against Nazi Germany.

¹³It is interesting to see that at the same time he considered it to be too risky to base his country's independence on the French-German misunderstanding. Schuschnigg, Austrian Requiem, p. 131.

¹⁴Czechoslovakia, for example, stopped the Socialist emigree's activity in Brno and moved them to Paris. Schuschnigg, ibid., p. 146.

Both "questions of principle," as he put it, created great difficulties for Austria's foreign policy and finally left her no other alternative than the one she followed to the end.

Schuschnigg emphasized many times that he did not consider a Habsburg restoration timely. It was possible that even the leaders of the Little Entente states did not consider it as an imminent danger,¹⁵ although it was one reason for their fear and suspicion. The Yugoslavians, on the other hand, took this danger so seriously that they considered it necessary to prepare a possible German-Yugoslavian military cooperation in case of a Habsburg restoration attempt.¹⁶ It is known today that by October 1936 the Seventh German Army Corps received orders, that in case of a Habsburg restoration, they should invade Austria while the Yugoslavian entered from the south.¹⁷ Instead of comforting the Little Entente states concerning the question of the Habsburg restoration, Schuschnigg tried to enlist the support of the Vatican¹⁸ to explain his policy to the Little Entente, but they were shamed away from this assignment. The Habsburg question had to be postponed because of the concerted protest of France, England, and the Little Entente. It, however, was not renounced, and thus it represented an equally important obstacle to the

¹⁵"Once I asked Jan Masaryk about the Habsburg restoration. He said that somehow the government of Czechoslovakia was not so much afraid of it as Rumania. However, if one asked the Rumanians, it was supposedly Benes who was afraid of it." Interview with Schwerzenberg.

¹⁶Eichstadt, Von Dollfuss zu Hitler, p. 87.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 88.

Danubian Pact, as did the Hungarian revisionism.¹⁹ The reason for it certainly cannot be found in practical political considerations.

The rejection of participation in anti-German combinations was based more on the pangerman and pro-Nazi sympathies of a great number of Austrians than on the romantic, German nationalist and loyalist sympathies of Schuschnigg. This pangerman sentiment grew day by day and had no real opposition, since the Socialists were driven underground. Though every statesmen of Europe showed some understanding toward this problem, it probably hurt Austria's chances as much as the question of the Habsburg restoration, especially after Schuschnigg began his appeasement policy toward Hitler.

It is outside of the task of a historian to speculate what would have happened if . . . ! Therefore, we must be satisfied with the fact that Schuschnigg had a chance to eliminate the disturbing question of the Habsburg restoration and the pro-German loyalty, although he did not. The conclusion we may draw, therefore, must be something like this: while Schuschnigg certainly was a good Austrian and tried to serve the interest of his country as well as he could, because of his personal convictions and prejudices, he failed to explore all the possibilities that were open for Austrian foreign policy in the years 1934-1936.

We tend to dismiss the importance of such failures, because we know what happened during the years following 1936. However, my conclusion remains valid against this argument, simply because nobody knew for sure in 1936 what would happen in 1938 or later.

¹⁹DFPH, I, conversation of Kánya and Mackensen, Budapest, February 25, 1931, Doc. No. 49.

Dollfuss successfully blocked both movements and commanded the loyalty of the Austrian people.

Yugoslavia

Yugoslavia's problems came into the center of European diplomatic interest only with the assassination of King Alexander. Yet, this very same problem of the fear of Italy, and to a lesser degree, Hungary and Bulgaria, existed well before that time. King Alexander and, after his death, Prince Paul tried to eliminate the greater menace of Italy. The modus vivendi created with Bulgaria and the rapprochement attempts with Mussolini are examples of the good judgment of Yugoslavian statesmanship.

What made Yugoslavian policy pro-German? In the light of our investigation we may safely answer that it was due to: economic interests, for Yugoslavia depended on German trade much more than on any other trade; political interests, because she found in Germany a more effective patron against Hungary than France ever was; and ideological interests, because her fear of Communism and the Eastern Pact would have forced her into closer cooperation with the Soviet Union.

After the assassination, Yugoslavia made an attempt to straighten up her relationship with France--willy-nilly, but (and only the results are important) she agreed not to accuse Italy in the affair.

France did not realize the importance of this gesture, just as she did not realize the anxiety of Yugoslavia during the Danubian Pact negotiations. Right before the Danubian negotiation, the German-Yugoslavian trade treaty and diplomatic rapprochement opened up the 'second choice for Yugoslavia, that is, to get rid of the selfish French patronage. In response to the demanding voice of Laval, the Yugoslavian statesmen answered with a selection of better opportunities. What is important to realize is that they saw this better opportunity while France did not. Even if she had, Laval believed that Yugoslavia's

loyalty and gratitude would force them to see the Nazi danger from the French side, forgetting the Yugoslavian side. Hypnotized by the spectacular actions of Hitler, France concentrated her attention entirely on Western Europe, later on Ethiopia and on Spain. She failed to reassure her smaller allies and neglected them, trying to find a stronger ally against the rising danger of Germany. Finding an ally in the Soviet Union, France actually alienated Yugoslavia even more.

If France had even tried to understand the Yugoslavian interests during the latest Danubian Pact negotiations, France would have reassured Yugoslavia that she would not abandon Yugoslavia and would restrain Mussolini from aggressive action. She could have used her tacit agreement with Mussolini over Abyssinia as a convincing argument to regain Yugoslavia's confidence. However, she did not. The Yugoslavian statesmen followed a realistic foreign policy that promised the most advantages for their country.

Hungary

In regards to Hungary the French policy was based on the assumption that Hungary was an anti-democratic state, but at the same time, so weak that she would never play any important role in international politics. The complete neglect of geographical conditions allowed France to believe in the validity of this last assumption. Due to the geographic location, it was naive on the part of any power to believe that a strong Central European block could be created without the participation of Hungary. This geographic location made Hungary much more important than her military strength suggested. The Hungarian statesmen realized this and played skillfully to secure for their nation the most benefits.

It is true that the Hungarian politicians were short-sightedly revisionist. However, their revisionism was well-founded and justified even in the eyes of many prominent Little Entente statesmen. In the 1920's, France would have been strong enough to lay down the solid basis for a Central European cooperation by using the League of Nations charter to prosecute a revision according to the ethnographic borders. Yet, France did not feel it necessary to even analyze the consequences of such a move. Such a revision would have great effects on Hungary. Fulfilling this Hungarian demand, France would have been able to take away the mass support from those very much resented authoritarian "Fascist" politicians. The pressing economic and social problems would have dominated Hungary's political life and the solutions to these problems would have created the bases for an unsuspecting, close cooperation of all the successor states in the Danube Basin.

After the rise of Hitler and the appointment of Gömbös, the French diplomacy made only one weak attempt to lure Hungary into the French camp. Such attempts might or might not have produced results. The pro-French groups in Hungary were so strong in the first half of 1934 that Gömbös openly complained against them and criticized their activity, although at that time, France was no longer in a position to force even the smallest concessions for revision on her allies. A deeper evaluation of Hungary's policy could have only produced the conclusion that the Gömbös government was not a servile and obedient ally of Italy; and while Gömbös praised German Nazism, he was not hesitant to react most aggressively toward the German attempts to spread Nazism in Hungary.

During the Danubian Pact negotiations, the French diplomacy looked upon Hungary as an Italian satellite and made no direct contacts with the Gömbös government. Yet, Mussolini's handling of Gömbös opened an opportunity for

France to not only gain Hungary's confidence, but also to prevent her rapprochement with Germany. France, however, missed this opportunity.

Under such circumstances, the selected policy of Gömbös seemed to be the most beneficial for Hungary.

In conclusion, the above analysis put the question of responsibility on the shoulders of France. She was not able to create a mood of reconciliation, nor was she able to enforce a loyal pro-French policy. She realized that she could not eliminate the revisionist forces, and yet she did not realize that without solving the Danubian problem, she could not count on her allies' support against Nazi Germany. With this misunderstanding of the individual aims of the different Central European states, she left the door open for the German penetration.

Germany thus gained an unlimited amount of food supplies, as well as raw materials. Without these resources, Hitler could not have so easily realized his rearmament program; could not have grown strong enough to challenge France and Britain openly; could not have destroyed Czechoslovakia without firing a shot; and could not have enslaved, in the first years of the war, almost all of Europe.

All this happened in the years 1934-1935. They were crucial years, indeed, not only for the three small states discussed here, but also for all of mankind. With better diplomacy, France could have prevented World War II during these years.

DECLINE OF THE FRENCH TRADE

Value in Million Dollars	Austria				Czechoslovakia				Hungary				Rumania				Yugoslavia				Refer- ences
	1932		1934		1931		1934		1930		1934		1931		1934		1933		1934		
	Imp.	Exp.	Imp.	Exp.	Imp.	Exp.	Imp.	Exp.	Imp.	Exp.	Imp.	Exp.	Imp.	Exp.	Imp.	Exp.	Imp.	Exp.	Imp.	Exp.	
80													86								
70																					
60																					
55																					
50																					
45																					
40																					
35																					
30																					
25																					
20																					
15																					
10																					
5																					
0																					

1) For the exchange rates see: Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, Banking and Monetary Statistics, Washington, D.C., 1943, pp. 663, 668, 670, 671, 672, 673, 676, 682.

2) Amounts are calculated on the basis of Morini-Comby, Les Echanges, pp. 30-31, 46, 61.

TABLE II
RANKS AS TRADING PARTNERS IN 1934

Trader	Rank as Trading Partner		
	Germany	France	Italy
Austria	1	10	less than 10
Czechoslovakia	1	5	less than 10
Hungary	2	5	3
Rumania	1	less than 10	less than 10
Yugoslavia	1	8	2

Note: Assembled on the basis of Morini-Comby, Les Échanges, pp. 13, 25, 36, 46, 61.

TABLE 111

PERCENTAGE OF AUSTRIAN IMPORT¹

Year	Germany	Czecho- slovakia	Hungary	Poland	U.S.	Switzer- land	Yugo- slavia	Rumania	England	Italy	France	Others ²
1933	19.68	13.29	11.30	6.45	5.20	3.69	8.75	4.46	3.11	4.33	2.8	16.94
1934	17.45	13.63	11.03	6.20	5.28	3.88	8.36	5.55	4.38	4.23	3.2	16.81
1935	17.00	12.7	9.4	6.3	6.0	3.3	6.7	7.0	4.4	5.0	3.1	19.1
1936	17.1	11.4	9.3	5.9	6.2	3.1	6.1	8.0	4.4	4.7	3.7	20.1

PERCENTAGE OF AUSTRIAN EXPORT³

1933	15.7	7.7	10.6	7.0	9.9	7.9	5.6	6.4	4.3	3.9	2.3	18.7
1934	16.3	7.7	10.4	6.1	11.3	7.3	6.1	4.0	5.4	3.8	1.5	20.1
1935	16.0	7.3	14.1	5.9	10.6	5.6	6.2	4.2	4.3	3.6	1.9	20.3
1936	16.3	7.3	13.4	5.1	9.8	4.8	6.9	5.0	5.5	4.5	2.4	19.0

¹As quoted in Ernst Haas, Die Aussenhandelspolitik der Ehemaligen Republik Österreich Wharend der Weltwirtschafts Krise bis zum Anschluss (Würzburg, Konrad Triltsch ed., 1933), Table 11, 'Statistik des Aussenhandels Österreichs,' Volumes: 1933, p. 12; 1934, p. 12; 1935, p. 12; 1936, p. 12.

²Split among different countries in insignificant small amounts.

³Haas, ibid., Volumes: 1933, p. 13; 1934, p. 13; 1935, p. 13; 1936, p. 13.

TABLE IV

PERCENTAGE OF AUSTRIAN FOREIGN TRADE IN 1933-1934

1933	Germany	Italy	Hungary	Czecho- slovakia	Rumania	Yugo- slavia	Poland	U.S.	Switzer- land	England	France	Others
Import	19.68	4.33	11.30	13.29	4.46	8.75	6.45	5.20	3.69	3.11	2.8	16.94
Export	15.7	3.9	10.6	7.7	6.4	5.6	7.0	9.9	7.9	4.3	2.3	18.7
	Friendly Nations Total			Hostile Nations Total			Neutral Nations Total					
Import	35.31			26.50			38.19					
Export	30.2			19.7			50.1					

1934	Hungary	Italy	Germany	France	Czecho- slovakia	Rumania	Yugo- slavia	Poland	U.S.	Switzer- land	England	Others
Import	11.03	4.23	17.45	3.2	13.63	5.55	8.36	6.2	5.28	3.88	4.38	16.81
Export	10.4	3.8	16.3	1.5	7.7	4.0	6.1	6.1	11.3	7.3	5.4	20.1
	Friendly Nations Total		Hostile Nations Total					Neutral Nations Total				
Import	15.26		54.39					30.35				
Export	14.2		41.7					44.1				

TABLE V
HUNGARY'S TOTAL FOREIGN TRADE IN 1934

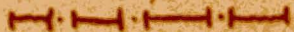
	Austria	Italy	Germany	Rumania	Yugoslavia	France	England	Switzer-land	Others	Total
Million Pengos	179.406	74.764	152.891	50.313	25.167	24.158	49.438	27.660	166.296	750.093
%	23.91	9.96	20.35	6.7	3.35	3.72	6.59	3.68	21.74	100
	Friendly Nations Total			Hostile Nations Total			Neutral Nations Total			
%	54.22			13.77			32.01			100.00

Note: Data for German trade calculated on the basis of Macartney, October Fifteenth, Part I, p. 141.
 Data for Austrian and Italian trade calculated on the basis of ibid., p. 145.
 Data for other countries calculated on the basis of Morini-Comby, Les Echanges, p. 30.

Borders:

Map II.

Monarchy:



Hungary:



Hungary after
1920:



Germany envisaged
on Hitler-youth
maps: (1935)



Population over 50%



in every color

Population between 20-50%



in every color

ETHNOLOGICAL MAP
OF THE AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN EMPIRE
(1910).



French-Italian-Yugoslavian Cooperative Military Plan to Prevent the Anschluss

List of Important Personalities

- Alexander I. King of Yugoslavia. He succeeded the throne in August 1921, and established his royal dictatorship in 1927. He was a great supporter of Serbian nationalism and oppressed the Croatian and Macedonian separatist movement. He made several unsuccessful attempts to find a modus vivendi with Mussolini. He was assassinated at Marseilles on October 9, 1934.
- Alth, Waldemar. Hungarian Ambassador to Yugoslavia.
- Baldwin, Stanley. Leader of the British Conservative Party and Lord President of the Council in the National Government from November 10, 1931; Prime Minister, June 7, 1935-May 28, 1937.
- Barthou, Louis. Chairman of L'Union Democratique et Radicale in the French Senate, and Foreign Minister in the Doumergue government, February 9, 1934-October 9, 1934.
- Beck, Colonel Josef. Polish Foreign Minister.
- Benes, Edouard. Czech Foreign Minister, 1918-1935, and President of the Republic, December 18, 1935-October 5, 1938.
- Bethlen, Count István. Hungarian Prime Minister, 1921-1931.
- Bleyer, Jakab. University Professor; Vice-President of the Cultural Association of Germans in Hungary.
- Blum, Leon. Leader of the French Socialists, and Prime Minister of the Popular Front, June 4, 1936-June 22, 1937.
- Bulow, Bernhard. Political Secretary of the German Foreign Ministry, 1934-1936.
- Campbell, Sir Eric. British Charge d'Affaire in Paris, 1934-1935.
- Chlapowski, Alfred. Polish Ambassador to France.
- Clemenceau, Georges Benjamin. French Prime Minister, 1917-1920.
- Colonna, Ascanio. Italian Ambassador to Hungary, October 6, 1932-December 21, 1936.
- Cot, Pierre. French Air Minister who visited the U.S.S.R. with a French air squadron during the days of French-Russian rapprochement in July 1933.
- Daladier, Edouard. Leader of the French Radical Socialists; Prime Minister and Minister of Defense, January 1, 1933-October 23, 1933; Minister of Defense, October 26, 1933-January 27, 1934; and Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, January 30, 1934-February 7, 1934.

- Dollfuss, Engelbert. Austrian Federal Chancellor from May 1932 to his assassination on July 25, 1934. In 1933 he founded the Fatherland Front to embrace all Austrian political parties supporting his government. He introduced a Fascist-type system in Austria based on the ideas of the papal encyclical Quadragesimo Anno.
- Doumergue, Gaston. President of the French Republic; French Prime Minister in the "Government of National Union," February 9-November 8, 1934. In his radio addresses he tried to gain public support for his policy against the opposition in the Chamber of Deputies.
- Eden, Anthony. Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in the National Government, November 10, 1931-December 31, 1933; Lord Privy Seal without Cabinet rank, January 1, 1934; Rapporteur of the Marseilles affair in the League of Nations, October-December 1934.
- Ermansdorff, Otto. Deputy Director of Department II of the German Foreign Ministry.
- Fabry, Colonel Jean. Minister of Defense in Laval's government. He was strongly anti-Communist, and as such, an opponent of the Soviet-French rapprochement.
- Flandin, Pierre Etienne. Chairman of the Republicans de la Gauche, and Minister of Public Works in the Doumergue government.
- Gamelin, General Maurice. Military advisor of Barthou and Laval; Chief of Staff of the French army from January 1935.
- Gömbös, Gyula. Hungarian Minister of Defense, October 10, 1929-September 21, 1932; Prime Minister, September 30, 1932-October 6, 1936; and one of the prominent leaders of the Nationalist and Revisionist leagues.
- Göring, Hermann Wilhelm. Minister President and Minister of Interior of Prussia; Air Minister from April 1933.
- Habsburg, Otto von. Son of Charles, the last emperor of Austria and King of Hungary. His succession to the throne was blocked by the resolution of the peace treaties. He had many supporters in both countries who wanted him to restore the monarchical form of government and reunite the old lands of the Habsburg monarchy.
- Hassel, Ulrich. German Ambassador to Italy, 1932-1938.
- Heeren, Victor von. German Ambassador to Yugoslavia, 1934.
- Herriot, Edouard. Leader of French Radical Socialist Party; Minister of State without Portfolio in the Doumergue and Flandin governments, February 9, 1934-May 30, 1935.
- Hodza, Milan. Prime Minister of Czechoslovakia, November 6, 1935-September 1938.

Hornbostel, Theodore von. Political Secretary-General in the Foreign Office of the Federal Chancellery of Austria.

Horthy, Miklós (de Nagybánya). Regent of Hungary.

Hóry, András. Hungarian Ambassador to Italy, 1927-1934; Under-Secretary of Foreign Affairs, 1934-1935; Ambassador to Poland, 1935-1940.

Jeanneney, Jules. President of the French Senate.

Kánya, Kálmán. Hungarian Foreign Minister, February 4, 1933-November 28, 1938.

Köpke, Gerhard. Director of Department II of the German Foreign Ministry.

Koster, Roland. German Ambassador to France, 1932-1935.

Kvaternik, Eugen. Assistant leader of the USTASHE organization. He became Minister of Police in the Nazi-satellite Croatian state in 1942.

Lammers, Hans Heinrich. Director of the Reich Chancery.

Laroche, John. French Ambassador to Poland

Laval, Pierre. Member of numerous French governments from 1925; Minister of Colonies in the Doumergue government, February 9-October 13, 1934; succeeded Barthou as Foreign Minister, October 13-November 9, 1934, in the Flandin cabinet until May 30, 1935.

Lipski, Josef. Polish Ambassador to Germany, November 15, 1934-September 1, 1939.

Litvinov, Maxim Maximovich. People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, 1930-1939.

Macek, Vladimir. Leader of the Croatian National Peasant Party.

Mackensen, Hans George von. German Ambassador to Hungary, 1933-1937.

Marek, Ferdinand. Austrian Ambassador to Prague.

Masaryk, Thomas Garrigue. President of Czechoslovakia, 1918-1935.

Mazirevich, Szilárd. Hungarian Ambassador to Germany, 1933-1936.

Michailov, Ivan. Assistant leader of the IMRO.

Muff, General Wolfgang. German Military Attache to Austria.

Neurath, Constantin von. German Foreign Minister, 1933-1938.

Neusstadter-Stürmer, Odo. Labor Secretary in the first Dollfuss government, 1932-1933.

Papen, Franz. Vice-Chancellor of the Reich and Saar Plenipotentiary until July 26, 1934. He was a Minister in Austria on a special mission directly responsible to Hitler.

Paul-Boncour, Joseph. French Prime Minister, December 14, 1932-January 29, 1933. He represented the Yugoslavian royal family at the Marseilles trial.

Pavelich, Ante. Leader of the Croatian USTASHE movement.

Pétain, Marshal Philippe. Minister of War in the Doumergue cabinet.

Pilsudsky, Josef. Marshal of Poland; Minister of War; and Inspector General of the Army.

Potemkin, Vladimir. Soviet Ambassador to France.

Radvánszky, Baron Albert. Vice-President of the Upper House of the Hungarian Parliament.

Rákosi, Mathias. People's Commissar in the Kun Communist government in Hungary.

Ritter, Karl. Director of the Economic Department of the German Foreign Ministry.

Röder, Vilmos. Hungarian General; Minister of Defense, October 12, 1936-May 13, 1938.

Schnurre, Karl. Councillor of the German Embassy in Hungary, 1934-1936.

Schoen, Hans. German Ambassador to Hungary, 1926-1933.

Schuschnigg, Kurt von. Austrian Federal Chancellor, July 29, 1934-March 11, 1938.

Simon, Sir John. Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 1931-1935.

Stieve, Friedrich. Director of the Cultural-Political Department of the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Stojadinovich, Milan. Yugoslavian Prime Minister, and Foreign Minister, June 23, 1935-February 4, 1939.

Suvich, Fulvio. Under-Secretary of State in the Italian Foreign Ministry.

Tardieu, André. French Prime Minister, and Foreign Minister with short interruption between 1928-1932.

Titulescu, Nicolae. Rumanian Foreign Minister, 1932-1936.

Ullein-Reviczky, Antal. Director of the Press Department in the Hungarian Foreign Ministry.

Wettstein, János. Hungarian Ambassador to Czechoslovakia, 1935-1939.

Yevtic, Bogoljub. Yugoslavian Foreign Minister until December 4, 1934, when he became Minister President and Foreign Minister.

Ziffkovich, General Pero. Prime Minister during the Royal dictatorship of King Alexander, 1927-1931; Advisor to King Alexander of Yugoslavia.

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Hennyey, General Gustave. Hungarian Military Attache in Athens and Belgrade, 1933-1934; Chief of the Intelligence Department of the Hungarian General Staff, 1934-1935.

Hornbostel, Dr. Theodore. Political Secretary-General of the Austrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1933-1938.

Radvánszky, Baron Anton. First Secretary of the Hungarian Minister of Foreign Affairs, 1933-1934.

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APPROVAL SHEET

The dissertation submitted by Mr. Anthony Komjathy has been read and approved by members of the Department of History.

The final copies have been examined by the director of the dissertation and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated and that the dissertation is now given final approval with reference to content and form.

The dissertation is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

May 17, 1972
Date

Walter J. Gray
Signature of Advisor