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Behind the Foreign News

THE united Europe which Hitler and Mussolini promise if Axis aggressions can be maintained is not the sort of federation to cause the enslaved millions of the continent to straighten their backs and cheer.



TIBOR DE ECKHARDT

Once the "Bolshevik menace" and "Anglo-American exploitation" are eliminated, we are told by Mussolini's newspaper, Popolo d'Italia, "Europe will automatically find political stability and economic and social solidarity based on the harmonious co-operation of all European people."

What, under this design, will become of "independent" Slovakia and "independent" Croatia which Hitler "rescued" from the threat of the democracies? For that matter, what will become of "sovereign" Italy? Where is that purely Germanic state which was the only territory over which Hitler once said he had any desire to rule?

One immediate flaw in the picture of "solidarity and harmonious co-operation" of such a federation is the notorious fact that those two old cronies in blood and boodle, der fuehrer and il duce, would sooner stab each other in the back than sit down together at any baize table. Add to this the growing restlessness of the peoples of occupied Europe and the Axis threat to fulfill the dream of Napoleon remains a dream—or rather a nightmare.

When the war ends in Allied victory there will emerge a unified Europe, not because of, but in spite of the efforts of the dictators. Most of mankind has learned that it cannot continue in the old ruts of super-nationalism, unlimited sovereignty, exclusive economy and escape such catastrophes as the current conflict. The majority of European leaders are not only reconciled to the idea of some form of limited federation, they are looking forward to and preparing for it.

This is not to say that a United States of Europe will emerge full bloom from the ashes of war. The first steps will of necessity be

limited and faltering. While the Hitler-Mussolini brand of enslavement, of unity in tyranny, will be impossible, the conception of the democracies will be difficult. There are many barriers that must be crossed before the initial steps can be taken.

Chief of these, of course, is Germany. The future of that nation brings up Europe's major post-war problem. Only one condition is certain: steps will be taken to insure the continent and the world against a repetition of German (not Nazi) aggression a quarter-century after the return of peace. Sentimental considerations for "the poor, oppressed Germans," a fallacy for which the world—but especially America—"fell" after the World War will not enter the argument. Germany will be compelled to undergo a long period of tutelage before it can be welcomed into a federation and in the interim honest men will be on guard against the old Teutonic trick of "organizing sympathy" which lured the unsuspecting into the era of appeasement.

Another question will be Russia's place in a European federation. That will depend on what the U. S. S. R. looks like after its tussle with National Socialism. Certainly Europe cannot tolerate Russian aggressions any more than German. There will no longer exist—when Germany is defeated—any excuse for Muscovite domination of the Baltic states, Finland or Bessarabia.

A small but stubborn barrier to federation is Hungary. To be successful a federation must be composed of states that are nearly on the same social and political level. Hungary, to this day, because of the gigantic estates held by its noblemen and land aristocracy, remains in a semi-feudal state of development. How to federate—even to the smallest degree—a feudal agricultural country like Hungary with, for example, a highly developed industrial democracy such as was and will be Czecho-Slovakia, presents the architects of the future European structure with one of their gravest tasks.

There would be hope was there any official tendency within Hungary to reform its archaic system. There is none. On the contrary plans are cleverly being laid to maintain the estates intact with their concomitant thousands of

landless peasants whether the Nazis succeed in establishing their federation—that is, the "New Order"—or whether the democracies win.

Hungary under the regime of Admiral Nicholas Horthy, however much at heart it may despise the Germans, is not giving Hitler any grounds for complaint. It is fighting against Russia along with the Nazis, it is supplying Germany with much needed food stuffs and raw materials and it is bending its legislation, particularly in regard to anti-Semitism, to German wishes. It has every reason to anticipate greater cuts of its neighbors' territories should Germany win.

Four weeks ago a well-known Hungarian political figure arrived in New York and opened headquarters in the Waldorf-Astoria. He is Tibor de Eckhardt, and as head of the Small Farmers party, leader of the reputed opposition. His ostensible purpose is to start a free Hungarian movement to give at least moral support to the Allied cause. The argument runs that the government at home is so deeply enmeshed in the Nazi web that it cannot speak for itself and Eckhardt will show the anti-Nazi, truly democratic intentions of the Hungarians.

Eckhardt's mission would be more convincing, his alleged democratic sentiments would carry more weight, if his record in the cause of democracy had been a little brighter. Eckhardt was the first president of the Society of Awakening Hungarians, a terrorist group organized in 1920 to hunt down and root out not only the remnants of Bela Kun's bloody Communist regime, but all liberal elements. It was Europe's first full fledged Fascist movement long before Adolf Hitler conceived the idea of Storm Troops and rowdy practices for political ends.

Eckhardt only played as leader of the opposition in the Hungarian Parliament. For a long time he was chief of propaganda in the foreign office, but his aspiration to a cabinet post was never satisfied. In dudgeon he organized his Small Farmers party. But even as an alleged opponent of the regime he voted for all the anti-Semitic laws introduced by the government—laws bitterly opposed by such liberals as Count Bethlen.

The shallowness of his opposition was demonstrated in 1934 when he

was so strongly in the confidence of the government that he was selected to represent it at the League of Nations when the question of Hungary's part in the assassination of King Alexander and French Foreign Minister Louis Barthou at Marseille came before that body. No opponent, certainly, would be entrusted with what was Hungary's most delicate negotiation.

Eckhardt is more the Hungarian Hess than an antagonist of the government. He is here as the "liberal" tail to the feudal dog. The fact is that not only the Hungarian regime, but the Germans, acquiesced in his trip to America. He was given all the necessary papers and documents to make the journey. He traveled through Yugoslavia and Greece after Axis occupation. No real opponent would have had such easy sailing. Britain twice refused to admit him and so his efforts have been transferred to the United States.

The Hungarian press bureau sent out a story that the Germans had protested the permission granted Eckhardt to make the trip. The Germans don't protest such matters if they are really anti-Nazi in character, they simply stop them without further ado.

Any day now Eckhardt may announce his Free Hungarian movement. Magyars in America would be wise to be on guard against it. It is solely a scheme to "organize sympathy" and to maintain the position of the aristocracy come what may in the war.

There is, however, a genuine free Hungarian movement, the Democratic Hungarians in America, headed by such outstanding personalities as Prof. Rustem Vambrey of New York, Dr. Oscar Jaszi of Oberlin College and the noted correspondent and writer, Emil Lengyel. It wants a free and a democratic Hungary, one that can take its rightful place in any European federation.

Hungarians of the former Czechoslovak republic are also organizing under the direction of Ignac Schultz, former Hungarian member of the Parliament at Prague. These people want to see a free Hungary that can live in peace with its neighbors. They know that unless Hungary becomes a modern state in the political sense the unification of Europe will be difficult to achieve.

