

CHANGE THE WORLD



*How About Stopping
Appeasement of Fascists
Who Pressure Foreign-Born?*

By **MIKE GOLD**

A HUNGARIAN-AMERICAN worker, a machinist by trade, told me a curious tale the other night. He is an anti-fascist, and not a very complicated one. About a month or two ago, he decided that he must do something in person about fascism.

Past 45, the American armed forces could not use him. But this was a global war, and anything that hurt Hitler anywhere was helping the United States.

The immigrant American thought of his motherland, now in the hands of Hitler. He told his wife of his plan, wound up his family affairs, and wrote a letter to Washington full of simple courage and straight thinking.

He asked the government to permit, and also to aid him, to return to Hungary, where he offered to do sabotage under U. S. direction in some munition plant or other factory turning out war material for Hitler.

The volunteer for this perilous task received a quick answer. He was asked to call at a certain office. There a group of government employes put him through a third degree.

It was the full works, he says, almost as bad as the variety given to gangsters in the movies. He was told that he was a dangerous criminal, and if not, to prove it. He was questioned and re-questioned on every detail of his past. After a few days of this sort of thing, he was released. Then his home, his place of employment, his friends were checked up. Then he was called back and grilled again. But he still stuck to his story. So the inquisitors decided any man so patriotic must be insane. They threatened to have him committed to an asylum.

As he told me the story, the man became a little wistful. "Have I done anything wrong?" he asked me. "Am I really crazy in my thinking about this war? Have I seen too many Hollywood movies which glorify the anti-Nazi underground in Europe?"

In curious contrast to this persecution, one should remember that for many months another Hungarian, a fascist named Tibor Eckhardt, has been travelling through the United States and Canada.

He has stayed at the best hotels, in the best suites, for he is filthy with big money. In all the cities where he visited, Eckhardt has organized mass-meetings of Hungarians, and conferred with leaders of Hungarian-American organizations.

According to the lavish newspaper publicity he managed to attract Eckhardt pictured himself as a sort of De Gaulle, who was assembling a Free Hungary movement to be directed against the fascist dictator and Hitler stooge, Admiral Horthy.

Now Eckhardt could fool American editors with such bunk, but he couldn't fool the Hungarian colonies in the places he visited. The Hungarians knew Tibor Eckhardt as the most notorious fascist of their motherland. It was he who had organized, in the post-war period, "Awakening Hungary," a typical storm troops formation modelled on the Nazi-Mussolini pattern, and one responsible for Jewish pogroms and the murder of thousands of Jews, liberals, Socialists and Communists.

Eckhardt had come directly from Hungary. Dictator Horthy would not have permitted him to leave, except on a mission. The Hungarians in America suspected that Eckhardt was sent here to organize them, by intrigue and demagoguery, into the Axis camp, just as Gestapo and Italian agents have done in America for years with their own people.

But Eckhardt's mission was a colossal flop. Hungarians in America and Canada are overwhelmingly anti-fascist. Scornfully, roughly, they chased the Axis agent out of one city after another.

It was they themselves who had to do it. The American government, far from protecting them from this fascist agent, actually seemed to welcome him. Certainly, the State Department, which had refused so many visas to anti-fascist refugees, made no difficulties about this man's visa, nor did the F.B.I. send a single agent to investigate this dangerous fascist alien who was freely propagandizing here.

I don't know where Eckhardt is at the moment, but I do hope American official courtesy isn't being stretched so far that he is being taken on a tour of our navy yards. After Pearl Harbor, it is a little unsafe to trust any shade of fascist, I think, even when he poses as a "reformed" Nazi.

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Hitler and his Axis are now making war on the United States. We have suffered some hard blows, but have not yet felt the full brunt of the danger that this war by desperate criminals will bring.

It will take time, experience and many painful lessons before the American people understand all the strategic necessities of this war.

One of our best allies in this war are the millions of people suffering in the European nations under the iron heel of Hitler.

They are always ready to revolt. But they must be organized and helped by us. As yet, they cannot do it alone.

Lord Beaverbrook, a former appeaser, has compelled by respect and trust since England has been at war. He has not only been a terribly effective organizer of war production, in contrast to our own flabby, obstructive and harmful Knudsen. He has also seen some of the larger political strategy of this kind of people's war.

Lord Beaverbrook, a former appeaser, has compelled my respect the creation of a new cabinet member to be called the "Minister for People's Revolutions in Europe."

Such revolutions will come. But the sooner they can be encouraged to start, the shorter will be the war. Here are millions of bitter and determined soldiers ready to fight on our side against Hitler. The Soviet Union organized guerrillas against Hitler. They were an important factor in his defeat. But here is a whole world of such guerrilla fighters, ready to slash, injure, obstruct and sabotage the hated Nazis all through Europe.

In the United States, we have millions of Italians, Germans, Hungarians, Japanese, Bulgarians, Norwegians, Dutch, French, Belgians—immigrants from enslaved lands where their own flesh and blood are victims of world fascism.

Hundreds of thousands of these people can be organized for every form of special guerrilla war against the Axis.

When will we do this?

When will we stop this stale, dreadful business of appeasing a Hitler stooge like Petain, while smacking down anti-fascists like De Gaulle?

When will we call off the wrong-way bloodhounds who still sniff around anti-fascist immigrants in this country, while Axis sympathizers still run newspapers, make speeches and even dominate politically in various immigrant communities?

At a minimum, it seems to me, we ought to relieve the Americans of foreign birth of the fascist pressure upon them which we allowed German, Italian and Japanese consuls to exercise by terror for so many years, even with our own government aid.

We ought to organize these loyal and anti-fascist millions for our national fight and not neglect them. We ought, we will before this war can be won, create an atmosphere in which a Hungarian-American volunteer of the sort I have described, will be treated like a hero, and not like a suspicious criminal.