

NY Times July 19, 1942

Hungary a Main Factor

Accord With Czechoslovakia Held Necessary to Peace

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NEW YORK TIMES:

In a letter published in THE NEW YORK TIMES of June 7 I suggested that the representatives of Czechoslovakia and Hungary should convene in America, as the Czechs and the Slovaks did twenty-four years ago, and agree on a constructive program as a contribution to a United Nations victory.

I maintained that a friendly understanding between these two nations, separated by the widest gulf of hatred and suspicion, would defeat Hitler's divide-and-rule policy and serve as the foundation of a unified anti-Axis front among the seventy million people of the Danubian region. A Czechoslovak-Hungarian agreement also would neutralize the trump suit in Goebbels's repertoire, the specter of a revengeful peace, the dread of which continues to tighten the chains between Hitler and his unwilling satellites.

Obstacle in Way

Following this suggestion THE TIMES carried an exchange of letters between Dr. Josef Hanc, a spokesman of the exiled Czechoslovak Government, and Dr. Anthony Balásy, a former Hungarian diplomat, speaking for a faction of conservative Hungarian opinion. In addition to clarifying the issues and demonstrating some of the difficulties, this correspondence revealed the very attitude which in itself became the major obstacle of a Czechoslovak-Hungarian understanding.

Dr. Hanc agreed with the basic premise that "no pacification of Central Europe is possible without a friendly understanding between Hungary and

her neighbors," hoping that "a settlement can be reached where past attempts have failed," but underlined "the unbridgable gap between the world of Horthy and the world of the Four Freedoms," claiming that the only hope of a Czechoslovak-Hungarian agreement "lies in the change of that regime and the democratization of Hungarian society," expecting this to be "a long process."

History Cited

Dr. Balásy quoted in his reply statistics and historic instances to show that Admiral Horthy's government was no more aggressive than the Polish Government, which also seized a section of Czechoslovakia after the Munich crisis, and no more dictatorial than the Rumanian Government, "a virtual protectorate of Berlin."

In THE TIMES of July 5 Dr. Hanc reiterated his contention that the Horthy government was the greatest obstacle of a Czechoslovak-Hungarian rapprochement, anticipating that "complete victory of the United Nations will have to result in the collapse of all the anti-democratic regimes, especially that of Hungary, whose records have been particularly bad and in need of thorough overhaul." He also introduced the theme of Hungaro-Yugoslav relations, which may be regarded as completely irrelevant in this discussion, except perhaps as a modicum to condition the reader's mind.

The Czechoslovak-Hungarian agreement, the cornerstone of a general accord among all Danubian nations to foster a United Nations victory, thus should be postponed sine die. By carefully retracing the rocky road of bygone misunderstandings the issue was carried to its logical conclusion of an all-absorbing non possumus.

It is appropriate to suggest that the

✓

Czechoslovak-Hungarian accord was proposed as a victory measure, to bring about the downfall of Hitler and all of his helpers, including Regent Horthy. The target is never a hindrance. While the destruction of the Hitler-allied Horthy government remains the avowed purpose of a Czechoslovak-Hungarian agreement, it is difficult to claim that the agreement cannot be reached because of the misdeeds of that government. The pact should be signed between the exiled Czechoslovak Government and the representatives of Hungary's inarticulate millions who are free to speak on American soil, and not between Benes and Horthy.

It is impossible to assume that the Horthy government should survive, salamander-like, the purifying flames of a United Nations victory; therefore it only can become an obstacle to a Czechoslovak-Hungarian entente in case of a Hitler victory, which, in turn, is hardly in keeping with your correspondents' desires.

GABOR DE BESSENYEY.

New York, July 17, 1942.

