

# A DREAM OF HABSBURG RESTORATION

F. SEDLICKY

WHILE the present crisis demands the fullest concentration upon the sole and supreme task of defeating Hitler, it may not be amiss to devote an article to the problem of Central Europe. This is one of the most controversial, but also most important, of the problems of the post-war world. Such an article seems opportune, too, in view of propaganda for the restoration of the Habsburg monarchy, which provoked discussion recently in the Canadian parliament. Even in the midst of the struggle, discussion of the post-war organization of Europe ought not to lapse entirely.

## I

Such propaganda professes as its immediate aim the liberation of Austria from the Nazi yoke, and the restoration of monarchy in Austria and Hungary under the historical Habsburg dynasty. As its further aim, it advocates the political and economic realignment of the various nations of Central Europe, pretending that Habsburg restoration is the only way to reestablish Central European unity and stability, necessary in the interest of Europe as a check to German imperialism.

It contends that such a unification was realized for centuries in the Austro-Hungarian Empire; that the Habsburg Empire—a real example of liberalism, and of national and religious tolerance—was the embodiment of the federalization idea and of the super-national "European" spirit; that the dissolution of that monarchy by the Versailles Treaty was the very root and the original sin from which sprang all the present evil; that the liberation and independence of the successor states proved a failure and a mistake which opened the gates to the flood of German imperialism over Europe; and that this error must and can be undone only through restoration of the Habsburg Empire by the new peace treaty, if the tragedy of Europe is not to be repeated all over again.

Let us look a little into these arguments. It will be made clear that putting the blame on the Versailles Treaty for the disappearance of the Habsburg Empire and for all the post-war difficulties of Central Europe is an ambitious presumption, and

a misjudgment which takes the effect for the cause. For undoubtedly the condition of that ancient empire, and the wrong policy pursuant on its failure to fulfill its Central European mission, were in fact the cause of the First World War and—therefore—of *Versailles*.

It cannot be doubted that the old empire had an important European mission, but it is equally certain, and even admitted by the advocates of restoration, that it failed in it. That great mission—awaiting fulfilment even to-day—was the safeguarding of Central European unity while preserving the national and cultural individuality of the various Central European nations, and the harmonization of their just national claims and economic interests on the basis of equality.

The need for a federation has been felt by these nations since the Middle Ages. Thus the Habsburg monarchy, under threat of the Turkish danger, was founded in 1526 on a federal basis as a personal union of three equal components: Austria, Bohemia and Hungary. How did it conceive and discharge this mission? Throughout centuries the Habsburgs did not adopt as their supreme mission what the Czech historian Palacky in the 19th century called the "Idea of the Austrian State," namely, the federalization of the various national components of the empire on the basis of equality of rights. On the contrary, the Habsburg policy for centuries ran in the opposite direction, fostering German predominance over the other nationalities of Central Europe.

Apart from its purely dynastic interests, the Habsburg dynasty for many centuries considered its foremost mission to be the advancement of the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation, of which the Habsburgs were the head since the Middle Ages. Though in theory the Holy Roman Empire was a universal super-national Christian European Commonwealth in a mediaeval sense, it was also a mediaeval form of German imperialism. It was built under the sign of the Cross, subjecting by the sword the neighbouring Slavic tribes, many of whom—as the Wends and Prussians—completely disappeared through extermination and Germanization. Others, such as the Czechs and Poles, survived, but not without an age-long, bitter political and often bloody struggle.

Actually the fundamental racial problems of Central Europe have not changed as greatly in 700 years as one might at first assume. This is shown by a letter which might have been written just as well in 1938 by President Benes of Czechoslovakia to

President Moscicki of Poland, if it had not been written in 1278 by the Czech King Premysl Otakar II to the Polish princes, when he was faced with a war against the newly-elected German Emperor—Rudolf, the Habsburg:

"Among all the nations in the world, the Polish nation is the most similar to ours. We are bound together by a common language, common origin and blood relationship, and by the proximity of our countries. Therefore the Polish princes, nobility and people, are dear to our hearts. We rejoice in your success, strive to increase your honour and glory, to shield you against your enemies. At the same time we rely upon your help in time of need.

Therefore, having decided to take our stand against the insults and persecution of the German King Rudolph [of Habsburg], we now pray you to come to our aid. Surely you realize that, if we succumb, the insatiable gullets of the Germans will open wider and their destructive greed will strike your country as well. We are a solid bulwark for you, but if we do not withstand their attack, great danger threatens you. Mere subjugation of your country will never satisfy their rapacity; they will seize your estates and encumber you with crushing burdens. What untold persecution will then be the lot of your nation, which the Germans hate so much! Free Poland will fall into cruel bondage, and the conqueror's fury will ravage your nation . . . And so we beg of you, hearken not to them but to us, your kin, and arm yourselves mightily for our defence, since in helping us you will be helping yourselves . . ."

This is just one historical parallel—many more could be cited.

Great as are the differences in the political structure and in the ideological and moral purpose, there are also striking parallels between the First and the Third German Reich.

Universality was the lofty ideal of the Holy Roman Empire—that of the Third Reich to-day is the New Order in Europe.

The means for the attainment of the ideal are the same: conquest, religious persecution and Germanization—the *Drang nach Osten* of yesterday and of to-day.

Not quite without reason Hitler is hailed by his Nazis as the "Restorer" of that First Reich and quite consciously, in the name of "historical right" and of a "German cultural mission," he violated Czechoslovakia and Poland. Again the Germans call themselves—as in the Middle Ages—"Crusaders" of Christianity and Western "Kultur."

The exponents of this truly German national idea were the Habsburgs—for centuries the Emperors of the Holy Roman Empire.

It is beyond the scope of this article to follow the course of the Habsburg policy throughout the long constitutional struggles with the Czechs and the Hungarians. They defended their constitutional rights and religious freedoms, solemnly pledged by the dynasty at the birth of the federation, never surrendered by those nations, but not respected by their Habsburg kings. That struggle, as far as the Czechs are concerned, culminated after the Battle of the White Mountain near Prague in 1618—the "Munich" of the Thirty Years War—in the loss of constitutional independence and in national ruin. At the end of the 18th century the Habsburgs succeeded in the reduction of the originally independent national and constitutional components of a Federation to mere provinces of a centralistic, absolutely-ruled and German-administered Empire. Thus—it can be said—the Habsburgs, instead of fostering what their propaganda of to-day claims to be their mission, namely, the federation of the Central European nations as equals, gradually abolished the very foundations of that structure. It is much the same with the Habsburg claims to "liberalism," "tolerance" and "super-national spirit." They are—to say the least—exaggerations. However, with the rise of nationalism and the awakening of the national consciousness of the smaller Central European nations at the end of the 18th and during the 19th century, and with the disappearance of the Holy Roman Empire, the original federal idea of the Monarchy emerged with renewed insistence, and became an imperative condition and the only justification for its survival.

## II

The first to deal with the Central European problem in a new light, and to formulate the necessity of a federal constitution for the Empire, as early as 1848, was the great Czech historian and politician, the author of *The Idea of the Austrian State*, Frantisek Palacky, who also took part in the draft of the Kromeriz constitution in 1848, when the great liberal and constitutional movement swept Europe. While Palacky pleaded for Central European unity in a federated empire, Christian Pan-Germans advocated German unity even at the price of a break-up of the Habsburg Empire.

Another Czech politician and eminent journalist, Karel Havlicek, wrote on the Austrian policy in 1850:

"Our crucial problem lies in the present situation of the Slavs in Austria. If Austria would comprehend what is her best

course, she might become the sanctuary and the beloved fatherland of the three great nations of Slavs. These are the Czechs and Yugoslavs, and in addition either the Poles or the Ruthenians . . .

One thing must be understood: there is no longer a place for the old Austrian practice of "*Divide et impera*." Quite another policy is required; and in the unity and brotherly affection among the Slav group lies the surest power of the Austrian monarchy. Moreover, an effort must be made to create a closer understanding between the hitherto distant Slav groups in Austria, namely, the Czechoslavs and the Yugoslavs.

The Czechoslav countries, Bohemia, Moravia, part of Silesia and Slovakia, have for a long time been one single nation in their literary and spiritual life. Historically, they long existed as a single state. The patriots of Bohemia, Moravia and Slovakia have always striven for complete unification of these countries which are so closely linked by ties of blood and culture . . .

A Slav policy in Austria does not require that the government try to make Slavs out of non-Slavs. A Slav policy requires that the government further the efforts of Slavs everywhere to consolidate and develop their national identity, that it help and not hamper them in their national and spiritual growth. The government would find that the power of its Slavic subjects was the source of its own strength and permanence . . ."

What was the reward for such truly patriotic writing? Five years in prison at Brixen in the Tyrol. The 1848 revolution in Prague, Vienna and Budapest was suppressed, and an era of reactionary absolutism followed. The great opportunity was missed.

But the greatest and probably the last opportunity was forced upon the Habsburg Monarchy in 1866, when Prussia's Bismarck, after a victorious campaign, pushed Austria definitely out of the German Zollverein in preparation for the second German Empire proclaimed in Versailles in 1871. The defeat at Sadowa in Bohemia, in 1866, could have been transformed by the dynasty into the starting-point of an internal and international rebirth of the Empire. Actually, however, it became a "Munich" not only for the French Republic, but also for the Austrian Empire. Austria, against her will, finally became free of her entanglement with Germany, and her proper place and rôle became evident, namely, to safeguard the Central European nations [and hence Europe] against German imperialism.

Absolute rule had finally to be abandoned, and a constitutional régime erected. This was supposed to be done by the so-called Compromise of 1867. But in what a form! Instead of a constitution which would have assured the equality of all nations of the Empire, the constitution of 1867 was the reverse of an

impartial super-national federation. It divided the empire into two halves, each with its own parliament and government—Austria and Hungary, in each of which the dominant position was reserved for what one would call to-day two "super-races." The Czechs, Poles, Slovenes and Ruthenes (Ukrainians) were delivered to the Austrian and Bohemian [Sudeten] Germans; the Slovaks, Rumanians, Croatians to the Magyars. The Slavic majority of the empire was thus artificially converted into a minority in each half. This enabled the dynasty to keep the empire together by playing one nation against the other, but only at a fearful price, namely, sacrifice of "the Austrian Idea" to German imperialism. For the Austrian empire could have won its real independence and *raison d'être* only in relying on the Slavic majority. But this could not possibly be done by the tragic Emperor, Francis Joseph, with his memories of being heir of the Emperors of the Holy Roman Empire of the German nation, and his ostentatiously proclaimed pride in being a "German Prince." The Emperor, as a matter of fact, was unable and unwilling to overcome his resentment at the blow of 1866, which put an end to his aspirations of being the first among the German Princes.

Another factor in the empire's internal and external policy was the fear of Pan-Slavism, cleverly fomented by Pan-Germans of that time to conceal their own plans, in a manner similar to the bogey of Bolshevism as it is used in our day by Hitler. In reality, Pan-Slavism was never anything else than a romantic literary movement, rejected as it has always been by the Czechs as well as by the Poles as a political conception. Austria, in fact, was the cradle of modern Pan-Germanism, its prophets having been the Austrians Schönerer and Wolf, and also of modern German anti-Semitism. It is by no means a mere accident that Austria is the homeland of Hitler, not only geographically, but also spiritually!

True, there was a weak attempt in the right direction when, in 1871, Prime Minister Hohenwart proposed a constitutional reform in the sense of federalization. But having no strong support of the Crown, he was thwarted by Bismarck, by the Austrian Pan-Germans and by the Hungarian Prime Minister Andrassy. A remarkable coalition indeed! Andrassy, of course, was aware of the danger to the Magyar hegemony over the Slovaks, Croatians and Rumanians in the case of a federalization of the empire. And Bismarck was keen enough to recognize not only the danger of such a federalization to German

imperialism, but also the opportunity which German imperialism was afforded by its "protection" of the predominant position of the Austrian Germans and the Hungarians. Thus the alliance of Hungarian and German imperialism is by no means of to-day, but an old tradition.

To preserve their dominant position, the Austrian Germans and the Magyars were allowed to look upon Germany more and more as their national protector against the rising "inferior" Slavs. Thus the constitution of 1867 was the lever whereby the Habsburg empire, under the influence of the Austrian Germans and the Magyars, was thrust into an alliance with Germany, and became, in spite of the warnings of all the Czech politicians from Palacky to Masaryk, a powerful instrument for—instead of a bulwark against—German foreign policy, hotly opposed as it was by the interests and the will of its Slavie majority.

It was after the Compromise of 1867 had been enforced that the same Palacky, who in 1848 declared: "If Austria did not exist, it would have to be created," again wrote the other memorable words:

"Before there ever was an Austria, we were; and after she has passed, we shall be."

As early as 1864, Palacky said this in the Provincial Diet of Bohemia to the representatives of the Bohemian [Sudeten!] Germans:

"It is an unfortunate fact that the Germans in Austria, the German Bohemians in particular, appear in liberal guise only when they have procured 'a police permit.' They consider themselves a minority in the state, and live in mortal fear of us, whom they consider as tyrannical as themselves. Consequently, they curry favour with any German government, be its seat in Vienna, Frankfurt or Berlin. They simply cannot bring themselves to imagine any relation between Germans and Slavs except that of master and slave; they feel that they must subjugate the Slavs, lest they themselves become subjugated. Their modest euphemism about German 'leadership' can deceive . . .

"The principle of equal rights for all is made a laughing-stock. But, gentlemen of the opposition, do not imagine that our indignation will inflame us into taking up arms. You need not fear this—for you have cause for greater fear concerning the state of the nation. You yourselves have long since pursued the way that leads to its downfall, and you will follow on the same road with terrifying persistency. You have undermined its moral foundations, and allowed rank corruption to penetrate into every class. The inner rot flourishes and works its own decay. See

for yourselves what has befallen the country under your leadership. Only twenty-five years ago Austria was universally acknowledged to hold the hegemony over Europe. *Nowadays the name of Austria is no longer on the roll of great powers, since it has had to place itself under the 'friendly' protection of Prussia.* You were the ones who urged this course, and now Austria is dependent on the good will of Prussia for its very existence . . ."

And in 1865 he wrote:

"They say that we have forfeited our right to be a nation because we have since time immemorial been in subjugation to Germany. Where in this, may we ask, lies our fault and our neighbours' distinction? They make reply that it all dates back to some prehistoric superiority of their race. Theirs is the blood which by its very origin is the nobler, and accordingly theirs is also the superior mind and soul, superior by far to the Slav mind and soul. Such vain glory, which we encounter every day in German writings, must be borne with patience, for it is the ordinary talk of people who do not know what they are saying. What is surprising, however, is that despite this firm persuasion of theirs, they continue to plot our Germanization. Do they not fear that their blood—being mixed with blood of a lower order—would be contaminated and dishonoured? It would seem that they ought rather to issue decrees that no Slav may even approach the Germans, lest he thereby imperil the purity of their breed . . ."

Amazing, isn't it? And finally in 1873:

"Among men there can be no permanent freedom without justice. Justice simply means recognition and respect for the rights of our neighbours. I am almost ashamed to repeat these commonplaces, but they have nowhere been so forgotten as here in Austria. A distinguished journal has had the audacity to preach the use of violence against all non-Germans—and this under the slogan of "equal rights for all." Since 1848, when the voice of liberty was heard even within Austria, I have constantly proselytized for this very simple principle. It alone could solve the problems arising from the heterogeneous national conditions of Austria. In my last pamphlet, published in 1865, "The Idea of the Austrian State", I stated it once and for all. If Austria is to live, it will have to live in freedom. And this freedom must rest on a confederation of all its peoples. *In the long run, Austria must submit to a federal government. Any other course will seal its doom . . .*"

The course, however, was the "Compromise" of 1867. No wonder that against this constitution there fought all the Czech and Slovak politicians from Palacky and Rieger to Kramar, Hodza, Hlinka, Benes and Masaryk, who insisted on a reform in the direction indicated by Palacky! It was in vain. This ill-conceived constitution made Palacky's prediction come true fifty years later. It caused the internal and foreign policy of



the empire since 1867 to become but the betrayal of the Austrian mission. The inescapable consequence of this policy was the plunge into the World War, and finally the internal collapse of the empire, which was really disrupted by its own component nations long before the Versailles Treaty was signed. It was only when this tragic failure of the Habsburg empire became irretrievable that Masaryk and Benes took up the struggle in 1914, and that the various nations decided after the World War to seek a better solution of the Central European problem, a solution which would really safeguard them against Pan-Germanism. Thus the real grave-diggers of the Austro-Hungarian Empire were not the Slavs, but the Austrian Pan-Germans and Hungarian imperialists.

If the Habsburg propaganda now blames the very fact of the liberation of the oppressed races for the overrunning of Central Europe by Germany, and contends that the Habsburg restoration even in post-war Austria could have checked the Nazi flood in Central Europe, be it not forgotten that the old Habsburg monarchy itself not only was not able to resist German imperialism of 1914, but actually became its active and subservient accomplice.

### III

No man in Europe was more aware of the Pan-Germanic danger than Thomas Masaryk, and it was therefore he who, as early as 1918, proposed the formation of a new, democratic unity of Central Europe, able to resist another German assault. He expounded his thesis and his plans in his book *The New Europe* [1918]. He wanted a confederation of Central European states embracing Poland, the successor states of the Danubian Basin, and the Balkans. We see that now Masaryk's concept is more actual than ever.

Why did it remain unrealized? To analyze the reasons for this failure would mean to write a history of European, and not merely Central European, policy of the period between the two wars. Let us consider only a short record of the rôle played by the chief political factors.

These are the Central European "successor" states on the one hand, and the great European powers on the other.

The first group was split at the outset into the Little Entente, representing the liberated victorious nations, and Austria and Hungary, the defeated nations. Austrian and Hungarian propaganda became disseminated in the period between the

World Wars, and even at present has succeeded to some extent in creating the impression that the two nations were mishandled not only by the Versailles and Trianon Treaties, but even after the World War also suffered unjust treatment from their neighbours. In reality the Little Entente pursued not an aggressive, but a defensive policy; one, moreover, that was not pettily Central European, but constructive and European.

This policy aimed at the reconciliation and re-unification of Central Europe and, indeed, of Europe as a whole. The liberated nations insisted, of course, on the security of their young national life, and opposed, therefore, the revisionist ambitions of Hungary. But their basic attitude towards Hungary and Austria was conciliatory, and they were ready to make even territorial readjustments towards the goal of that solidarity, providing there was a change of the intransigent revisionist attitude of Hungary, and a will to collaboration on Austria's part. Just as was the case before the World War, Austria and Hungary showed utter lack of understanding and willingness for constructive collaboration with the liberated nations as equal partners.

The Hungarian ruling class, the land-owning gentry, crushed every surge towards democracy, and refused to give up the dream of the restoration of the mediaeval Hungarian state, in which the Magyars domineered and suppressed the "inferior" Slavie and Rumanian minorities. They whipped up the passions of extreme nationalism and revisionism, thus distracting the masses from their social misery and their democratic yearnings, and preserving the semi-feudal pre-war economic and political status. To achieve their aims, they readily became first the allies, then the tools and accomplices of Fascism and Nazism.

The Austrians on their part showed as little understanding for Palacky's "Austrian Idea" as they did before the World War. A deep despondency over their defeat, which transformed a once great European power into a small state, led to a feeling of frustration, and—propelled by pre-war Pan-German tendencies and post-war economic difficulties—to a flight into the *Anschluss* mentality. Austrians simply did not wish to live as a nation; hence they called their republic "*Deutsch Osterreich*" [German Austria], and they had to be prevented from a voluntary *Anschluss* in the interest of Europe long before they were incorporated by Hitler forcibly, when they no longer wanted it.

The *Anschluss* policy was not restricted to one class only;

it was shared equally by the nationalists and the socialists [before the ascendancy of Hitler]. For them "the Austrian Idea" had no appeal. Only slowly, in reaction to the Nazi ideology and barbarity, did the conservative elements begin to remember that after all they were Austrians and not necessarily Germans. When Chancellor Schuschnigg tried to approach the Czechoslovak Government, it was, alas! too late: the masses of workers had become indifferent after the defeat of Austrian democracy by Fascism in 1934, and Hitler had already occupied the Rhineland.

The policy of the Little Entente, on the other hand, as represented by the efforts of Benes, Titulescu and King Alexander, aimed not only at consolidation of Central Europe but, in awareness of the German danger, at European solidarity. One need only recall that the Little Entente was the staunchest supporter of the League of Nations, and that Edward Benes devoted his efforts at Geneva as much to the cause of reconciliation of France with the German Republic as towards the strengthening [by the *Geneva Protocol*] of the effectiveness of the League as a preliminary for general disarmament. When Hitler usurped power in Germany, Benes tried to save the remnants of Barthou's policy of collective security by promoting the entry of Russia into the League, and by the conclusion of the Franco-Czechoslovak-Russian alliance. In all these efforts he had the full collaboration of Yugoslavia and Rumania. But his zeal for collective security and Central European consolidation did not find sufficient response and support from the Great Powers.

The Great Powers not only did not cooperate in bringing the successor states together, but used Central Europe as the chessboard of their rivalries:

(a) Great Britain, pursuing the isolationist policy [1] thought herself not directly interested in this area; [2] following the traditional policy of balance of power, did not favour the predominant French influence in Central Europe and the political or economic consolidation of the French-patronized Little Entente; [3] favoured rather the idea of leaving Central Europe as a sphere of economic influence to Germany.

(b) France did not dare to pursue a constructive and strong policy of collaboration with the Little Entente, so as not to antagonize Great Britain and Italy. For this reason France soon felt the Little Entente to be rather a political liability, and did not put up any resistance to the economic penetration of

Germany and the political penetration of Italy. The outstanding example of this pusillanimous policy was the way the French court and government handled the assassination of King Alexander and Minister Barthou by the Pavelic terrorist organization promoted by Italy and Hungary. The rôle of Italy was hushed up completely, and Hungary escaped with a mere reprimand. This started the weakening of the Little Entente and the swing of Yugoslav policy towards collaboration with Germany by Stojadinovic.

(c) Italy—which during the 19th century regarded the Habsburg empire as her hereditary enemy and the barrier to her domination of the Mediterranean, did everything to prevent the consolidation and closer cooperation of the Central European nations. To prevent the rise of a new rival bloc, Mussolini concluded an alliance with Hungary and later also with Austria against the Little Entente.

(d) Germany, of course, pursued its traditional policy of *Lebensraum* in Central Europe, first by economic means, later by her fifth column in Austria and Czechoslovakia. She used every device to break up the Little Entente, and finally enlisted in Munich the support of the Western Powers for her supremacy in Central Europe, with the inescapable result of a second World War. Supported by economic isolationism, the negative forces prevailed against the reconstruction of Central European solidarity.

What are the prospects of a Central European federation to-day? Can the Habsburg dynasty play any unifying rôle again?

For Otto of Habsburg the task of a Central European federation is more insoluble now than it was in the past.

For, first, in view of the historical memories, he can no longer claim to possess the common allegiance of the various nations on the strength of emotional ties. The Habsburg idea has long been dead in Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia, and, I would say, also among the large masses of Austria and Hungary.

Secondly, he is bound to fail as far as the Czechoslovaks and Yugoslavs are concerned, for the very same political reasons for which he is being supported by some Austrian and Hungarian circles.

Indeed, Otto of Habsburg would not for a moment enjoy the support of the Hungarian ruling clique and its American representative, Tibor Eckhard, if he proposed [let us assume

the unimaginable] the democratization of Hungary by the abolition of class privileges and by a thorough land reform, along with the recognition of and union with Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia.

The restoration of the Habsburg monarchy, as they conceive it, would entail the fulfilment of Hungarian territorial ambitions, which cannot be achieved without a new separation of Slovaks from the Czechs, of Slovenes and Croats from Serbs, in short, without the death of Czechoslovak and Yugoslav national unity.

In other words, the Habsburg restoration is regarded by its Hungarian supporters only as another means to perpetuate their internal privileges and to achieve their imperialistic aims. Therefore it is unacceptable to Czechoslovaks and Yugoslavs. Of this fact the Habsburg propaganda is quite conscious.

Hence the argument that the Czechoslovak and Yugoslav national unity proved to be a complete internal failure and a fallacy, and accordingly could not withstand the first attack. [In reality that unity did not disintegrate from within, but was destroyed only by violence and treachery from without.]

Hence the caution in the support of Hungarian aspirations and in the collaboration with Tibor Eckhard.

Hence the sweet overtures to the Slovenes and Croats.

Hence the furious attacks against Dr. Edward Benes, the old champion of New Europe.

Disruption of Czechoslovak and Yugoslav national unity, however, entails nothing but the return to German domination over Central Europe with the support of Hungarian nationalism, as it existed during the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The absurdity of such a "Restoration" solution for Central Europe is, therefore, obvious.

Habsburg propagandists might have some chance in convincing some of their friends abroad of their good intentions by appealing to the monarchic traditions and sentiments of the Anglo-Saxons. But that restoration is meant to take place not in Canada, but in Central Europe. And there, undoubtedly, the return of the Habsburgs to the Austrian and Hungarian throne would only create a dangerous tension for the reasons stated above, and would inevitably isolate Austria and Hungary from the other Central European nations. For they would not find any adherence from the Czechoslovaks and Yugoslavs. The unity of the Czechoslovak and Yugoslav people will automatically emerge again as soon as the Nazi yoke is overthrown. Thus the

Habsburg dynasty, if restored in Austria and Hungary, would constitute rather a check than a stimulus for Central European consolidation. That propaganda simply does not take into account the real conditions existing in Central Europe, and not even those in Austria and Hungary. The situation there cannot be appraised according to the conceptions of Austrian or Hungarian legitimist refugees.

It must not be forgotten that after the World War the Austrians and Magyars themselves dethroned the Habsburg dynasty, realizing that the Habsburgs had led them into the catastrophe of the First World War. The Hungarian peasant masses have only the memory of servitude and exploitation under their feudal masters during the rule of the Habsburgs. That they should expect their liberation through another Habsburg régime, supported by the old gentry, cannot be believed. Even among the Hungarian nationalist bourgeoisie and aristocracy, the sincerity of the legitimist sentiment is more than doubtful.

It may be that the ruling class would welcome the Habsburgs as an escape from defeat and a means of winning the peace after a lost war. But the Magyars as a nation fought the Habsburgs, no less than did the Czechs, prior to the 1867 constitution which gave them such great privileges. They revolted against them in 1848 under Kossuth, and were suppressed with the help of the Russian Czar. And was it not the present Regent Horthy himself who expelled the last Emperor and Hungarian King Charles from Hungary? In pre-war Austria the legitimist idea found a following only among the old bureaucracy, aristocracy and clergy, but did not win over the Austrian masses.

That profound political and social changes will take place in the direction of democracy in both countries, especially in Hungary, when Hitlerism disappears, is beyond any doubt. There can be no return to a Dolfuss Austria, or a Horthy Hungary, as there can be no return to an Italy of Mussolini and a France of Bonet-Flandin or Laval-Pétain. Neither will there be a return to the old Austro-Hungarian Empire of the Habsburg dynasty. The reconstruction of Central Europe can be achieved only by the democratic forces of those countries. How are these forces represented by the Free Movements of Austrians and Hungarians in America?

There is first the Austrian National Committee.

Although it did not promote officially the restoration of

the Habsburg dynasty, and despite the claim that it represents the will of all Austrian political parties to Austrian independence, it cannot be considered as the exponent of the democratic forces of Austria. For the dominant position in the Austrian National Committee is held by the monarchists and by the Fascist group of the former Dolfuss-Schuschnigg régime.

The President of the Austrian National Committee is Mr. Hans Rott, former minister of the Schuschnigg government, chairman of the monarchist and pro-Habsburg Free Austria, who likes to call Otto of Habsburg "Chief of the House of Austria."

Second president is Mr. Guido Zernatto, the former general secretary of the Fascist *Vaterländische Front*, which played the leading rôle in the suppression of Austrian Social Democracy and in the setting up of the Fascist régime in 1934.

Other functionaries are Mr. Martin Fuchs and Count Ferdinand Czernin, both conservatives and legitimists.

That is why the Social Democrats refused to join the Austrian National Committee, and set up an independent organization "The Austrian Labour Committee," pursuing the policy: Neither Hitler nor Habsburg, but a democratic and socialist Austria.

What about the Magyars?

The small group of truly "Democratic Hungarians" headed by Professor Rustem Vambéry, who advocates democratization of Hungary and reconciliation and cooperation with Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia, is overshadowed by the main body of American Magyars organized in the "American Hungarian Federation", which clings to the old concepts of Hungarian nationalism. This organization only recently dropped from chairmanship Tibor von Eckhard, the former leader of the Fascist "Awakening Magyars" of 1920, who is regarded by many as a spurious envoy of the present Hungarian Fascist régime.

While professing democracy and sympathy with the United States, Eckhard consistently refrained from condemning the present Hungarian government, and tries to excuse its policy on the ground of duress, completely ignoring its alliance with Fascism for the last 20 years. The open support he gives to Otto of Habsburg suggests the only too understandable desire of the Hungarian gentry to save themselves through taking refuge in a Habsburg restoration, while the support he received from Otto indicates the real nature of the Habsburgs' views of a Central European reconstruction.

It is evident that these "Free Movements" are quite unrealistic, and do not reckon with the true conditions in Central Europe which will arise from the defeat of Germany and Hungary. Undoubtedly the remnants of feudalism there will be swept away by a wave of democracy which will bring to the surface the new democratic forces and leaders in Austria and Hungary. There will be no place for a Habsburg restoration.

Certainly the Free Austrian and Hungarian Movements could then only serve the interests of their countries and of Europe if they anticipated the post-war situation and sought democratic collaboration with the Czechoslovak and Yugoslav governments.

This, alas, cannot be expected from Tibor Eckhard, and is hardly to be hoped for from the Austrian National Committee.

Certain it is, however, that Central European solidarity and unity in a federation of all the Danubian nations can be built only on the foundation of a truly democratic régime in all the countries concerned. The only unifying factor conceivable, besides the obvious common interests and dangers, will be democratic allegiance to the spirit of a New Europe, certainly not to an obsolete Habsburg idea.

In the realization of this aim, the Central European nations will have the support of the whole democratic world, for the genesis of both World Wars has taught the world that an enduring and democratic settlement of the Central European problem is a paramount condition of European security, hence of vital moment to all.