

# MID-EUROPE UNION A BAR TO GERMANS

## Representative Fess Advocates a Confederation of New Nations on the Pattern of the United States

By CONGRESSMAN S. D. FESS OF OHIO

THE proposal of Senator Lodge that Danzig be made a Polish port has wide significance. It looks to the security of a Polish Government erected upon a racial as well as an ethnological foundation, with an outlet to the commercial world that will not be contingent upon the option of a former Hohenzollern Government to which it had been subject.

There is yet a larger meaning to this step, which is but one of many that must be taken to insure against danger. Our country quite naturally hopes for complete autonomy as sovereign nations of the various peoples so long held subject to the Central Powers.

The real Poland erected upon these bases would be a Government of not less than 30,000,000 people. It would be well equipped for local self-government, first, generally speaking, by a law-abiding population, highly intelligent and learned in the fundamentals of law and order; given the freedom of development unrestricted by oppression and repressive measures it would become one of the prosperous nations of Europe. Its close proximity to Prussia, and especially the juxtaposition of Königsburg, the real birthplace of those notorious elements known as Prussianism, would subject it to a constant danger of being again overrun unless it had security of defense through an organic relationship with its kindred neighbors. The recently reborn Czechoslovak nation, a second Slavic country ethnologically similar to Poland, is also eminently constituted for a successful career of nationality, possessed of a high degree of popular education and well equipped for local government. It launches out under the Presidency of Professor Masaryk with ample promise, clouded only by the ancient danger of a rejuvenated German dominancy.

Rumania, another integral factor, has shown her ability for autonomous control, which gives assurance of success of government of and by the people under a proper system.

The same is true of the Southern or Yugoslav countries.

Here is a chain of countries, heretofore generally subject, now free to test their ability for local government, which range from the Baltic province, including the Esthonians, Letts, and Lithuanians; the Poles and Czechoslovaks; the Ruthenians, Rumanians, and South Slavs, to which should be added Greece, a chain of small nations reaching from the Baltic to the Adriatic and Mediterranean, skirting the entire eastern coast of Germany and Austria. These countries are occupied by at least 60,000,000 people, almost as large in population as Germany before the war. Each of these various provinces aspires to national independence. Students of history and government declare them capable of successful national existence.

The great problem of the future peace of the world secured against the dangers of a rejuvenated autocracy in the domains of the Central Powers is how to erect these various groups into a governmental federation where each will, like our own States, retain its local self-government but in the interest of national defense become a part of a confederation operative as our own nation. If on the east of these recent autocracies there is not erected a bulwark of nationalities strong enough to hold within fixed boundaries their former oppressors, they will feed again in time upon the exploitation of the once powerful but now totally impotent Russia, including these border nations.

A confederation made up of these Slavic peoples, to include Rumania, Albania, Dalmatia, and Greece, would make a power that could insure against the one lurking fear of the democracies of Europe and America.

The distance from the Baltic provinces to those on the Adriatic from the north to the south is less by many miles than from the east to west boundaries of our own country. The population is about three-fifths that of ours, and does not consist of as great a variety as that of the State of Pennsylvania and much less than that of the City of New York. The possibilities of transportation by land or water are designed to unify its peoples. Its outlet on the north on the Baltic, southeast on the Black Sea and thence through the Dardanelles into the great ~~ocean~~, then, on the southwest on the Adriatic, with its river facilities, would give it a commercial position equal to any country of any continent. It would thus be connected by land and water with all the population of Europe.

Its mineral wealth, including the famous oil fields of Rumania, and its wonderful agricultural possibilities, including the famous grain fields of the Ukraine, would give it a commanding place in Europe as one of the richest nations in the world. These countries confederated into one national Government like our "Imperium in Imperio" would by the cement of common interest and national defense compel the peace of Europe by insuring an eastern bulwark against the dangerous Prussian, whose exploitations eastward, now so imminent and disquieting, would be permanently forbidden.

essence of the confederation. There is no basis for the confederation of the counties of the State of New York as there is the forty-eight States of the Union.

No parts of the proposed confederation are wider in their interests than the States of Massachusetts and Mississippi, or than the Atlantic Seaboard States, the Mississippi Valley States and the Rocky Mountain States.

When our confederation was created the various parts widely differed on many lines.

In nationalities we had the English in New England and the Southern Atlantic States, the Dutch in New York, the Swedes in Delaware, the French further west, and the Spanish down south.

In religion, the break off from the English Church in New England, the Established Church in Virginia, the Quakers in Pennsylvania, the Catholics in Maryland, the Methodists in Georgia, the Huguenots in the Carolinas, and Scotch Covenanters in New Jersey. In government, we had the Charter System in New England, the Royal System in the South, and the Proprietary in Pennsylvania, Delaware, and Maryland.

These varied interests and beliefs were the essence of the confederation system, as was evidenced in the debates that culminated in the organic union with the Constitution as the basis of government and give assurance that the varied people and interests of these eastern border countries will operate favorably for the success of a federal system. Each State should select delegates to meet at some central point to adopt an organic system with a Constitution whereby each State should maintain its sovereignty in all matters pertaining to its own internal interests while the National Government must be sovereign over all matters pertaining to the interests of all, such as treaty relations with foreign countries, customs duties, currency laws, &c. It is not only the success of these Governments that is paramount, but their safety as well.

To maintain the autonomy of each when so widely different is the very

All students of Germany's progress

know what her ambitions were, and also her plans to insure these. In numerous pronouncements even up to this year German officers and statesmen referred to mistakes of this war, and how the nation must prepare to avoid them in the next war. It is not reasonable to believe that this spirit, so pervading and so compelling, while broken, is destroyed. The German people are still the German people, and the dominating thought of the superiority of this people will as surely reveal itself again as the operations of gravity will continue. In the peace discussions this fact must not be overlooked.

With the end of the war the supreme concern is how to insure against another war. So long as the ambitions of the Hohenzollern family had unlimited sway and the German population served that ambition, the imminence of war was apparent.

The complete unification of Kaiser and people in a campaign of world domination as displayed in a program of industrial achievement, assisted by a worldwide propaganda, which had insinuated itself into all channels of diplomacy, backed by a powerful military machine, explains in part the possibility of holding most of the world at bay for over four years in the most frightful war of all history.

The German Army was defeated, the propaganda exposed, the dominance arrested, and the people reduced to the suppliant.

There are some questions claiming an answer.

What is the status of the ruling element of the former empire? Is there

any latent power of future danger? What is the morale of the people and what relation will it sustain toward the ambitious designs of its former ruling classes? What are the latent possibilities of German mind and energy in their application to industry? What limitation is fixed upon agencies of propaganda which prior to the war had been operative in every country of the world and had been coloring much of the national life of many nations even outside of Europe?

Germany proper was saved the pillage and ravages of war. Her territorial integrity was undisturbed. Her lands were not overrun, her cities were not burned, her homes were not pillaged, her industries were not destroyed, her people were not compelled to see rivers of blood; in a word, Germany knew no war as did France, Belgium, Serbia—especially these three nations.

Has the war crushed the ambition for world dominancy of the boasted superman or simply retarded it? In either instance will it be re-born, and become again the slogan of a people demanding a "place in the sun"?

The west will doubtless be free for years from this danger. What about the great and fertile fields for German propaganda on the east border countries?

The one decisive answer is a confederation of these border States either by an actual organic law or such close alliance as to produce the effect of law. Here on the east border is the real peace problem, when viewed from the safety of the future.