

## “THE UNITED STATES OF EUROPE”— WHY NOT?

BY VICTOR S. YARROS

SINCE the great war, not a few thinkers have despaired of Europe—or of humanity—for, after all, there is but one Western civilization, and if Europe is doomed, America, too, is facing destruction. But it is difficult to rid one's self of the feeling that the despair is largely theatrical. And it is likely that the average person vaguely agrees with those who, like Herbert C. Hoover, have, despite many depressing developments in the old world, paid surprisingly warm tributes to the splendid intellectual resources, the industry and the recuperative power of Europe.

A striking illustration of the vitality and vigor of European civilization is found in the somewhat sudden emergence of a new ideal or goal—“the United States of Europe!” In Germany, Herr Maximilian Harden, in France, M. Joseph Caillaux, in England and America certain Labor and advanced Liberal leaders have almost simultaneously raised that heartening and inspiring slogan. Can this phenomenon be a mere accident, an ephemeral and passing affair? Hardly. If Utopians and sentimentalists had, in times of profound peace, of fancy-free aspiration, launched the idea of a federal republic of Europe, most of us would have rightly dismissed it as well-meant, dreamy, but futile speculation. But that sober-minded men, practical men, realists in politics, should at this critical time seriously propose the formation of such a republic, and suggest steps and measures in that direction, is a portent charged with significance. For ten years politicians, editors, diplomats, men of affairs have talked of nothing and thought of nothing save the hatreds, the suspicions, the fears, the antipathies, the prejudices which have prevented the pacification and reconstruction of Europe. The talk has been of conflicts, of revenge, of preparations for another terrible

war. Yet, in the midst of all this, and in spite of it, or because of it, voices are now raised in favor not of lame and unstable compromises, not of narrow, financial agreements, but of a courageous, daring, magnificent attempt to work out a permanent and progressive solution of the whole complex of European problems!

There is such a thing as intensely practical idealism, and there is such a thing as thoroughly sane and saving radicalism. Some problems are too intricate and difficult for timid, skeptical, half-hearted, conventional men; they require heroic treatment. Europe's case, men are beginning to see, calls for faith, for vision, for confidence in quintessential human nature.

Perhaps, indeed, Europe needs a new ideal if it is to experience a change of heart. Dull sermons, hypocritical pretensions, holier-than-thou attitudes, sweeping denunciations of European sins have utterly failed to impress the alleged offenders. Pharisaical peace-ments and ignorant exhortation have been resented by Europe. The impatient outsider who rails at "superheated nationalism" in Europe, or at the disposition to subordinate economics to politics, business to principle, and who cavalierly advises the summary demolition of tariff walls and other obstacles to free commerce, only provokes contempt and ridicule—and richly deserves it.

But there are better and more effective ways of appealing to reason and to the sense of human solidarity. The men who have proclaimed the ideal of a United States of Europe are not committing the stupid blunder of pouring scorn upon nationalism, however crudely this sentiment may be expressing itself in some sections. They are in full sympathy with national aspirations; they advocate no mechanical, artificial union of irreconcilable elements. They do not say to the nations of Europe: "You are benighted, reactionary, perverse, absurd; you are governed by low passions, and we, superior peoples, have only contempt for your traditions and cultural claims." No; they say to the nations and states of Europe: "We understand you; we have deep sympathy with your aspirations; we do not even seriously blame you for the mistakes you seem to us to be making, for behind every present problem there lies a long history of struggle and injustice; we do not expect you to forget the past and sacrifice any institution, custom, tradition, principle that you cherish and love: all we suggest and urge is that you take as enlightened, rational and noble a view of your relation to your neighbors as it is humanly possible to take, and that in asserting your several interests, make sure that those interests are legitimate and permanent."

Such an attitude as this turns away wrath and surely, if slowly, induces heart-searching and an open-minded approach to a proposed policy.

Now, no nation in Europe today professes predatory and aggressive sentiments. No nation admits that it contemplates war or prefers war to the arbitrament of reason and equity. All nations protest their devotion to peace and amity; all are ready—they say—to inaugurate a new international order of things. In these circumstances, it is not to be wondered at that some far-sighted and high-minded spirits should seek to direct attention to the possibility of European federation.

If a United States of America, why not a United States of Europe? The American colonies were not indifferent to their liberties and rights; but they found federation, and eventually union, indispensable to security, to orderly progress, to economic and spiritual expansion. Obstacles and difficulties were not lacking, but gradually the idea of union was made popular and in due time it triumphed over local prejudices and timid counsels. Why should not the idea of a federated Europe similarly triumph?

It would be idle to minimize the difficulties in the way. Differences of language alone constitute formidable barriers to federation. But Switzerland is a federal republic despite differences in language. If Russia ever settles down under a free republican form of government, that form will be federal, and it will function despite the heterogeneous character of the Russian empire—the multiplicity of races, languages, tribes, varieties within it.

To be sure, it would require a century of planning, discussion of objections, removal of difficulties, reconciliation of apparent or real conflicts of interests to set up a federal European republic. But it is one thing to conceive a great objective and move slowly toward it, receiving encouragement and inspiration from every forward step taken, and another thing to drift and flounder and muddle amidst difficulties and dangers without a goal and haven in view.

Europe is great and vital enough to right itself, to find salvation and healing in substituting solidarity for division, co-operation for destructive rivalry, union for chaos and warfare.

After all, the leading nations of Europe, as H. G. Wells, in his historical outline, has pointed out, belongs to the same stock. After all, England, Germany, France and Italy have more in common than they have in severalty." Science, art, philosophy, finance, industry, commerce, technique are international, not national. The great men of Europe are "good Europeans" first and nationalists in the second

place. Beethoven, it was once beautifully said, was a conclusive argument against war with Germany. Well, there are many such "arguments," and every civilized European nation is able to advance them. Europe is intellectually and artistically united, and politics as well as economics must begin to draw the unavoidable inferences from that fact. Germany loves Shakespeare even more than England does. Goethe loved France as much as any native can love it. Lord Haldane, philosopher and statesman, calls Germany his spiritual home. Even during the war, France listened to Bach, Beethoven, Schumann, Wagner. The scientific men of Germany paid sincere and warm homage to Pasteur on the occasion of the observance of his centenary. These things are symptomatic, even though the thoughtless politician never stops to reflect upon them.

But what, it may be asked, can practical men do at present to promote European federation or union, assuming the ideal to be ultimately realizable and intrinsically desirable?

The answer to this question was given long ago by a German philosopher—Immanuel Kant. It is not generally known that Kant, with prophetic insight and foresight, advocated disarmament and free-trade for Europe, and advocated these reforms as essential conditions precedent to the establishment of a League of Nations, a federated Europe!

Germany is disarmed, and the other nations of Europe, or their liberal and enlightened elements, must take up the question of the limitation of their own armaments in earnest. Disarmament must be general, or else it is a snare and fraud. A French senator has indeed proposed the immediate scrapping of the world's navies, but what of armies? The League of Nations has a committee to study armament limitation, but it is not receiving the slightest encouragement in that direction from the great powers. The question is "up" however, and the friends of humanity, peace and civilization will not permit it to be thrust aside. That the world is thinking of armament limitation is itself a notable moral gain. Lift the menace of huge standing armies, and the question of federating Europe at once takes a leap forward.

In the second place, there is the idea of establishing an absolutely independent International Court of Justice for the civilized world. Not a few, including Senator Borah and other American statesmen, favor compulsory jurisdiction for such a court, though they would rely on public opinion, rather than on force, for the carrying out of the court's decisions. A Court implies a Code, and a Code of law implies systematic collaboration in the development and improve-

ment of such law. To bring thinkers and jurists together for such high tasks is to encourage them to take large, unselfish, humane views of national questions and to put humanity and civilization above selfish and short-sighted notions. That in turn paves the way for federation or union wherever possible and beneficial. "Out-law war," is a new cry heard in the world. The men and women who are determined to outlaw war are often guilty of confused thinking, of putting the car before the horse; but their voices are raised in support of righteousness, and the more they ponder the ways to the desired end, the more clearly will they perceive that war cannot be arbitrarily "outlawed" by resolutions, but must be made unnecessary, unprofitable and alien to men's thoughts by substituting community of interests for conflicts of interest. If the American colonies had remained divided, would any pious anti-war declaration have saved them from fratricidal strife and commercial and physical antagonisms? Europe should strive to remove or modify the conditions which engender war. These conditions are largely economic, but not exclusively such. There are political and psychological factors to be attended to by the friends of peace and civilization.

The reference to economic causes of war brings us to the remarkable reconstruction program of M. Caillaux, former premier of France, in his book entitled, "Whither France? Whither Europe?" As already indicated above, M. Caillaux, though a patriotic Frenchman, has no hesitation about contemplating and favoring a United States of Europe. Realizing, however, the number and variety of post-war obstacles in the way of that ideal, he faces courageously the immediate problems before impoverished and distracted Europe. His plans for rehabilitation and pacification include the following major items:

The scaling down of all European public debts and the pooling of the gold reserves of Europe; administration of the pooled finances by a board of governors representing all the chief European banks of issue; reduction of armaments; the formation of syndicates under government control, with State participation in profits, to stimulate and stabilize production, exchange of products and foreign commerce; the abolition of all tariff barriers in Europe.

M. Caillaux, like other intelligent men, would not for a moment suggest that internationalism means the effacement of the subtler and finer racial and national differences. An economic federation, with political institutions to reflect and foster it, need not interfere with the enthusiastic promotion of national literatures, national art,

national musical tendencies, national social and religious institutions. No Frenchman writes like a German, Englishman or Italian. No German fails to appreciate the peculiar genius of the French—of Moliere, for example, or of Balzac, or of Renan. A general European culture is compatible with the free and spontaneous development of particular cultures expressive of deep and innate racial differences. In the house of civilization there are many mansions, all of them attractive and all legitimate. Federation for specific purposes is not inconsonant with the widest and fullest local autonomy.

It is to be hoped, then, that the hopeful, progressive utterances of the European liberals and progressives in favor of federation and union will be echoed and re-echoed in a thousand circles and from a thousand platforms. That way lies redemption and regeneration. That way lies resumption of world progress without danger of another world catastrophe even more destructive than the last one was of the very foundations and pillars of civilization.

Men of science, religious leaders, artists, reformers, imaginative writers, journalists—and even statesmen of the nobler type—can severally and in concert do much day by day to uphold and “people-ize” the ideal of a United States of Europe, a federation of free and great states dedicated to justice, to solidarity, to amity and to human advancement.