

Camp News

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Plan for the New Europe

By GEORGE T. RENNER, Professor of Geography, Teachers' College, Columbia University.

From the "Daily Mirror," London.

The peace that follows the present war will depend largely upon what kind of new map of Europe the democracies are prepared to draw at the peace table.

Before 1914 about two-thirds of Europe was occupied by Slavic people, and about one-third by Germanic and Latinised Mediterranean peoples.

The Treaty of Versailles did two things. A line was drawn from Petsamo, on the Arctic, to the mouth of the Danube.

Russia was shoved east of this line and isolated from European affairs, while west of it were all those European peoples—including millions of Slavs—who were more or less Romanised in their culture.

Then, west of that line, political boundaries were redrawn to conform more or less to language boundaries.

Some glaring weaknesses existed in this map.

The Finns (Karelians) east of the line were left out of Finland. Millions of White and Little Russians west of the line were included in other countries.

Millions of French and German-speaking peoples were left out of France and Germany.

The synthetic country of Belgium, comprising French, Dutch and German peoples, was maintained in order to provide a pad or buffer in the west.

France held the Italian island of Corsica and Yugoslavia the Dalmatian coast, rendering Italy totally insecure on either flank.

Britain held the geographically French Channel Islands, the Norse Shetlands and Greek Cyprus.

Italy held Greek Rhodes and France held what should have been Italian Tunisia.

Sweden had no northern outlet, and Russia was denied access to the Dardanelles by the device of maintaining a small piece of Turkey-in-Europe.

A more or less artificial Portugal, a vast Dutch colonial empire and Greece were maintained solely by British naval power.

A whole flock of small new countries was created and released in the political and economic world, without even feathers of experience in political intrigue to protect them.

Post-Versailles Europe contained no fewer than thirty-five independent countries and five colonial dependencies—forty political units in all. The dependencies included one Italian and four British possessions.

For a time it included three other artificial States—the Saar, the Zone of the Straits, and the city of Fiume—but these three died violent deaths along the way.

Obviously forty-three political units (or forty-four if we include the Vatican State) in a continent the size of Europe, with no regulated relations among them was a fertile breeding ground for war. And, sure enough, it did breed war.

About one-fourth of all Europeans are Russians. Aside from them, the Germans are the strongest ethnic bloc in Europe. The nub of most of the Continent's troubles hinges on trying to ignore that fact.

Twenty-five years ago the British Overseas Dominions and the United

States intervened to preserve Western civilisation in Europe.

To-day they are again compelled to intervene. Fortunately, a German error in timing involved Russia in the struggle, and hence the world's political structure may again be preserved.

But the next time, nothing on earth is likely to save European civilisation as we now know it, unless a new type of political organisation is set up after the present war is finished.

It is entirely possible to have a strong united Germany surrounded by eight other strong European nations, any one of which would be tough enough to discourage aggression.

A Europe consisting of nine strong nations would constitute its own framework for achieving stability.

The first of these would be the Fenoscandic Union consisting of Iceland, Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Finland and Estonia. All of these are culturally similar, and have at times enjoyed union with one another.

A second bloc would be a West Slavic or Czecho-Polska State.

If this be expanded to include Lithuania, with which Poland has been associated in the past, a fairly compact State with ocean frontage would result.

In the south-east, the thoroughly chastened Balkan States are now more nearly ripe for a federal union than ever before in history.

Such a State would unite the South Slavs, the partially Latinised Slavs of Rumania, the Albanians and the Greeks.

Italy should be given Dalmatia, Tunis, Corsica and Nice, so that she would be made secure from attack within the Adriatic and Tyrrhenian Sea.

A strengthened French Republic should include all French speaking peoples of Europe.

An Iberian Union should be set up on republican principles.

Russia should be compensated for losses of territory to Finland by an outlet to the Gulf of Riga on the Baltic and to the Dardanelles in the south.

Germany should include all the German-speaking people of Europe, and its perennial ally Hungary should be attached to it.

The new Dutch-Flemish State should be invited to full dominion status in the British Commonwealth of Nations. This would accomplish two ends: It would protect England's continental flank and would save Holland from German aggression.

It is not at all incompatible with facts, either. For more than a century the British Empire has protected Holland's vast colonial holdings. Politically, religiously, racially and commercially, the Dutch are closer to the British than any other European peoples.

A Europe of this kind would thwart no one, not even the Germans.

It cuts across no major cultural lines. It would be a long step, geographically, toward peace on the world's bloodiest continent.

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