

"JUGO-SLAVIA" BEFORE PEACE CAN COME IN THE BALKANS

Serbs, Croats and Slavs There Demand Formation of a New Kingdom --Italy May Object

(By Herbert Corey in N.Y. Globe) Salonica.—A few people in the United States have read about Jugo-Slavia. Other few have heard about it. To all of us, perhaps, Jugo-Slavia has seemed as impalpable as a dream.

"The new Slav kingdom will be created within 6 weeks after the declaration of peace," said a man who is in touch with the allied diplomacy. "It will be an added guarantee of the future peace of Europe."

"There will be another European war within five years."

That statement reflects the opinion of the majority of thinking men with whom I have talked. It is believed—this statement is so qualified because recent experience has shown how often secret agreements think the close of the public treaties between nations—that the foreign offices of Great Britain, France, and Russia are disposed to be entirely friendly to the aspirations of the Balkan Slavs. Only Italy's attitude remains to be resolved.

Draw a line on the map about the borders of the proposed Jugo-Slavia. It will include, under the title of Great Serbia, the states of Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Dalmatia, and as a second half the states of Croatia and Slavonia. Add a couple of the bordering provinces of Bulgaria, in which the Serb blood is strong, and the new state is in effect complete.

"As long as we Slavs are parcelled out among other peoples, that long shall there be no peace in the Balkans," said one of them. "Give us our own state—permit us to have peace, so that we may prosper in our own way—and the causes which have led to war will be removed. There are no richer lands in the world than the Balkans. We have silver and gold, copper and iron, coal and oil. We have forests and pastures. We have everything that should make for happiness—except the right of peace. For years we have held the sword and are tired."

From the international point of view which will be taken by the diplomatic establishments of the allies, the creation of a strong Slav power in the Near East would effectually block Germany's drive to the east. Jugo-Slavia would extend from the Roumanian and Bulgarian fronts to the Adriatic, and thanks to old antagonisms the intimate relation the new power would undoubtedly bear to Russia would certainly hold in check that "drang-nach-osten" which has been the key of Austrian policy for the past seventy years. All this is promised, of course, on the assumption that the allies win a complete victory. The creation of Jugo-Slavia would be merely a phase of the great plan by which another European war is to be prevented—or at least delayed.

As a practical proposition, the establishment of Jugo-Slavia seems to offer no insuperable difficulties. Croatia and Slavonia are Catholic in religion, it is true, while the other states are Greek orthodox, and use the Latin alphabet. But there is nothing in these facts to make for separation, and the strong movement now on foot to discard the cumbersome Cyrillic characters for the Latin alphabet will undoubtedly bear fruit all the earlier if the new kingdom is made. The people of these states are alike in blood, in racial aspirations, and to a great extent in culture. It is true the Croats and Slavonians have largely gained their education in Vienna for geographic and political reasons. On the other hand, they are as virulently hostile to the Austrians as the Serbs themselves.

"We led 40,000 Austrian prisoners with us on the Great Retreat," said an officer. "It seemed impossible for the Serbs fought without food and without cannon on the retreat. The army made its way almost single file through narrow, snow-filled passes."

"They came with us willingly because they are Slavs," he added. "We could not have forced them."

The plan is to create a state under the kingship of Prince Alexander of Serbia, who reigns as regent in place of his old father, King Peter. The two states of Greater Serbia and Croatia-Slavonia will be autonomous, each having its parliament, while they will have in common their diplomatic and consular services, the army, and the treasury. There will be no navy, even if the Slavs get the seaports on which they have set their eyes. They are not a seagoing people, for one thing. For another, their formal relations in East being what they are, the possession of a navy might prove only an incitement to trouble. The Slavs want no trouble. They have had only trouble for generations. The thing each Slav most earnestly desires is an honorable and a lasting peace.

Although the situation has not progressed far enough for diplomatic representations in the open, it is generally assumed that the only opposition to the creation of Jugo-Slavia will come from Italy. It is the desire of one school of Italians to dominate the Adriatic Sea completely by the possession of or access to the Adriatic ports. Unless the new kingdom had access to open-water it would be a weakling, deprived of the power to prosper, and therefore certain to fall apart at the first strain. Italy's wish to form a collection of small Balkan states under her own protectorate is utterly rejected by the Slav leaders. There is no disguise of the fact that they anticipate an arrangement would eventually issue in an appeal to arms.

If the Jugo-Slavs are given what they desire the new kingdom will have the ports of Flume, Zara, Pola, Ragusa, and Spalato. These were all at one time under the dominion of the ancient Republic of Venice, and have maintained their Italian character in great part ever since. The immediate hinterland, however, is Slav to a man. Ten miles outside of these cities Italian is barely understood by a few and spoken by almost none. In Dalmatia there are 600,000 Serbs and only 50,000 Italians. For historical and economic reasons, however, Italy lays claim to the whole seaboard. If she gets it the new Jugo-Slavia would be completely at her mercy. It is urged that Italy has no need to fear Slav aggression in the Adriatic, for if she is in possession of Trieste at the head of the sea and the ports of Valona and Bari on either side of the entrance she can police it most effectually.

Neither Roumania nor Bulgaria is included in the plan of Jugo-Slavia. There are two provinces of Bulgaria which are largely Serb by blood, but it is believed that Russia will interfere to save Bulgaria, after that state has been sufficiently punished. Russia is believed to want a buffer state between Roumania and the rest of Europe. Bulgaria as a buffer state between Roumania and the rest of Europe. Roumanian blood is to some extent Latin—just as Bulgarian is founded on the Tartar—and the Roumanians would therefore be outsiders in a Slav state.



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India Progresses Under Beneficent British Rule

Native States There Reach High Stage of Culture and Refinement Under Intelligent and Broad Minded Rulers

Bikaner, Rajputana, India, Feb. 5.—(Correspondence of The Associated Press)—No more marked evidence of the spirit of progress which is sweeping India can be found than in some of the States that are ruled by the Indian Princes under the protection of the British Government. One of the most pronounced examples of advancement is Bikaner, which ranks among the highest of the more than 700 Indian States.

The Maharajah belongs to the new order of Indian rulers who have been schooled in the learning of the West and who have accepted the tenets that the stability of government depends upon the enlightenment, prosperity and happiness of its people. When he took over the control of Bikaner eighteen years ago—he was then eighteen—he immediately set about to put into practice the advanced ideas which he had acquired and to-day railways, modern schools, an up-to-date hospital, a model prison, electric lighting, sanitary improvements, water supply systems, and beautiful public buildings furnish visible demonstrations of progress, while he has established a Representative Assembly and puts his administration on a business basis that has resulted in the State income being nearly trebled.

In personal appearance, in bearing and in accomplishment, His Highness impresses one as having just stepped out of an Arabian Nights tale in which he has played the part of the gallant Prince, so typical is he of what one has been led to expect in a story of that sort. Tall, broad-shouldered, handsome, ever affable, yet maintaining a dignity which brooks no over-familiarity, of magnetic personality, a born soldier, an excellent horseman, a sure shot and keen sportsman, as the trophies of big game in his palace show, an indefatigable worker in affairs of state—such is the Maharajah of Bikaner at the age of thirty-six.

One of the most striking innovations which the Maharajah has made in his state has been the establishment of the representative assembly through which his people have a voice in the government. It was a voluntary concession on his part. "I came to the conclusion," he said, "that the greatness of a ruler lies in the greatness of his people. When I announced that I intended to establish the Assembly some of my friends begged me not to take such a step. It is giving away your power," they declared.

The Maharajah was asked if both he and the people were satisfied that the change had been beneficial. "Come and ride with me and my sons to the temple in the city this afternoon and I think you will get a better answer than I can give you verbally," he replied.

The invitation was accepted and the correspondent accompanied the Maharajah and his two young Princes to the great Hindu Temple where the Ruler and his sons performed their devotions. During the morning the streets had been specially watered to lay the dust and this had given the people warning that some member of the reigning family was to pass. As the carriage whooped the winding ways dense crowds gathered beside the road and nearly every window was filled with eager faces. Even the roofs were covered with those who hoped to get a better view.

It is not an unusual thing for the Maharajah to make a trip through the capital, but there were the throngs just the same, as keen to get a glimpse as though he were a foreign Prince. And as the carriage advanced the people broke into such cheering as the correspondent had seldom heard before. Even tiny children took up the cry of "Khama," a salutation of respect and devotion, peculiar to these parts and used only for the ruler, and the volume swelled until it became almost deafening. More than one of the aged people gave the Maharajah their blessings and invoked any troubles which he might have, to come upon themselves. All the way this wonderful demonstration was kept up. His Highness smiling and saluting to right and left. When a point finally was reached where he

could make himself heard he leaned forward and said:

"Does it pay to do the best one can for his people? For myself I ask no better answer than we have just given."

The Maharajah is rapidly turning his capital into a model city. Bikaner now has one of the largest and best electric light installations in India, being among the first of the Indian cities to adopt this mode of lighting. The telephone, too, has been brought into use to connect all the important government offices and residences. Sanitation is a hobby of His Highness and the entire city has been cleaned up, buildings being torn down and replaced where necessary. The streets have been widened in many places and just now a modern water supply system is being installed.

The Maharajah has a keen sense of appreciation of the beautiful and has created a large number of magnificent buildings, of Oriental design but with Western interiors, most of which are for the use of the public or the government. The plans for all these structures have been personally supervised by him.

The ruler no longer lives in the ancient, fort-encircled Palace of his ancestors but has built a Palace further away from the city—a fairly land with its beautiful gardens. And at the same time, while placing himself in more modern surroundings, he let out a great public garden for his people opposite the old Palace. Even a zoo has been placed in this park for the amusement of the little folk of Bikaner, and facilities for bathing are provided in a large artificial lake.

His Highness is particularly interested in the education of his subjects and while he has not yet inaugurated compulsory education, he has by persuasion worked wonders in getting the people to send their children to school. In the capital two colleges have been built, one for the public and the other for the sons of the nobles. The public college has something like 1,000 pupils, who are being taught both in English and their own language, literature, history and the sciences are not being neglected. The Nobles' college, while smaller, has a large number of students.

Outside the capital the Maharajah has also been at work and has increased the mileage of railways in his state from 86 to 498 miles. Two new lines, one 132 miles long, and the other a more direct connection between Delhi and Sind via Bikaner, some 500 miles in length, are in progress, and a great irrigation plan which will turn the sandy country of Bikaner into good agricultural lands is under consideration. For his achievements the Maharajah has been decorated by the King several times.

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Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand..... "I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink..... naked, and ye clothed me....." Then shall they answer him, saying— "Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink?or naked, and clothed thee?" And the King shall answer..... "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." Overseas, in ravaged Belgium, more than 3,000,000 of "the least of these" are hungry, thirsty, thinly clad—looking to us! Have you done what you could for any of them? Whatever you can give, send your subscription weekly, monthly or in one lump sum to Local or Provincial Committees or SEND CHEQUES PAYABLE TO TREASURER Belgian Relief Fund 59 St. Peter Street, Montreal The Greatest Relief Work in History. Subscriptions may be sent to and will be acknowledged by The Courier.

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