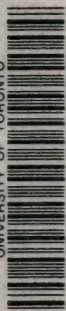


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DOCUMENTS AND STATEMENTS
RELATING TO
PEACE PROPOSALS & WAR AIMS
(DECEMBER 1916—NOVEMBER 1918)

DOCUMENTS AND
STATEMENTS RE-
LATING TO PEACE
PROPOSALS & WAR AIMS

(DECEMBER 1916—NOVEMBER 1918)

WITH AN INTRODUCTION

BY

G. LOWES DICKINSON



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PREFATORY NOTE

THE object of this publication is to preserve the record of the aims of the belligerent Governments, as set forth by them during the great war. No official edition of this material is likely to be issued; and the documents and speeches might easily be buried and lost in the files of newspapers. With regard to the official Notes of the Governments, there has been no difficulty of selection. The choice of speeches is necessarily arbitrary. But the attempt has been made to select those which are most significant and important. In some cases only extracts are given from the full speech, or a summary is substituted in part. Where this is the case, it is indicated in the text; and it is believed that no misrepresentation will be found to be involved in a procedure adopted only in order to eliminate what seemed unessential.

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INTRODUCTION ¹

BY G. LOWES DICKINSON

A COLLECTION such as that which follows is a text requiring much comment. But for any final comment the time is not ripe nor the materials available. What can here be attempted is to indicate some of the questions to which the documents give rise, and to supplement them with additional matter, so far as that can be done in a brief space and with the information at present open to the public.

It is to be noted, first, that we have here only such part of the diplomacy of the war as the statesmen concerned thought fit to give to the public. That this should be so voluminous is, in itself, a significant fact. It shows that the time has come in which it is impossible to carry on a war without at least a brave show of motives appealing to the ordinary citizen. Moreover, as is clear from all our texts, the only motives which it is supposed will appeal to the public are ideal—self-defence, treaty obligation, outraged right, the cause of the weak. No Government, whatever its real objects, ventures to call upon the people to wage a war for territory and markets. The enemy Governments did not do so, any more than our own. Hence the fact, adverted to by President Wilson in his first Note, that the professed objects of all the belligerents were identical. 

One of the first and most important questions, therefore, arising out of our documents is whether these high-sounding words really express the truth, and all the truth, about the purposes of those who were the masters of war and peace. That question can only be answered when men's minds are in a state to ask it fairly, and when material is published at present unavailable. Even so, the truth will only be partially known,

¹ For the selection and translation of the documents and speeches the writer of this Introduction is not responsible.

and it is not likely to be simple. For these tremendous events are not set in motion and controlled by men fully conscious of their own purposes, preparing them over long periods of time, and carrying them through with ruthless consistency. Many minds and influences co-operate; all the minds are waiting more or less upon the chances of the game; and new personalities from time to time come in to take charge and deflect the original course of events. Such changes in leading personalities often bring a change in motive and ideal. And wars begun for honourable ends may be continued for others which statesmen dare not avow. The historian will have the difficult task of confronting the professions of public men with the actual agreements they made with one another, with the words they spoke or wrote in private (so far as these may be recorded), and, above all, with what they actually did when the war was over and won. The main comment, indeed, on these documents will be the whole course of future history, as set in motion by the actual arrangements entered into at the Peace Conference. Some comment, however, is already to hand. And to this I shall refer the reader as we proceed.

The relation, then, of public professions to actual intentions and acts is one problem raised by our documents. There is another, urgently felt by those who lived through the war and scanned the horizon for signs of peace with an anxiety no historian of the future will ever be able to recover. Was there any point in those terrible years at which, with greater wisdom and humanity, on either side or on both, the war could have been terminated in such a way as to prepare that durable peace which all professed to have as their main object? But with this point historians are not likely to deal faithfully. When a war has ended with victory, history is hypnotized by the event just as contemporaries are. And it is supposed that because victory crowned the war, therefore victory was the best ending, and was worth the cost at which it was attained. In truth, however, with regard to this war, and to all wars, the most important of all questions are these:—Was it necessary that the youth of the world should perish year after year? Could the result desired be attained in no other way? Did the result, when attained, justify the sacrifice? Such questions, put in regard to previous wars, leave the historian, often enough, in grave doubt, or, worse, with a conviction of vain unnecessary sacrifices, made to human obstinacy, cupidity and pride. They are poignantly raised by the diplomacy of the war just ended.

They cannot yet be answered, perhaps they will never be answered, beyond all dispute. But they, above all, look out at us from the documents here printed.

The first of our documents is the German Note of December 1916. At that moment the fortunes of Germany stood, to all appearance, at their height, though in fact her statesmen may have known, even before that date, that ultimate victory was impossible. The Germans were in occupation of Poland and of the greater part of Serbia and Roumania, in the east; of Belgium and an important part of France, in the west. They had won, they might claim, the campaigns of 1914, 1915, 1916, although their costly offensive at Verdun had failed. The Allies, on the other hand, had behind them the disastrous failure of Gallipoli and the practical annihilation of the small nations that had come in on their side. It is unlikely that any peace could have been made at that time which did not correspond, in some measure, to these military facts. On the other hand, time was working against the Central Powers. And of this factor, no doubt, they would have taken account in putting forward definite proposals of peace.

What their terms would have been President Wilson perhaps knew, or thought he knew. His Note of December 18th was written without collusion with the Germans. But it indicates clearly that he believed, at that time, that a reasonable accommodation might have been reached. He points out that, in their public professions, both groups of belligerents claimed to be fighting a war of self-defence, to have no aggressive aims, and to desire a durable peace. It is not likely that the President took at the face value these professions of Governments. But he perhaps thought it possible that a peace might be reached tolerable to both sides, on which should be grafted that new order of international relations which, from the first, was the purpose of all his intervention. If the President did think that such a peace was then attainable, the Note of the Allied Governments in reply must have sharply undeceived him. For those Governments put forward, then for the first time, demands which we have no clear evidence that they ever abandoned (though they may later have been prepared to modify them), and which were plainly unattainable without a complete and crushing victory. Without such victory, they believed, no doubt, that they could not achieve security. Their moral indignation against Germany was, presumably, sincere, and it expressed itself in the demand for punishment and reparation. But there was something else, not then known

to the public, which dictated their reply. They had made among themselves a series of secret treaties presupposing complete victory, and dividing among themselves enormous tracts of enemy territory.

These treaties were published during the winter of 1917-18 by the Russian Revolutionary Government. They were generally ignored by the Press of the Entente countries, so that, even to this date, large numbers of people seem to be unaware and sceptical of their existence. But they were reproduced in the *Manchester Guardian* and, later, published in book form,¹ so that they are accessible, in essentials, though perhaps not in the complete text, to any reader who cares to study them. Such readers will find that while, in their public protestations, the Allied Governments were preoccupied with ideal purposes, in their private agreements these high ends play no part. The treaties are concerned with partitions of territory calculated to increase the power, the wealth, and the strategic security of the Allied nations, while correspondingly weakening the enemy Powers; and with this purpose in view, they do not hesitate to violate, in many important particulars, that principle of nationality which had been advertised from the beginning as a principal war aim of the Entente. The greater part of the Turkish Empire was to be partitioned between England, France, Italy and Russia. France was not only to recover Alsace-Lorraine, but to detach from Germany all her other provinces, of purely German inhabitants, on the left bank of the Rhine. Italy was to annex not only the Trentino and Trieste, but Dalmatia and all the most important islands of the Adriatic. Russia was to take Constantinople and the Straits. Roumania was to incorporate not only the Roumanians of Transylvania, but large populations of Magyars and Serbs. As to Poland, the disposal of that question was left to the free discretion of Russia. Whether, from the beginning, the complete dissolution of Austria-Hungary was intended remains in doubt, but it seems probable that, on this point, the diplomacy of the Allied Governments oscillated, according as they thought a separate peace with the Dual Monarchy to be possible or not.² In any case, however, territorial sacrifices by the Dual Monarchy

¹ *The Secret Treaties and Understandings*, by F. Seymour Cocks, published by the Union of Democratic Control.

² On December 4, 1917, President Wilson explicitly stated that "We do not wish in any way to impair or to rearrange the Austro-Hungarian Empire" (see p. 92 below). Cf. Lloyd George's speech of January 5, 1918 (p. 113).

were implied such as only a Power completely defeated would be likely to accept.

A full discussion of these treaties, of the justification of them, or the contrary, and of the circumstances under which they came to be made, cannot here be attempted. But it is necessary to remember their existence, for they were an important determinant of the policy of the Allies. They precluded any peace on a basis of give and take, of mutual agreement, of a drawn war; and were alone sufficient to rule out the kind of settlement to which presumably President Wilson was looking when he issued his first Note. A peace "without annexations" was contrary to the treaty engagements of Great Britain and her Allies. And so was a peace "without indemnities." For the Italian treaty specifically declares that "Italy is to get a share in the war indemnity corresponding to the magnitude of her sacrifices and efforts." This fact must be remembered when we come to consider the proposals of the Russian Revolutionary Governments.

While thus the sort of accommodation apparently contemplated by President Wilson was ruled out by the Entente Governments, there is no reason to suppose it would have been acceptable to the Central Powers. We do not know what terms, if any, the latter may have suggested to the President. But we do know that, between December 1916 and April 1917, Mr. Wilson's attitude to our enemies was completely transformed. In his Note of December 18, 1916, he had seemed to put the aims of the belligerents, on both sides, on a level; and in his address to the Senate of January 22, 1917, he desiderates a "peace without victory." But in April 1917 he came into the war on the side of the Entente Powers. And thenceforth he consistently demands victory, and denounces the German Government as the enemy of civilization and of mankind. The renewed and intensified submarine war, and the discovery of the German intrigues in Mexico, may be sufficient to account for this transformation. Or there may be other facts not yet disclosed. At any rate, from this time on, the President's attitude is consistent. He will not trust the German Government. But he separates the Government from the nation, stating that he is the enemy of the one, but not of the other. And the peace for which he contends is a peace of equal right for all, reserving to a reformed Germany the same liberty of development that is to be guaranteed to the rest of the world. The policy of America was never complicated by the bad traditions and the secret diplomacy which distorted that of

her European Allies. America came into the war simply and solely to establish right and a durable peace based on a new international order. And her action constitutes an unprecedented and capital fact in the history of mankind.

Meantime, previous to the entry of America into the war, there had occurred, in March 1917, the Russian Revolution. From a military point of view these two great events may be held ultimately to have balanced one another. But at the outset the revolution was a great blow to the Allies. It ended all effective military action by the Russian armies, and so contributed to the failure of the Allied offensive in 1917. And it may well have disposed the Western Powers to look for some way of ending the war by diplomacy. The year 1917 accordingly is marked by rumours, discussions and intrigues, which are reflected in the documents before us.

In order to follow these discussions with intelligence, the reader should bear in mind the general position of affairs, which may be summarized as follows:—The Russian Revolution meant that Russia must go out of the war unless she could bring about a general peace. There was, therefore, months before the Bolshevik revolution, steady pressure in that direction from the Russian Government. Further, the revolution modified the whole international situation in the East. The repudiation of imperialistic aims by the new Russian Government (see No. XIV) ended the long tension and rivalry between Austria-Hungary and Russia. Peace on the East, it might well be thought, could now be secured on terms satisfactory to both countries. Further, as we now know, the Government of Austria-Hungary believed itself unable to carry on the war over another winter. A definite statement to this effect was submitted to the young Emperor by Count Czernin, the new Foreign Minister, on April 2nd, and forwarded by the Austrian Emperor to the Kaiser.¹ “I am perfectly clear,” Count Czernin writes, “that a further winter campaign is out of the question; in other words, that peace must be made in the late summer or the autumn.” And he went on to say, “The German statesmen have left me in no doubt that for Germany too a further winter campaign is an impossibility.” Count Czernin drew the conclusion that a definite detailed peace offer must be made before America should have time

¹ This statement will be found quoted in full in the very important speech delivered by Count Czernin on December 11, 1918. The speech is translated in full in the *International Review* for February and March 1919. It will be referred to again in the course of this Introduction.

to bring her resources into the war. He did not, however, propose to offer a separate peace. He held that to be both dishonourable and impossible. He wished, like the Russian Revolutionary Government, to bring about a general peace. According to his statement it would seem that this must also have been the wish of the German statesmen, since (as he affirms) they thought it impossible to face another winter campaign. And it seems pretty clear that it was in view of this situation that the Reichstag resolution of July 19th was introduced and passed (No. XV) and the Pope's Note of August 1st launched upon the world (No. XVIII). Count Hertling, the Bavarian Premier, was probably behind both events. He is known to have visited Vienna at the end of April. It would seem, then, to be plain that the statesmen both of Austria-Hungary and Germany were anxious during the year 1917 for a general peace, not by conquest but by agreement. On the other hand, Count Czernin has made it clear that at no time did the military chiefs of Germany acquiesce in this view. "The future will show," he says, "what superhuman efforts we made to induce Germany to yield. If all these efforts failed, the blame rested not on the German nation, nor in my opinion on the German Kaiser, but on those German soldiers who were possessed with such a boundless feeling of power. From Bethmann to Kühlmann, every one in the Wilhelmstrasse wanted peace. But they could not attain it, because the military party overthrew every one who tried to act contrary to their will. . . . All (the militarists) were agreed that peace could only be concluded on the basis of an increase of territory for Germany." ¹ It would appear then that there were very strong currents running towards peace both in Russia and in the Central Powers, but that these currents were countered by the determination of the militarists in power to make only a victorious peace. This should be borne in mind in estimating the policy of the Allied Governments. For their attitude would react on the state of parties in Germany, would strengthen the peace elements if it were conciliatory, and, if otherwise, play into the hands of the militarists.

What their policy actually was, during this period, is not so clear as that of the enemy Powers has now become. But it looks as though two points could be established. First, that feelers were thrown out, pretty continuously, towards a separate peace with Austria-Hungary. This is confirmed by a sentence of Count Czernin in the memorandum above referred

¹ See note p. xvi.

to. "Your Majesty, covered by my responsibility, has rejected the repeated attempts of our enemies to separate us from our Allies." Secondly, it seems certain that at no time were the Allied Governments prepared to make a general peace, except one dictated after victory. It is at any rate difficult to suppose anything else, in view of their contemptuous rejection of the Russian proposals and their opposition to the Labour meeting at Stockholm. Count Czernin is, therefore, probably correct when he says: "Ludendorff was exactly like the statesmen of England and France; all of them wanted no compromise, but only victory. In this respect there was no difference between them. The peace by agreement which I wanted was rejected just as much on the Thames and on the Seine as by Ludendorff."¹

It is in the light of this general situation that the public notes and speeches and the private discussions of the year 1917 must be studied. We will deal first with the conversations between Austria and France, initiated in the spring of 1917, interrupted in August of that year, and renewed in the spring of 1918. These conversations were not revealed to the public until April of the latter year. The official statements concerning them will be found collected in No. XII of our series. Whether the conversations were initiated by Austria or by France is not a matter of very great interest. The interest is the kind of terms which Austria suggested and France refused. These will be found in the letter of the Emperor Karl. It will be seen that, according to the text of that letter, as published by the French Government, the young Emperor promised to support "the French just claims regarding Alsace-Lorraine." But as this passage was alleged by the Austrian Government to be falsified, it is impossible to build upon it. There is evidence, however, that even if Alsace-Lorraine could have been obtained by France she would not have been satisfied. The whole episode was discussed in secret session by the Foreign Affairs Committee of the French Chamber of Deputies in May 1918; and according to the usually well-informed correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian*² it was there elicited that M. Poincaré, acting on his own personal responsibility, demanded for France not only Alsace-Lorraine but the frontier of 1814 and "guarantees" in regard to the left bank of the Rhine. This would be in accordance with the secret agreement between Russia and France, which was drawn up in February 1917.

¹ See note p. xvi.

² See *Manchester Guardian* May 8 and May 23, 1918.

It came out, further, in the same inquiry, that Germany also had been making approaches, through a certain Baron Lanken, to M. Briand. M. Briand is said to have stated that the offer comprised the complete independence of Belgium, Alsace-Lorraine for France, and the Trentino and Trieste for Italy. The *quid pro quo* was to be concessions in the East and guarantees against the economic boycott proposed by the Allied Governments in the Paris Resolutions. Further, it is stated that there was a second letter (not published) from the Austrian Emperor, in which he "expresses pleasure that there was substantial agreement between him and the French and British Governments, and repeats his conviction that, provided the Allies will agree to reasonable terms, he will induce Germany to accept them; but says that in the other event he himself will do so, and there is no doubt that he will be followed by the whole valley of the Danube." This suggests that there was a connexion between the Austrian and the German approaches, and that the point of view taken by Count Czernin in the memorandum cited above was accepted by the civilian Government of Germany.

As to the attitude of the various Entente Governments towards these conversations, it would appear that Russia was not informed of them; that the United States was informed only after they had broken down; that France was hostile, for the reasons given above; that Italy was hostile because she adhered to her claims (backed by the secret treaty) for Dalmatia and the islands; but that Mr. Lloyd George was in favour of continuing the discussions and was overruled by the representatives of France and Italy.¹

There, till further light is obtainable, this tangled episode must be left. But a few words may be added on the important question of Alsace-Lorraine. The documents and rumours we have reproduced suggest that, in the summer of 1917, the German statesmen were ready to abandon the provinces. It is possible that this was so. But if it were, the failure of the conversations hardened their hearts. For thereafter, as will be seen in the documents, they stated again and again that there could be no question of giving up German territory.² On the other hand, French statesmen made it equally clear that the recovery of the provinces was an essential war aim of France.³ So that, on that showing, the war would have continued indefinitely for these two provinces (whose total popula-

¹ See *Manchester Guardian*, May 8, 14, 23, 1918.

² See, e.g., Kühlmann's speech of October 9, 1917 (No. XXIX).

³ See, e.g., Ribot, October 12, 1917 (No. XXX).

tion is but a small fraction of the numbers killed in the war), even if every other issue in dispute could have been compromised. Here, surely, is food for curious reflection.

We turn now to Russia. The revolution of March 1917 was made by the workmen and soldiers. But it was endorsed by the upper-class liberals and reformers of the Duma, and resulted in the formation of a mixed Provisional Government, outside of which remained the extremer elements. In the Provisional Government, so far as foreign policy was concerned, there were two conflicting elements; one represented by Miliyukoff, standing upon the secret treaty that gave Russia Constantinople and the Straits, and maintaining thus the old Imperialistic tradition; the other represented by Kerenski, repudiating annexations and working for a general peace on the basis of no annexations and no indemnities. Miliyukoff announced his policy in an interview in which he said that "the programme of the Entente pursues two harmonious aims, in complete conformity with national aspirations. Namely, the liberation of populations enslaved under Ottoman domination, and the fundamental reorganization of Austria-Hungary. . . . The Italians will be joined to Italy, the Ruthenians will be amalgamated with our Ukraine, Armenia must be placed under the protection of Russia." This interview was promptly repudiated by Kerenski. And the official policy of the Russian Government is contained in the manifesto (No. XIV) included in our collection. This may be supplemented by the following proposals which appeared in Kerenski's organ, the *Rabocidja Gazette* :—

"(1) On a specified day all military and naval operations shall cease.

"(2) The old geographical map shall serve as the basis for the new frontiers.

"(3) Each belligerent shall have a right to those frontier territories invaded by the enemy since the beginning of the war.

"(4) The population of the frontier provinces shall have the right of expressing whether they shall form a separate independent State with claims on the territory of the belligerents, Their declarations shall be taken into consideration provided 10 per cent. of the adult population signify their desire.

"(5) In the case of 3 and 4 the Peace Conference will take the necessary measures to arrange, after a given period, a plébiscite on the basis of universal franchise, equal and secret. The result of the plébiscite, under the scrutiny of the representatives of both parties, shall be definitely decisive.

“(6) There shall be created a fund of approximately £1,000,000,000 for the restoration of territory destroyed by the war. The belligerent Powers shall contribute to this fund in proportion to their war expenditure. This fund shall be distributed amongst the stricken populations correspondingly to the destruction sustained.”

The policy of Kerenski, it must be observed, was not a *separate* peace between Russia and the enemy. On the contrary, he expended superhuman energy in the attempt to maintain the fighting spirit of the army. But he foresaw (and events justified him) that it would be impossible to keep the Russians fighting for purposes which they did not understand, and which they believed to be imperialistic; and he was devoting his endeavours to persuade the Allied Governments to restate their terms on the lines of his own principles. The policy of those Governments is veiled in darkness. They seem, at one time, to have intended some such restatement. At any rate, a declaration by Kerenski's Government, shortly after the Korniloff episode, announced that “In perfect accord with its Allies, the Government will very shortly participate in a conference of the Allied Powers, at which, while discussing the settlement of questions connected with the common war of the Allies, our representatives will seek to reach an understanding with the Allies on the basis of the principles proclaimed by the Russian Revolution.” The instructions given to the Russian representative who was to attend this Conference at Paris will be found in No. XXXI. Finally, however, it was announced that the Conference was not to deal with the terms of peace at all. And there seems little doubt that the Bolshevik revolution of November was precipitated by the inability of the Russian Government to bring about a restatement of war aims such as might either have led to a general peace or, failing that, have assured the Russian people that they were fighting for purposes of which they could approve.

A similar effect was produced on the Russian situation by the prohibition of the Conference of International Labour at Stockholm, summoned by the Russian Soviets. All the other Allied Governments in the end refused passports for this meeting. But we have Mr. Henderson's authority for the statement that Mr. Lloyd George was originally in favour of it.¹ Mr. Henderson

¹ “There was one member of the War Cabinet, and one only, in favour of a Stockholm Conference, and that was the Prime Minister.”—Mr. Henderson at East Ham, November 27, 1918.

had himself become converted, during his visit to Russia, to the policy of a Labour Conference, on the ground that it was necessary, if Russia was to be prevented from going out of the war, to restore the confidence of the people in the purposes of the war. Events proved him to have been right. But he found, on his return, no support in the British Government.

Between the Russian proposals for a general peace and the Austro-German approaches described above there appears to have been no connexion. For the Emperor Karl's letter was not revealed to the Russian Government. But there was a close connexion, as has been clearly indicated, between the famous Reichstag Resolution of July 1917 and the Austrian conversations. Count Czernin's Memorandum, referred to above, was communicated to Erzberger, and by him to the Centre Party, of which he was the head. It was thus that the "Block" (of the Centre, the Majority Socialists, and part of the National Liberals) was formed, which passed the resolution (No. XV). This resolution, it will be observed, is on the lines of the Russian proposals—a peace without annexations and without indemnities. But we have Count Czernin's authority for the statement that the military rulers in Germany were opposed to any such peace. There was thus a cleavage in Germany between the civilian Government and the majority of the representatives of the people, on the one hand, and the army chiefs, who had the effective power, on the other. Had the Allied Governments been willing to consider such a peace as the Russian Government and the Reichstag were demanding, their policy was clear. They would have expressed their readiness to discuss terms on that basis. Had they done so, it is at least possible that the movement for peace in the enemy countries would have become irresistible and have swept the militarists from power. But, as we have seen, the Allied Governments were as much opposed to such a peace as the German militarists. The Reichstag resolution, therefore, was treated with contempt by the Governments, the Parliaments, and the Press of the allied nations. Its reception in England is sufficiently indicated by the fate of the resolution brought forward to welcome it in the House of Commons (No. XVI). And this reception in the enemy countries of course helped to ruin the prospects of the whole movement in Germany.

The Pope's Note (No. XVIII) belongs to the same connexion of events. The Centre Party and the Vatican were in close touch, and no doubt the Note was planned as part of the same campaign as the resolution. It advocates a complete restora-

tion, on the one hand, by Germany, of Belgium and the other invaded districts ; on the other, by the Allies, of the German colonies ; and it invites a peace based on all-round disarmament and the introduction of international arbitration as a substitute for war. To this Note the Austrian and German Governments gave a sympathetic reply (Nos. XX and XXI). Amongst the Allies, President Wilson replied accepting the principles of the Note, but refusing to act upon it, on the ground that he could not trust the rulers of Germany. Replies from other nations, including Belgium and Russia, continued to appear throughout the year. England, Italy, and France alone did not deign even to notice the appeal. This attitude, presumably, was dictated by a clause in the secret treaty with Italy, which runs as follows : " France, Great Britain, and Russia pledge themselves to support Italy in not allowing the representatives of the Holy See to undertake any diplomatic steps having for their object the conclusion of peace or the settlement of questions connected with the present war." To the historian who remembers the part played by the Papacy throughout the Middle Ages in endeavouring to preserve the peace of the world and to adjust disputes, this repudiation beforehand of any intervention by the Holy See gives ironic testimony to the completeness with which Europe has become dechristianized, so far as international relations are concerned.

Before leaving this series of events, special attention should be called to the speech of Count Czernin (No. XXVIII) ; for it is as remarkable in its insight into the needs of the world, and its grasp of the only possible remedy, as the utterances of President Wilson himself.

We see, then, that during the spring and summer of 1917 efforts to bring about a general peace on terms which should not humiliate nor enfeeble any of the combatants, but should guarantee a durable peace by disarmament and international reorganization, were put forward by Russia, by Austria, and by the German Reichstag. And that, at the same time, separate and private approaches were being made to France by Austria, and, more questionably, by Germany. All these efforts were shattered on the uncompromising resistance of the Allied Governments. Precipitated, at least in part, by their failure, there occurred in November the second or Bolshevik revolution in Russia. The consequences of this revolution were far more momentous than those of the first. It set loose upon the world that great wave of revolutionary fervour which threatens to overwhelm the existing order throughout the whole of Europe.

And it involved the immediate withdrawal of Russia from the war. It is not very sensible to blame the Bolsheviks for this. Any one who had followed the state of affairs in Russia, and had observed the failure of the offensive forced by the Allies upon Kerenski's Government, might have foreseen that no Government, and least of all an imperialistic one, could have kept Russia in the war. But while the Bolsheviks had to make peace, and came in to make peace, they did not, any more than Kerenski, want a separate peace. What they proposed was a general peace on the basis already adopted by Kerenski—no annexations and no indemnities. Trotsky's Note to the Governments of the world, and the terms of peace contemplated by the new Soviet Government, will be found in No. XXXII. Needless to say, the Allied Governments were not more sympathetic to the proposals of Trotsky than they had been to those of Kerenski and of the Pope. Trotsky, however, kept the door open as long as he could. And the negotiations of Brest-Litovsk were interrupted (Nos. XXXVI and XXXVIII) in order to give the Allied Governments an opportunity of participating in them. The Allies refused. And it was this refusal which enabled the Germans to withdraw their general acceptance of the Russian principles, since that acceptance had been conditional on a similar acceptance by their enemies, and on the conclusion of a general peace (No. XXXVII). "Had the Entente at that time been ready to make a general peace, the principle of no annexations would have been completely established." So says Count Czernin, the Austrian Plenipotentiary at Brest-Litovsk.¹ Whether or no that be the case, the German offer to conclude such a peace lapsed automatically, when the Entente refused to participate in the negotiations.

Thus unsupported by the Entente, Trotsky had a losing battle to fight. But what finally ruined his policy was the defection to Germany of the Ukrainian Government. That Government was one of the propertied class, formed to fight the Soviets. The Entente Governments, true to what has been, throughout, their Russian policy, supported this Government with money and military aid. And the Government they were supporting made that separate peace with Germany which gave her the mastery of all South Russia to the Caspian.²

Our next series of documents starts with Mr. Lloyd George's speech of January 5th (No. XXXIX), addressed to the Trade

¹ Speech of December 11, 1918, referred to above.

² See on this, p. 175 below.

Union Congress. This speech seems to show that, in spite of the refusal of the Allied Governments to accept a peace without annexations or indemnities, they, or at any rate the British Government, had abandoned some of the claims put forward in the Note of January 10, 1917. Mr. Lloyd George states that the treaties with Russia (repudiated by the Revolution) are no longer to be held valid. Turkey is not to be deprived either of Constantinople or of Thrace. Austria-Hungary is not to be broken up. As to Alsace-Lorraine, the Allies stand for a "reconsideration of the great wrong of 1871," a phrase generally thought to point to a compromise on that question. Reparation is insisted upon, but clearly distinguished from an indemnity for the cost of the war. With regard to Russia, it is assumed that Prussia intends to annex the border provinces, but a broad hint is given that if the Russian Government makes a separate peace Russia will be abandoned by the Allies. The question of the German colonies is reserved for the Peace Conference; their fate is to be regulated by the wishes and interests of the inhabitants. On the other hand, the non-Turkish provinces of Turkey are to be detached, and the demands of Italy and Roumania (presumably as expressed in the treaties) to be satisfied. The conditions thus suggested were uncompromisingly rejected by Count Hertling (No. XL). But there followed immediately an important address by President Wilson, in which he formulated those famous fourteen points which were finally accepted by all parties as the basis of the peace (No. XLI). To this speech Count Czernin and Count Hertling both replied on January 24th (Nos. XLII and XLIII). Count Czernin's speech was highly conciliatory and clearly invited further discussion. Count Hertling adopted a polemic tone and definitely refused any concessions of territory from Germany or her Allies. But he too appeared to keep the door open to further negotiations. That this was President Wilson's view is shown by his long and reasoned reply of February 11th (No. XLV). But before that speech was delivered the European Allies in Paris had closed all discussion by the statement made by the War Council at Versailles (No. XLIV).¹ A curious comment on this statement is supplied by Mr. Balfour's speech of February 13th (No. XLVI). It seems clear from this speech that Mr. Balfour had not even read the speeches of Czernin and Hertling. And he admits that if Count Czernin "made some announcement of acceptance of President Wilson's war aims," then "there is no doubt that the Versailles Council

¹ On this, *cf.* Count Czernin's statement, p. 182 below.

were profoundly wrong, and there is no doubt this Government at this moment is also profoundly wrong." Count Czernin had said definitely "that the proposals of President Wilson contain principles for a general world peace to which we also can assent," and it seems difficult, according to any ordinary use of language, to deny that this phrase implies "some announcement of acceptance of President Wilson's war aims." So that we seem to have, on this occasion, a declaration by the British Foreign Secretary that the Government of which he was a member had been "profoundly wrong" on a matter of the first importance, involving the prolongation of the war and the lives of millions of men. It is, of course, quite possible that no peace was at that time attainable which the Allied Governments would or ought to have accepted. But it is difficult to defend the action of the War Council at Versailles in banging the door at that stage of the discussions.

It should be noted, meantime, that in January 1918 the discussions between Count Reverera and Major Armand, broken off in the August of 1917, had been renewed (No. XII). Their existence was revealed by Count Czernin in his speech of April 2nd (No. LIII); and the disclosures that followed led to his resignation (April 15th), and to the complete capitulation of Austria-Hungary to Germany; a capitulation embodied in the new alliance, military and economic, then entered into between the two States. The failure of the discussions of the winter and early spring of 1917-18 involved a further prosecution of the war and the terrible losses of the campaign of 1918. The German offensive was launched on March 21st, with results which will be fresh in the mind of the reader. And the further speeches included in this collection were made amid the thunder of the guns. They do not call for any special comment. The allied counter-offensive began on July 18th, and the course of events up to the date of our last document may be followed in the chronological table attached. There is, however, one last point to which the reader's attention must be called. As will be clear from the documents, the Germans laid down their arms on the condition that the terms of peace should be governed by the fourteen points of President Wilson's address to Congress of January 8, 1917 (No. XLI), qualified only by the reservations contained in the Note of November 5, 1918 (No. LXXXIII). Any failure to apply these points impartially and sincerely would be, therefore, a breach of faith on the part of the Allied Governments. Whether, in fact, the peace dictated at Paris is in conformity with this

pledged faith, especially as regards points 5 and 6, whether the exaction of a war indemnity, as distinguished from compensation for damage done to the civilian population, is compatible with the conditions offered and accepted, are questions to which the reader cannot afford to be indifferent. For they involve the honour of his country.

April 1919.

P.S.—After the above was in type, my attention was called to an article in the *Pester Lloyd* of February 28, 1919, giving details of a series of offers of peace made to Germany by the Tsarist Government of Russia in the winter of 1916-17. The first of these was made in October 1916, and may have influenced the Germans in their proposal for a general peace in December of that year.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

1916

- Dec. 5. Resignation of Mr. Asquith and formation of Mr. Lloyd George's Government.
6. The Germans capture Bucharest.
12. The German Peace Note.
20. President Wilson's First Note.
30. The reply of the Allied Governments to the German Peace Note.

1917

- Jan. 10. Reply of the Allied Governments to President Wilson's Note.
31. The Germans announce unrestricted submarine warfare.
- Feb. 3. The United States break off diplomatic relations with Germany.
25. German retreat in the West.
- March 12. The First Russian Revolution. (From this date to June there was practically a cessation of fighting on the Eastern front.)
31. The Emperor Karl's letter communicated to M. Poincaré.
- April 6. The United States declare war on Germany. Proclamation signed by President on 6th. Resolution came before Senate on 4th and before House of Representatives on 5th.
9. The Franco-British offensive begins in the West.
10. Repudiation of imperialism by the Russian Government.
- May 12. The Soviets invite an International Labour Congress at Stockholm.
14. Italian offensive from Tolmino to the sea.
30. The Russian Soviets appeal for a restatement of the war aims of the Allies.
- June 1. Ribot refuses passports for French delegates to the proposed Congress at Stockholm
7. Battle for the Messines Ridge.
New Russian offensive fails.

- July 14. Resignation of Bethmann-Hollweg. Michaelis Chancellor.
19. The Reichstag resolution adopted.
31. Third Battle of Ypres.
- Aug. 1. The Pope's Note to the belligerents.
15. New British offensive.
The alleged German offer to M. Briand through the mediation of Baron Lanken.
- Sept. 3. Fall of Riga.
10. The Korniloff episode in Russia.
- Oct. 15. Russia is declared a Republic.
Peace terms suggested by the Russian Soviet;
24. Italian defeat at Caporetto.
31. Count Hertling Chancellor.
- Nov. 7. Second or Bolshevist Revolution in Russia.
13. Clémenceau takes office in France.
22. Trotsky's invitation to a general peace.
24. British attack at Cambrai.
28. Lord Lansdowne's first letter.
- Dec. 5. Armistice on the Eastern front.
7. United States declares war on Austria-Hungary.
9. Jerusalem surrenders to Sir E. Allenby.
The Brest-Litovsk negotiations begin this month and extend into February. Trotsky invites the Allied Governments to participate in the negotiations.
- 1918**
- Jan. 5. Mr. Lloyd George's speech at Trade Union Conference restating Allied terms.
8. President Wilson's Address to Congress laying down the 14 Points.
- Feb. 4. Statement of the Allied War Council at Versailles cutting off the discussion of peace terms.
9. Separate peace signed between the Central Powers and the Ukrainian Rada.
- March 5. Lord Lansdowne's second letter.
21. German offensive launched.
- April 14. Marshal Foch appointed Allied Commander-in-Chief.
- July 18. Foch's counter-offensive launched.
31. Lord Lansdowne's third letter.
- Sept. 13. Americans wipe out St. Mihiel salient.
15. Austrian Peace Note.
18. President Wilson's reply to the Austrian Note.
29. Surrender of Bulgaria.
30. Resignation of Count Hertling.
30. Capture of Damascus by Allenby.
- Oct. 4. Prince Max of Baden German Chancellor.
6. German Note to President Wilson asking him to arrange an Armistice on basis of the 14 Points.

- Oct. 9. Hindenburg line broken.
27. Ludendorff dismissed.
30. Turkey signs Armistice.
31. Austrian Commander-in-Chief asks Italy for an Armistice.
- Nov. 1. Emperor Karl leaves Vienna. Revolution in Austria. Assassination of Tisza.
3. Austria signs Armistice.
6. Germany applies to Foch for terms of Armistice.
11. Germany signs Armistice.

DOCUMENTS AND STATEMENTS

RELATING TO

PEACE PROPOSALS AND WAR AIMS

(December 1916—November 1918)

I

THE GERMAN PEACE NOTE, DECEMBER 12, 1916.

(Addressed to the Chargé d'Affaires of the United States of America.)

BERLIN, *December 12, 1916.*

MR. CHARGÉ D'AFFAIRES,

The most formidable war known to history has been ravaging for two and a half years a great part of the world. That catastrophe, that the bonds of a common civilization more than a thousand years old could not stop, strikes mankind in its most precious patrimony; it threatens to bury under its ruins the moral and physical progress on which Europe prided itself at the dawn of the twentieth century. In that strife Germany and her Allies, Austria-Hungary and Turkey, have given proof of their indestructible strength in winning considerable successes at war. Their unshakable lines resist ceaseless attacks of their enemies' arms. The recent diversion in the Balkans was speedily and victoriously thwarted. The latest events have demonstrated that a continuation of the war cannot break their resisting power. The general situation much rather justified their hope of fresh successes. It was for the defence of their existence and freedom of their national development that the four Allied Powers were constrained to take up arms. The exploits of their armies have brought no change therein. Not for an instant have they swerved from the conviction that the respect of the rights of other

nations is not in any degree incompatible with their own rights and legitimate interests. They do not seek to crush or annihilate their adversaries. Conscious of their military and economic strength and ready to carry on to the end, if they must, the struggle that is forced upon them, but animated at the same time by the desire to stem the flood of blood and to bring the horrors of war to an end, the four allied Powers propose to enter even now into peace negotiations. They feel sure that the propositions which they would bring forward, and which would aim to assure the existence, honour, and free development of their peoples, would be such as to serve as a basis for the restoration of a lasting peace.

If, notwithstanding this offer of peace and conciliation, the struggle should continue, the four Allied Powers are resolved to carry it on to an end, while solemnly disclaiming any responsibility before mankind and history.

The Imperial Government has the honour to ask through your obliging medium the Government of the United States to be pleased to transmit the present communication to the Government of the French Republic, to the Royal Government of Great Britain, to the Imperial Government of Japan, to the Royal Government of Rumania, to the Imperial Government of Russia, and to the Royal Government of Serbia.

I take this opportunity to renew to you, Mr. Chargé d'Affaires, the assurance of my high consideration.

Von Bethmann Hollweg.

II

THE GERMAN NOTE TO THE POPE, DECEMBER 12, 1916.

(Presented by Minister von Mühlberg to the State Secretary of his Holiness Pope Benedict XV, Cardinal Gasparri.)

According to instructions received, I have the honour to send to your Eminence a copy of the declaration which the Imperial Government to-day, by the good offices of the Powers entrusted with the protection of German interests in countries with which the German Empire is in a state of war, transmits to these States, and in which the Imperial Government declares itself ready to enter into peace negotiations. The Austro-Hungarian, Turkish, and Bulgarian Governments have also

sent a similar Note. The reasons which prompted Germany and her allies to this step are manifest. For two years and a half a terrible war has been devastating the European Continent. Unlimited treasures of civilization have been destroyed, extensive areas have been soaked with blood, millions of brave soldiers have fallen in battle and millions have returned home as invalids. Grief and sorrow fill almost every house. Not only upon belligerent nations, but also upon neutrals the destructive consequences of the gigantic struggle weigh heavily. Trade and commerce carefully built up in years of peace have been depressed. The best forces of the nations have been withdrawn from the production of useful objects. Europe, which was formerly devoted to the propagation of religion and civilization, which was trying to find a solution for social problems, and was the home of science and art and all peaceful labour, now resembles an immense war camp in which the achievements and works of many decades are doomed to annihilation.

Germany is carrying on a war of defence against the enemies who aim at her destruction. She fights in order to assure the integrity of her frontiers and the liberty of the German nation in the right which she claims to develop freely her intellectual and economic energies in peaceful competition and on an equal footing with other nations. All the enemies' efforts are unable to shatter the heroic armies of the allies that protect the frontiers of their countries. Strengthened by the certainty that the enemy shall never pierce the iron wall, those fighting on the front know that they are supported by the whole nation, which is inspired by love for its country, ready for the greatest sacrifices, and determined to defend to the last extremity the inherited treasure of intellectual and economic work and social organization and the sacred soil of the country. Sure of our own strength, but realizing Europe's sad future if this war continues, seized with pity in the face of the unspeakable misery of humanity, the German Empire, in accord with her allies, solemnly repeats what the Chancellor already declared one year ago, that Germany is ready to give peace to the world by setting before the whole world the question whether or no it is possible to find a basis for an understanding.

Since the first day of his Pontifical reign his Holiness the Pope has unswervingly demonstrated in a most generous fashion his solicitude for the innumerable victims of this war, has alleviated the sufferings and ameliorated the fate of thousands of men injured by this catastrophe. Inspired by the exalted ideas of his ministry, His Holiness seized every opportunity in

humanity's interest in order to bring to an end so sanguinary a war. The Imperial Government is firmly confident that the initiative of the four Powers will find a friendly welcome on the part of his Holiness and that the work of peace can count upon the precious support of the Holy See.

III

PRESIDENT WILSON'S NOTE TO THE BELLIGERENTS, DECEMBER 18, 1916.

The President of the United States has instructed me to suggest to the Government of [his Britannic Majesty] a course of action with regard to the present war which he hopes that his Majesty's Government will take under consideration, as suggested in the most friendly spirit and as coming not only from a friend, but also as coming from the representative of a neutral nation, whose interests have been most seriously affected by the war, and whose concern for its early conclusion arises out of a manifest necessity to determine how best to safeguard those interests if the war is to continue.

The suggestion which I am instructed to make the President has long had it in mind to offer. He is somewhat embarrassed to offer it at this particular time, because it may now seem to have been prompted by the recent overtures of the Central Powers. It is in fact in no way associated with them in its origin, and the President would have delayed offering it until those overtures had been answered but for the fact that it also concerns the question of peace and may best be considered in connection with other proposals which have the same end in view. The President can only beg that his suggestion be considered entirely on its own merits and as if it had been made in other circumstances.

The President suggests that an early occasion be sought to call out from all the nations now at war such an avowal of their respective views as to the terms upon which the war might be concluded and the arrangements which would be deemed satisfactory as a guarantee against its renewal or the kindling of any similar conflict in the future as would make it possible frankly to compare them. He is indifferent as to the means taken to accomplish this. He would be happy himself to serve, or even to take the initiative in its accomplishment, in any way that might prove acceptable, but he has no desire to deter-

mine the method or the instrumentality. One way will be as acceptable to him as another, if only the great object he has in mind be attained.

He takes the liberty of calling attention to the fact that the objects which the statesmen of the belligerents on both sides have in mind in this war are virtually the same, as stated in general terms to their own people and to the world. Each side desires to make the rights and privileges of weak peoples and small States as secure against aggression or denial in the future as the rights and privileges of the great and powerful States now at war. Each wishes itself to be made secure in the future, along with all other nations and peoples, against the recurrence of wars like this, and against aggression or selfish interference of any kind. Each would be jealous of the formation of any more rival leagues to preserve an uncertain balance of power amidst multiplying suspicions; but each is ready to consider the formation of a League of Nations to ensure peace and justice throughout the world. Before that final step can be taken, however, each deems it necessary first to settle the issues of the present war upon terms which will certainly safeguard the independence, the territorial integrity, and the political and commercial freedom of the nations involved.

In the measures to be taken to secure the future peace of the world, the people and the Government of the United States are as vitally and as directly interested as the Governments now at war. Their interest, moreover, in the means to be adopted to relieve the smaller and weaker peoples of the world of the peril of wrong and violence is as quick and ardent as that of any other people or Government. They stand ready, and even eager, to co-operate in the accomplishment of these ends when the war is over with every influence and resource at their command. But the war must first be concluded. The terms upon which it is to be concluded they are not at liberty to suggest; but the President does feel that it is his right and his duty to point out their intimate interest in its conclusion, lest it should presently be too late to accomplish the greater things which lie beyond its conclusion, lest the situation of neutral nations, now exceedingly hard to endure, be rendered altogether intolerable, and lest, more than all, an injury be done civilization itself which can never be atoned or repaired.

The President, therefore, feels altogether justified in suggesting an immediate opportunity for a comparison of views as to the terms which must precede those ultimate arrangements for the

peace of the world which all desire, and in which the neutral nations as well as those at war are ready to play their full responsible part. If the contest must continue to proceed towards undefined ends by slow attrition until one group of belligerents or the other is exhausted, if million after million of human lives must continue to be offered up until on the one side or the other there are no more to offer, if resentments must be kindled that can never cool and despairs engendered from which there can be no recovery hopes of peace and of the willing concert of free peoples will be rendered vain and idle.

The life of the entire world has been profoundly affected. Every part of the great family of mankind has felt the burden and terror of this unprecedented contest of arms. No nation in the civilized world can be said in truth to stand outside its influence or to be safe against its disturbing effects. And yet the concrete objects for which it is being waged have never been definitely stated.

The leaders of the several belligerents have, as has been said, stated those objects in general terms. But, stated in general terms, they seem the same on both sides. Never yet have the authoritative spokesmen of either side avowed the precise objects which would, if attained, satisfy them and their people that the war had been fought out. The world has been left to conjecture what definite results, what actual exchange of guarantees, what political or territorial changes or readjustments, what stage of military success even, would bring the war to an end.

It may be that peace is nearer than we know ; that the terms which the belligerents on the one side and on the other would deem it necessary to insist upon are not so irreconcilable as some have feared ; that an interchange of views would clear the way at least for conference and make the permanent concord of the nations a hope of the immediate future, a concert of nations immediately practicable.

The President is not proposing peace ; he is not even offering mediation. He is merely proposing that soundings be taken in order that we may learn, the neutral nations with the belligerents, how near the haven of peace may be for which all mankind longs with an intense and increasing longing. He believes that the spirit in which he speaks and the objects which he seeks will be understood by all concerned, and he confidently hopes for a response which will bring a new light into the affairs of the world.

IV

**THE GERMAN REPLY TO PRESIDENT WILSON'S NOTE
OF DECEMBER 18th. DECEMBER 25, 1916.**

The high-minded suggestion made by the President of the United States of America in order to create a basis for the establishment of lasting peace has been received and considered by the Imperial Government in the friendly spirit in which it is expressed.

In the President's communication the President points out that which he has at heart and leaves open the choice of the road. To the Imperial Government an immediate exchange of views seems to be the most appropriate road in order to reach the desired result. It begs, therefore, in the sense of the declaration made on December 12th, which held out a hand for peace negotiations, to propose an immediate meeting of delegates of the belligerent States at some neutral place.

The Imperial Government is also of opinion that the great work of preventing future wars can be begun only after the end of the present struggle of nations. It will, when the moment shall have come, be ready with pleasure to collaborate fully with the United States in this exalted task.

V

**THE ALLIES' REPLY TO THE GERMAN PEACE NOTE
OF DECEMBER 12th. DECEMBER 30, 1916.**

The Allied Governments of Russia, France, Great Britain, Japan, Italy, Serbia, Belgium, Montenegro, Portugal, and Rumania, united for the defence of the freedom of nations and faithful to their undertakings not to lay down their arms except in common accord, have decided to return a joint answer to the illusory peace proposals which have been addressed to them by the Governments of the enemy Powers through the intermediary of the United States, Spain, Switzerland, and the Netherlands.

As a prelude to any reply, the Allied Powers feel bound to protest strongly against the two material assertions made in the Note from the enemy Powers, the one professing to throw upon the Allies the responsibility of the war, and the other proclaiming the victory of the Central Powers.

The Allies cannot admit a claim which is thus untrue in each particular, and is sufficient alone to render sterile all attempt at negotiations.

The Allied nations have for thirty months been engaged in a war which they had done everything to avoid. They have shown by their actions their devotion to peace. This devotion is as strong to-day as it was in 1914; and after the violation by Germany of her solemn engagements, Germany's promise is no sufficient foundation on which to re-establish the peace which she broke.

A mere suggestion, without statement of terms, that negotiations should be opened, is not an offer of peace. The putting forward by the Imperial Government of a sham proposal, lacking all substance and precision, would appear to be less an offer of peace than a war manœuvre.

It is founded on a calculated misinterpretation of the character of the struggle in the past, the present, and the future.

As for the past, the German Note takes no account of the facts, dates, and figures which establish that the war was desired, provoked, and declared by Germany and Austria-Hungary.

At the Hague Conference it was the German delegate who refused all proposals for disarmament. In July 1914 it was Austria-Hungary who, after having addressed to Serbia an unprecedented ultimatum, declared war upon her in spite of the satisfaction which had at once been accorded. The Central Empires then rejected all attempts made by the Entente to bring about a pacific solution of a purely local conflict. Great Britain suggested a Conference, France proposed an International Commission, the Emperor of Russia asked the German Emperor to go to arbitration, and Russia and Austria-Hungary came to an understanding on the eve of the conflict; but to all these efforts Germany gave neither answer nor effect. Belgium was invaded by an Empire which had guaranteed her neutrality and which has had the assurance to proclaim that treaties were "scraps of paper" and that "necessity knows no law."

At the present moment these sham offers on the part of Germany rest on a "War Map" of Europe alone, which represents nothing more than a superficial and passing phase of the situation, and not the real strength of the belligerents. A peace concluded upon these terms would be only to the advantage of the aggressors, who, after imagining that they

would reach their goal in two months, discovered after two years that they could never attain it.

As for the future, the disasters caused by the German declaration of war and the innumerable outrages committed by Germany and her Allies against both belligerents and neutrals demand penalties, reparation, and guarantees; Germany avoids the mention of any of these.

In reality these overtures made by the Central Powers are nothing more than a calculated attempt to influence the future course of the war, and to end it by imposing a German peace.

The object of these overtures is to create dissension in public opinion in Allied countries. But that public opinion has, in spite of all the sacrifices endured by the Allies, already given its answer with admirable firmness, and has denounced the empty pretence of the declaration of the enemy Powers.

They have the further object of stiffening public opinion in Germany and in the countries allied to her, one and all, already severely tried by their losses, worn out by economic pressure and crushed by the supreme effort which has been imposed upon their inhabitants.

They endeavour to deceive and intimidate public opinion in neutral countries whose inhabitants have long since made up their minds where the initial responsibility rests, have recognized existing responsibilities, and are far too enlightened to favour the designs of Germany by abandoning the defence of human freedom.

Finally, these overtures attempt to justify in advance in the eyes of the world a new series of crimes—submarine warfare, deportations, forced labour and forced enlistment of inhabitants against their own countries, and violations of neutrality.

Fully conscious of the gravity of this moment, but equally conscious of its requirements, the Allied Governments, closely united to one another and in perfect sympathy with their peoples, refuse to consider a proposal which is empty and insincere.

Once again the Allies declare that no peace is possible so long as they have not secured reparation of violated rights and liberties, recognition of the principle of nationalities, and of the free existence of small States; so long as they have not brought about a settlement calculated to end, once and for all, forces which have constituted a perpetual menace to the nations, and to afford the only effective guarantees for the future security of the world.

In conclusion, the Allied Powers think it necessary to put

forward the following considerations, which show the special situation of Belgium after two and a half years of war.

In virtue of international treaties signed by five great European Powers, of whom Germany was one, Belgium enjoyed, before the war, a special status, rendering her territory inviolable and placing her, under the guarantee of the Powers, outside all European conflicts. She was, however, in spite of these treaties, the first to suffer the aggression of Germany. For this reason the Belgian Government think it necessary to define the aims which Belgium has never ceased to pursue, while fighting side by side with the Entente Powers for right and justice.

Belgium has always scrupulously fulfilled the duties which her neutrality imposed upon her. She has taken up arms to defend her independence and her neutrality violated by Germany, and to show that she remains faithful to her international obligations. On August 4, 1914, in the Reichstag, the German Chancellor admitted that this aggression constituted an injustice contrary to the laws of nations and pledged himself in the name of Germany to repair it.

During two and a half years this injustice has been cruelly aggravated by the proceedings of the occupying forces, which have exhausted the resources of the country, ruined its industries, devastated its towns and villages, and have been responsible for innumerable massacres, executions, and imprisonments. At this very moment, while Germany is proclaiming peace and humanity to the world, she is deporting Belgian citizens by thousands and reducing them to slavery.

Belgium before the war asked for nothing but to live in harmony with all her neighbours. Her King and her Government have but one aim—the re-establishment of peace and justice. But they only desire a peace which would assure to their country legitimate reparation, guarantees, and safeguards for the future.

VI

THE ALLIES' REPLY TO PRESIDENT WILSON'S NOTE OF DECEMBER 18th. JANUARY 10, 1917.

I. The Allied Governments have received the Note delivered to them on December 19th in the name of the United States Government. They have studied it with the care enjoined upon them both by their accurate sense of the gravity of the moment and by their sincere friendship for the American people.

II. In general, they make a point of declaring that they pay homage to the loftiness of the sentiments inspiring the American Note, and that they associate themselves wholeheartedly with the plan of creating a League of the Nations to ensure peace and justice throughout the world. They recognize all the advantages that would accrue to the cause of humanity and civilization by the establishment of international settlements designed to avoid violent conflicts between the nations—settlements which ought to be attended by the sanctions necessary to assure their execution, and thus to prevent fresh aggressions from being made easier by an apparent security.

III. But a discussion of future arrangements designed to ensure a lasting peace presupposes a satisfactory settlement of the present conflict. The Allies feel a desire as deep as that of the United States Government to see ended, at the earliest possible moment, the war for which the Central Empires are responsible, and which inflicts sufferings so cruel upon humanity. But they judge it impossible to-day to bring about a peace that shall assure to them the reparation, the restitution, and the guarantees to which they are entitled by the aggression for which the responsibility lies upon the Central Powers—and of which the very principle tended to undermine the safety of Europe—a peace that shall also permit the establishment upon firm foundations of the future of the nations of Europe. The Allied nations are conscious that they are fighting not for selfish interests but, above all, to safeguard the independence of peoples, right, and humanity.

IV. The Allies are fully alive to and deplore the losses and sufferings which the war causes neutrals, as well as belligerents, to endure; but they do not hold themselves responsible, since in no way did they desire or provoke this war; and they make every effort to lessen such damage to the full extent compatible with the inexorable requirements of their defence against the violence and the pitfalls of the foe.

V. Hence they note with satisfaction the declaration that as regards its origin the American communication was in no wise associated with that of the Central Powers, transmitted on December 18th by the United States Government; neither do they doubt the resolve of that Government to avoid even the appearance of giving any, albeit only moral, support to the responsible authors of the war.

VI. The Allied Governments hold themselves bound to make a stand in the friendliest yet in the clearest way against the

establishment in the American Note of a likeness between the two belligerent groups ; this likeness, founded upon the public statements of the Central Powers, conflicts directly with the evidence, both as regards the responsibilities for the past and the guarantees for the future. In mentioning this likeness President Wilson certainly did not mean to associate himself with it.

VII. If at this moment there be an established historical fact, it is the aggressive will of Germany and Austria to ensure their mastery over Europe and their economic domination over the world. By her declaration of war, by the immediate violation of Belgium and Luxemburg, and by the way she has carried on the struggle, Germany has also proved her systematic contempt of every principle of humanity and of all respect for small States ; in proportion as the conflict has developed, the attitude of the Central Powers and of their Allies has been a continual challenge to humanity and to civilization. Need we recall the horrors that accompanied the invasion of Belgium and of Serbia, the atrocious rule laid upon the invaded countries, the massacre of hundreds of thousands of inoffensive Armenians, the barbarities committed against the inhabitants of Syria, the Zeppelin raids upon open towns, the destruction by submarines of passenger steamers and merchantmen, even under neutral flags, the cruel treatment inflicted upon prisoners of war, the judicial murders of Miss Cavell and of Captain Fryatt, the deportation and the reduction to slavery of civil populations ? The accomplishment of such a series of crimes, perpetrated without any regard for the universal reprobation they aroused, amply explains to President Wilson the protest of the Allies.

VIII. They consider that the Note they handed to the United States in reply to the German Note answers the question put by the American Government, and forms, according to the words of that Government, "an avowal of their respective views as to the terms on which the war might be concluded." Mr. Wilson wishes for more ; he desires that the belligerent Powers should define, in the full light of day, their aims in prosecuting the war. The Allies find no difficulty in answering this request. Their war aims are well known ; they have been repeatedly defined by the heads of their various Governments. These war aims will only be set forth in detail, with all the compensations and equitable indemnities for harm suffered, at the moment of negotiation. But the civilized world knows that they imply, necessarily and first of all, the restoration of

Belgium, Serbia, and Montenegro, with the compensations due to them; the evacuation of the invaded territories in France, in Russia, in Rumania, with just reparation; the reorganization of Europe, guaranteed by a stable régime and based at once on respect for nationalities and on the right to full security and liberty of economic development possessed by all peoples, small and great, and at the same time upon territorial conventions and international settlements such as to guarantee land and sea frontiers against unjustified attack; the restitution of provinces formerly torn from the Allies by force or against the wish of their inhabitants; the liberation of the Italians, as also of the Slavs, Rumanes, and Czecho-Slovaks from foreign domination; the setting free of the populations subject to the bloody tyranny of the Turks; and the turning out of Europe of the Ottoman Empire as decidedly foreign to Western civilization.

IX. The intentions of his Majesty the Emperor of Russia in regard to Poland have been clearly indicated by the manifesto he has just addressed to his armies.¹

X. There is no need to say that, if the Allies desire to shield Europe from the covetous brutality of Prussian militarism, the extermination and the political disappearance of the German peoples have never, as has been pretended, formed part of their designs. They desire above all to ensure peace on the principles of liberty and justice, and upon the inviolable fidelity to international engagements by which the Government of the United States have ever been inspired.

XI. United in the pursuit of this lofty aim, the Allies are determined, severally and jointly, to act with all their power and to make all sacrifices to carry to a victorious end a conflict upon which, they are convinced, depend not only their own welfare and prosperity but the future of civilization itself.

VII

THE BELGIAN REPLY TO PRESIDENT WILSON'S NOTE OF DECEMBER 18th. JANUARY 10, 1917.

The Royal Government, which has associated itself with the Reply handed by the French Prime Minister to the Ambassador of the United States, desires particularly to express its sense

¹ Stating his intention of creating a "free" Poland uniting the three parts into which it was partitioned.

of the sentiments of humanity that have prompted the President of the United States in addressing his Note to the belligerent Powers, and it highly appreciates the friendship towards Belgium, which he interprets with such good will.

As much as Mr. Woodrow Wilson, the Royal Government would wish to see this war come to an end as soon as possible.

But the President seems to think that the statesmen in the two hostile camps are pursuing the same war aims. The example of Belgium unhappily demonstrates that this is not the case. Unlike the Central Powers, Belgium has never aimed at conquest. The barbarous manner in which the German Government has treated and still treats the Belgian nation does not admit of any supposition that Germany will make it her care to guarantee for the future the rights of weak peoples which she has not ceased to trample under foot ever since the war that she let loose began to ravage Europe.

On the other hand, the Royal Government notes with pleasure and with confidence the assurance that the United States impatiently await the moment to co-operate in the measures which will be taken, after peace, to protect and guarantee small nations against violence and oppression.

Until Germany delivered her ultimatum, Belgium's sole aspiration was to live on good terms with all her neighbours towards each of them she discharged with scrupulous loyalty the obligations imposed on her by her neutrality. How was she rewarded by Germany for the confidence she showed? Overnight, without plausible warrant, her neutrality was violated, her territory was invaded, and the Imperial Chancellor, in announcing to the Reichstag this violation of right and of treaty, was compelled to admit the iniquity of such an act and to promise that reparation would be made. But the Germans, after occupying Belgian territory, showed themselves no more observant of the rules of International Law or of the provisions of the Hague Conventions. They exhausted the resources of the country by exactions as heavy as they were arbitrary; they deliberately ruined its industries, destroyed whole towns, and put to death or imprisoned a considerable number of inhabitants. Even now, while they loudly proclaim their desire to put an end to the horrors of the war, they aggravate the rigours of the occupation by carrying Belgian workmen into slavery by thousands.

If there is a country that is entitled to say that it took up arms in order to defend its existence, that country assuredly is Belgium. Compelled by force to fight or to submit to dis-

honour, she passionately desires that an end may be set to the unheard-of sufferings of her population. But she could accept only a peace that assures to her, together with equitable reparation, securities and guarantees for the future.

The American people have, since the beginning of the war, manifested towards the oppressed Belgian people their most ardent sympathy. An American committee, the "Commission for Relief in Belgium," in intimate co-operation with the King's Government and with the National Committee, is displaying tireless devotion and marvellous activity in supplying the needs of Belgium. The Royal Government is happy to seize this opportunity of expressing its profound gratitude to the "Commission for Relief" and to the generous Americans who are so eagerly bent on relieving the miseries of the Belgian population. Nowhere, moreover, have the raiding and deportation of Belgian civilians provoked a more spontaneous outburst of protest and of indignant reprobation than in the United States.

These facts, which are all to the honour of the American people, inspire the Royal Government with the legitimate hope that, at the final settlement of this long war, the voice of the Entente Powers will find in the United States a unanimous echo to claim for Belgium, the innocent victim of German ambition and of German greed, the rank and position that are marked out for her among the civilized nations, by virtue of her blameless past, by the valour of her soldiers, by her fidelity to honour, and by her people's remarkable aptitude for work.

VIII

THE GERMAN NOTE TO NEUTRALS, JANUARY 11, 1917.

The Imperial Government is aware that the Government of the United States of America, the Royal Spanish Government, and the Swiss Government have received the reply of their enemies to the Note of December 12th, in which Germany, in concert with her Allies, proposed to enter forthwith into peace negotiations. Our enemies rejected this proposal, arguing that it was a proposal without sincerity and without meaning. The form in which they couched their communication makes a reply to them impossible. But the German Government thinks it important to communicate to the neutral Powers its view of the state of affairs.

The Central Powers have no reason to enter again into a controversy regarding the origin of the world-war. History will judge on whom the tremendous blame of the war falls. Its judgment will as little pass over the encircling policy of England, the *revanche* policy of France, and Russia's efforts towards Constantinople as over the provocation by Serbia, the Serajevo murders, and the complete Russian mobilization, which meant war on Germany.

Germany and her Allies, who were obliged to take up arms to defend their freedom and their existence, regard this, which was their war aim, as attained. On the other hand, the enemy Powers have departed more and more from the realization of their plans, which, according to the declarations of their responsible statesmen, are directed, among other things, towards the conquest of Alsace-Lorraine and several Prussian provinces, the humiliation and diminution of Austria-Hungary, the disintegration of Turkey, and the mutilation of Bulgaria. In view of such war aims, the demand for reparation, restitution, and guarantees in the mouth of our enemies sounds strange.

Our enemies describe the peace offer of the four Allied Powers as a war manœuvre. Germany and her Allies most emphatically protest against such a falsification of their motives, which they openly stated. Their conviction was that a just peace acceptable to all belligerents was possible, that it could be brought about, and that further bloodshed could not be justified. Their readiness to make known their peace conditions without reservations at the opening of negotiations disproves any doubt of their sincerity.

Our enemies, in whose power it was to examine the content of our offer, neither made any examination nor made counter-proposals. Instead of that, they declared that peace was impossible so long as the restoration of violated rights and liberties, the acknowledgment of the principle of nationalities, and the free existence of small States were not guaranteed. The sincerity which our enemies deny to the proposal of the four Allied Powers cannot be allowed by the world to these demands if it keeps before its eyes the fate of the Irish people, the destruction of the freedom and independence of the Boer Republics, the subjection of Northern Africa by England, France, and Italy, the suppression of foreign nationalities in Russia, and, finally, the oppression of Greece, which is unexampled in history.

Moreover, in regard to the alleged violation of international rights by the four Allied Powers, those Powers which, from the

beginning of the war, have trampled upon right and torn up the treaties on which it was based have no right to protest. Already in the first weeks of the war England had renounced the Declaration of London, the contents of which her own delegates had recognized as binding in International Law, and in the further course of the war she most seriously violated the Declaration of Paris, so that, owing to her arbitrary measures, a state of lawlessness began in the war at sea. The starvation campaign against Germany and the pressure on neutrals exercised in England's interest are no less grossly contrary to the rules of International Law than to the laws of humanity.

Equally inconsistent with International Law and the principles of civilization is the employment of coloured troops in Europe and the extension of the war to Africa, which has been brought about in violation of existing treaties. It undermines the reputation of the white race in this part of the globe. The inhumane treatment of prisoners, especially in Africa and Russia, the deportation of the civil population from East Prussia, Alsace-Lorraine, Galicia, and the Bukovina, are further proofs of our enemies' disregard for right and civilization.

At the end of their Note of December 30th our enemies refer to the special position of Belgium. The Imperial Government is unable to admit that the Belgian Government has always observed the obligations imposed on it by its neutrality. Already before the war Belgium was under the influence of England and leaned towards England and France, thereby herself violating the spirit of the treaties which guaranteed her independence and neutrality.

Twice the Imperial Government declared to the Belgian Government that it was not entering Belgium as an enemy, and entreated it to save the country from the horrors of war. In this case it offered Belgium a guarantee for the full integrity and independence of the kingdom and to pay for all the damage which might be caused by German troops marching through the country. It is known that in 1887 the Royal British Government was determined not to oppose on these conditions the claiming of a right of way through Belgium.¹ The Belgian Government refused the repeated offer of the Imperial Government. On it and on those Powers who induced it to take up this attitude falls the responsibility for the fate which befell Belgium.

The accusation about German war methods in Belgium and

¹ For this episode see "England's Guarantee to Belgium and Luxemburg," by C. P. Sanger and H. T. J. Norton. (George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1915.)

the measures which were taken there in the interest of military safety have been repeatedly repudiated as untrue by the Imperial Government. It again emphatically protests against these calumnies.

Germany and her Allies made an honest attempt to terminate the war and pave the way for an understanding among the belligerents. The Imperial Government declares that it solely depended on the decision of our enemies whether the road to peace should be taken or not. The enemy Governments have refused to take this road. On them falls the full responsibility for the continuation of bloodshed.

But the four Allied Powers will prosecute the fight with calm trust and confidence in their good cause until a peace has been gained which guarantees to their own peoples honour, existence, freedom, and development, and gives all the Powers of the European Continent the benefit of working united in mutual esteem at the solution of the great problems of civilization.

IX

THE AUSTRIAN NOTE TO NEUTRALS, JANUARY 11, 1917.

The Royal and Imperial Government has had the honour to receive on the 5th inst., through the kind mediation of the Government of the United States of America, the answer of its enemies to its Note of December 12th, in which it declares its readiness, and that of its Allies, to enter into peace negotiations.

In conjunction with its Allies the Government has carefully examined the answer of the enemy Governments, with the following result :—

The enemy Governments reject the proposal of the four Allied Powers on the pretext that it is a proposal without sincerity and without meaning. The form in which they couched their communication makes a reply to them impossible. But the Royal and Imperial Government thinks it important to lay before the Governments of the Neutral Powers its view of the state of affairs.

The answer of the enemy Governments avoids the consideration of the possibilities of ending the war, and restricts itself to discussing afresh the events which led to the war, the

presumed strength of their own military position, and the supposed motives of the peace proposal.

The Royal and Imperial Government declines to enter now into a fresh controversy regarding the origin of the war. It is convinced that it is already clear to all right-minded and unprejudiced mankind on which side the blame falls for the outbreak of the war.

As regards particularly the Austro-Hungarian ultimatum to Serbia, the Monarchy, in the years which preceded this step, displayed sufficient proof of its forbearance towards the ever-increasing hostility, aggressive intentions, and intrigues of Serbia, until the moment when finally the nefarious murder at Serajevo made further indulgence impossible.

Again, a dispute as to which side has the stronger military position seems idle, and may be left to the judgment of the public at large. Besides, a comparison of the war-aims of the two groups includes the decision of this question. Whereas Austria-Hungary and her Allies entered the war not for the purpose of annexing territories, but in self-defence, with the enemy countries the contrary is the case. To name only a few of their war-aims, they intend the overthrow and spoliation of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, the conquest of Alsace-Lorraine, the partition of Turkey, and the diminution of Bulgaria. The four Allied Powers may therefore regard their purely defensive war-aims as already achieved, while their enemies are further than ever from the fulfilment of their plans.

Finally, when the enemy Governments describe the proposal of the four Allied Powers as a war manœuvre, and characterize it as insincere and meaningless, before beginning negotiations and so before they know our terms, this is a merely arbitrary assertion, a subjective and unverifiable hypothesis.

The Royal and Imperial Government and the Governments of its Allies have made their offer to begin negotiations for peace in full sincerity and loyalty, for they necessarily recognized the possibility that their expressly stated proposal to declare their peace terms at the beginning of the negotiations would be accepted. It is rather their enemies who, without making counter-proposals on their side, have refused to learn the content of the four Allied Powers' proposals. If the enemy desire above all the restoration of outraged rights and liberties, the recognition of the principle of nationalities, and the free existence of the small States, it will suffice to point to the tragic fate of the Irish and Finnish peoples, the extinction of the freedom and independence of the Boer Republics, the subju-

gation of North Africa by England, France, and Italy, and, lastly, the oppression of Greece, which is unexampled in history.

The Royal and Imperial Government asserts that it and the Governments of its Allies had already declared themselves willing to end the war by an oral interchange of views with the enemy Governments, and that it depended only on the decision of the enemy whether a way should be made for peace or not. Before God and humanity it disclaims responsibility for the continuance of the war.

Austria-Hungary and her Allies will, however, prosecute the fight with calm trust and confidence in their good cause until a peace has been gained which guarantees to their own peoples existence, honour, and freedom of development, and makes it possible for all the States of Europe to work together at the solution of the great problems of civilization.

X

MR. BALFOUR'S DISPATCH COMMENTING ON THE ALLIED NOTE OF DECEMBER 30, 1916, ADDRESSED TO THE BRITISH AMBASSADOR AT WASHINGTON, JANUARY 16, 1917.

SIR,

In sending you a translation of the Allied Note, I desire to make the following observations, which you should bring to the notice of the United States Government.

I gather from the general tenor of the President's Note that while he is animated by an intense desire that peace should come soon, and that when it comes it should be lasting, he does not, for the moment at least, concern himself with the terms on which it should be arranged. His Majesty's Government entirely share the President's ideals ; but they feel strongly that the durability of the peace must largely depend on its character, and that no stable system of international relations can be built on foundations which are essentially and hopelessly defective.

This becomes clearly apparent if we consider the main conditions which rendered possible the calamities from which the world is now suffering: These were the existence of a Great

Power consumed with the lust of domination, in the midst of a community of nations ill-prepared for defence, plentifully supplied, indeed, with International Laws, but with no machinery for enforcing them, and weakened by the fact that neither the boundaries of the various States nor their internal constitution harmonized with the aspirations of their constituent races or secured to them just and equal treatment.

That this last evil would be greatly mitigated if the Allies secured the changes in the map of Europe outlined in their joint Note is manifest, and I need not labour the point.

It has been argued, indeed, that the expulsion of the Turks from Europe forms no proper or logical part of this general scheme. The maintenance of the Turkish Empire was during many generations regarded by statesmen of world-wide authority as essential to the maintenance of European peace. Why, it is asked, should the cause of peace be now associated with a complete reversal of this traditional policy?

The answer is that circumstances have completely changed. It is unnecessary to consider now whether the creation of a reformed Turkey mediating between hostile races in the Near East was a scheme which, had the Sultan been sincere and the Powers united, could ever have been realized. It certainly cannot be realized now. The Turkey of "Union and Progress" is at least as barbarous and is far more aggressive than the Turkey of Sultan Abdul Hamid. In the hands of Germany it has ceased even in appearance to be a bulwark of peace, and it is openly used as an instrument of conquest. Under German officers Turkish soldiers are now fighting in lands from which they had long been expelled, and a Turkish Government, controlled, subsidized, and supported by Germany, has been guilty of massacres in Armenia and Syria more horrible than any recorded in the history even of these unhappy countries. Evidently the interests of peace and the claims of nationality alike require that Turkish rule over alien races shall, if possible, be brought to an end; and we may hope that the expulsion of Turkey from Europe will contribute as much to the cause of peace as the restoration of Alsace-Lorraine to France, of Italia Irredenta to Italy, or any of the other territorial changes indicated in the Allied Note.

Evidently, however, such territorial rearrangements, though they may diminish the occasions of war, provide no sufficient security against its recurrence. If Germany, or rather those in Germany who mould its opinions and control its destinies, again set out to dominate the world, they may find that by

the new order of things the adventure is made more difficult, but hardly that it is made impossible. They may still have ready to their hand a political system organized through and through on a military basis ; they may still accumulate vast stores of military equipment ; they may still perfect their methods of attack, so that their more pacific neighbours will be struck down before they can prepare themselves for defence. If so, Europe, when the war is over, will be far poorer in men, in money, and in mutual goodwill than it was when the war began, but it will not be safer ; and the hopes for the future of the world entertained by the President will be as far as ever from fulfilment.

There are those who think that for this disease international treaties and international laws may provide a sufficient cure. But such persons have ill-learned the lessons so clearly taught by recent history. While other nations, notably the United States of America and Britain, were striving by Treaties of Arbitration to make sure that no chance quarrel should mar the peace they desired to make perpetual, Germany stood aloof. Her historians and philosophers preached the splendours of war. Power was proclaimed as the true end of the State ; the General Staff forged with untiring industry the weapons by which, at the appointed moment, Power might be achieved. These facts proved clearly enough that treaty arrangements for maintaining peace were not likely to find much favour at Berlin ; they did not prove that such treaties, once made, would be utterly ineffectual. This became evident only when war had broken out ; though the demonstration, when it came, was overwhelming. So long as Germany remains the Germany which, without a shadow of justification, overran and barbarously ill-treated a country it was pledged to defend, no State can regard its rights as secure if they have no better protection than a solemn treaty.

The case is made worse by the reflection that these methods of calculated brutality were designed by the Central Powers not merely to crush to the dust those with whom they were at war, but to intimidate those with whom they were still at peace. Belgium was not only a victim ; it was an example. Neutrals were intended to note the outrages which accompanied its conquest, the reign of terror which followed on its occupation, the deportation of a portion of its population, the cruel oppression of the remainder. And lest nations happily protected, either by British fleets or by their own, from German armies, should suppose themselves safe from German methods, the submarine

has (within its limits) assiduously imitated the barbaric practices of the sister Service. The War Staffs of the Central Powers are well content to horrify the world if at the same time they can terrorize it.

If, then, the Central Powers succeed, it will be to methods like these that they will owe their success. How can any reform of international relations be based on a peace thus obtained? Such a peace would represent the triumph of all the forces which make war certain and make it brutal. It would advertise the futility of all the methods on which civilization relies to eliminate the occasions of international dispute and to mitigate their ferocity. Germany and Austria made the present war inevitable by attacking the rights of one small State, and they gained their initial triumphs by violating the treaty-guarded territories of another. Are small States going to find in them their future protectors, or in treaties made by them a bulwark against aggression? Terrorism by land and sea will have proved itself the instrument of victory. Are the victors likely to abandon it on the appeal of the neutrals? If existing treaties are no more than scraps of paper, can fresh treaties help us? If the violation of the most fundamental canons of International Law be crowned with success, will it not be in vain that the assembled nations labour to improve their code? None will profit by their rules but the criminals who break them. It is those who keep them that will suffer.

Though, therefore, the people of this country share to the full the desire of the President for peace, they do not believe that peace can be durable if it be not based on the success of the Allied cause. For a durable peace can hardly be expected unless three conditions are fulfilled. The first is that the existing causes of international unrest should be as far as possible removed or weakened. The second is that the aggressive aims and the unscrupulous methods of the Central Powers should fall into disrepute among their own peoples. The third is that behind International Law, and behind all treaty arrangements for preventing or limiting hostilities, some form of international sanction should be devised which would give pause to the hardiest aggressor.

These conditions may be difficult of fulfilment. But we believe them to be in general harmony with the President's ideals, and we are confident that none of them can be satisfied, even imperfectly, unless peace be secured on the general lines indicated (so far as Europe is concerned) in the Joint Note. Therefore it is that this country has made, is making, and is

prepared to make, sacrifices of blood and treasure unparalleled in its history. It bears these heavy burdens not merely that it may thus fulfil its treaty obligations, nor yet that it may secure a barren triumph of one group of nations over another. It bears them because it firmly believes that on the success of the Allies depend the prospects of peaceful civilization and of those international reforms which the best thinkers of the New World, as of the Old, dare to hope may follow on the cessation of our present calamities.

XI

**PRESIDENT WILSON'S ADDRESS TO THE SENATE,
JANUARY 22, 1917.**

On the 18th of December last I addressed an identic Note to the Governments of the nations now at war requesting them to state, more definitely than had yet been by either group of belligerents, the terms upon which they would deem it possible to make peace.

I spoke on behalf of humanity and of the rights of all neutral nations like our own, many of whose most vital interests the war puts in constant jeopardy.

The Central Powers united in a reply which stated merely that they were ready to meet their antagonists in conference to discuss terms of peace.

The Entente Powers have replied much more definitely, and have stated, in general terms indeed, but with sufficient definiteness to imply details, the arrangements, guarantees, and acts of reparation which they deem to be the indispensable conditions of a satisfactory settlement.

We are much nearer a definite discussion of the peace which shall end the present war. We are that much nearer the discussion of the international concert which must thereafter hold the world at peace. In every discussion of the peace that must end this war, it is taken for granted that peace must be followed by some definite concert of power which will make it virtually impossible that any such catastrophe should ever overwhelm us again. Every lover of mankind, every sane and thoughtful man, must take that for granted.

I have sought this opportunity to address you because I thought that I owed it to you, as the council associated with me in the final determination of our international obligations,

to disclose to you without reserve the thought and purpose that have been taking form in my mind with regard to the duty of our Government in the days to come, when it will be necessary to lay afresh and upon a new plan the foundations of peace among the nations.

It is inconceivable that the people of the United States should play no part in that great enterprise. To take part in such a service will be the opportunity for which they have sought to prepare themselves by the very principles and purposes of their polity and the approved practices of their Government ever since the days when they set up a new nation in the high and honourable hope that it might in all that it was and did show mankind the way to liberty. They cannot in honour withhold the service to which they are now about to be challenged. They do not wish to withhold it. But they owe it to themselves and to the other nations of the world to state the conditions under which they will feel free to render it.

That service is nothing less than this : To add their authority and their power to the authority and force of other nations to guarantee peace and justice throughout the world. Such a settlement cannot now be long postponed. It is right that before it comes this Government should frankly formulate the conditions upon which it would feel justified in asking our people to approve its formal and solemn adherence to a league for peace. I am here to attempt to state those conditions.

The present war must first be ended ; but we owe it to candour and to a just regard for the opinion of mankind to say that, so far as our participation in guarantees of future peace is concerned, it makes a great deal of difference in what way and upon what terms it is ended.

The treaties and agreements which bring it to an end must embody terms that will create a peace that is worth guaranteeing and preserving, a peace that will win the approval of mankind, not merely a peace that will serve the several interests and immediate aims of the nations engaged.

We shall have no voice in determining what those terms shall be, but we shall, I feel sure, have a voice in determining whether they shall be made lasting or not by the guarantees of a universal covenant ; and our judgment upon what is fundamental and essential as a condition precedent to permanency should be spoken now, not afterwards, when it may be too late.

No covenant of co-operative peace that does not include the peoples of the New World can suffice to keep the future safe against war ; and yet there is only one sort of peace that

the peoples of America could join in guaranteeing. The elements of that peace must be elements that engage the confidence and satisfy the principles of the American Government, elements consistent with the political faith and the practical convictions which the peoples of America have once for all embraced and undertaken to defend.

I do not mean to say that any American Government would throw any obstacle in the way of any terms of peace the Governments now at war might agree upon, or seek to upset them when made, whatever they might be. I only take it for granted that mere terms of peace between the belligerents will not satisfy even the belligerents themselves. Mere agreements may not make peace secure.

It will be absolutely necessary that a force be created as a guarantor of the permanency of the settlement so much greater than the force of any nation now engaged or any alliance hitherto formed or projected, that no nation, no probable combination of nations, could face or withstand it. If the peace presently to be made is to endure, it must be a peace made secure by the organized major force of mankind.

The terms of the immediate peace agreed upon will determine whether it is a peace for which such a guarantee can be secured. The question upon which the whole future peace and policy of the world depends is this : Is the present war a struggle for a just and secure peace or only for a new balance of power ? If it be only a struggle for a new balance of power, who will guarantee, who can guarantee the stable equilibrium of the new arrangement ? Only a tranquil Europe can be a stable Europe. There must be, not a balance of power, but a community of power ; not organized rivalries, but an organized common peace.

Fortunately we have received very explicit assurances on this point.

The statesmen of both of the groups of nations now arrayed against one another have said, in terms that could not be misinterpreted, that it was no part of the purpose they had in mind to crush their antagonists. But the implications of these assurances may not be equally clear to all—may not be the same on both sides of the water. I think it will be serviceable if I attempt to set forth what we understand them to be.

They imply, first of all, that it must be a peace without victory.

I beg that I may be permitted to put my own interpretation upon it, and that it may be understood that no other interpre-

tation was in my thought. I am seeking only to face realities, and to face them without soft concealments.

Victory would mean peace forced upon the loser, a victor's terms imposed upon the vanquished. It would be accepted in humiliation, under duress, at intolerable sacrifice, and would leave a sting, a resentment, a bitter memory upon which terms of peace would rest, not permanently, but only as upon quicksand. Only a peace between equals can last--only a peace the very principle of which is equality and a common participation in a common benefit. The right state of mind, the right feeling between nations is as necessary for a lasting peace as is the just settlement of vexed questions of territory or of racial and national allegiance.

The equality of nations upon which peace must be founded, if it is to last, must be an equality of rights; the guarantees exchanged must neither recognize nor imply a difference between big nations and small; between those that are powerful and those that are weak. Right must be based upon the common strength, not upon the individual strength, of the nations upon whose concert peace will depend.

Equality of territory or of resources there, of course, cannot be; nor any other sort of equality not gained in the ordinary peaceful and legitimate development of the peoples themselves. But no one asks or expects anything more than an equality of rights. Mankind is looking now for freedom of life, not for equipoises of power.

And there is a deeper thing involved than even equality of rights among organized nations.

No peace can last, or ought to last, which does not recognize and accept the principle that Governments derive all their just powers from the consent of the governed, and that no right anywhere exists to hand peoples about from potentate to potentate as if they were property.

I take it for granted, for instance, if I may venture upon a single example, that statesmen everywhere are agreed that there should be a united, independent, and autonomous Poland, and that henceforth inviolable security of life, of worship, and of industrial and social development should be guaranteed to all peoples who have lived hitherto under the power of Governments devoted to a faith and purpose hostile to their own.

I speak of this, not because of any desire to exalt an abstract political principle which has always been held very dear by those who have sought to build up liberty in America, but for

the same reason that I have spoken of the other conditions of peace which seem to me clearly indispensable—because I wish frankly to uncover realities.

Any peace which does not recognize and accept this principle will inevitably be upset. It will not rest upon the affections or the convictions of mankind. The ferment of spirit of whole populations will fight subtly and constantly against it, and all the world will sympathize. The world can be at peace only if its life is stable, and there can be no stability where the will is in rebellion, where there is not tranquillity of spirit and a sense of justice, of freedom, and of right.

So far as practicable, moreover, every great people now struggling towards a full development of its resources and of its powers should be assured a direct outlet to the great highways of the sea.

Where this cannot be done by the cession of territory, it no doubt can be done by the neutralization of direct rights of way under the general guarantee which will assure the peace itself. With a right comity of arrangement no nation need be shut away from free access to the open paths of the world's commerce.

And the paths of the sea must alike in law and in fact be free. The freedom of the seas is the *sine qua non* of peace, equality, and co-operation.

No doubt a somewhat radical reconsideration of many of the rules of international practice hitherto thought to be established may be necessary in order to make the seas indeed free and common in practically all circumstances for the use of mankind ; but the motive for such changes is convincing and compelling. There can be no trust or intimacy between the peoples of the world without them. The free, constant, unthreatened intercourse of nations is an essential part of the process of peace and of development. It need not be difficult either to define or to secure the freedom of the seas if the Governments of the world sincerely desire to come to an agreement concerning it.

It is a problem closely connected with the limitation of naval armaments and the co-operation of the navies of the world in keeping the seas at once free and safe, and the question of limiting naval armaments opens the wider and perhaps more difficult question of the limitation of armies and of all programmes of military preparation. Difficult and delicate as these questions are, they must be faced with the utmost candour and decided in a spirit of real accommodation, if peace is to come with

healing in its wings, and come to stay. Peace cannot be had without concession and sacrifice.

There can be no sense of safety and equality among the nations if great and preponderating armaments are henceforth to continue here and there to be built up and maintained. The statesmen of the world must plan for peace, and nations must adjust and accommodate their policy to it as they have planned for war and made ready for pitiless contest and rivalry.

The question of armaments, whether on land or on sea, is the most immediately and intensely practical question connected with the future fortunes of nations and of mankind.

I have spoken upon these great matters without reserve and with the utmost explicitness, because it has seemed to me to be necessary if the world's yearning desire for peace was anywhere to find free voice and utterance.

Perhaps I am the only person in high authority amongst all the peoples of the world who is at liberty to speak and hold nothing back. I am speaking as an individual, and yet I am speaking also, of course, as the responsible head of a great Government, and I feel confident that I have said what the people of the United States would wish me to say.

May I not add that I hope and believe that I am in effect speaking for liberals and friends of humanity in every nation and of every programme of liberty? I would fain believe that I am speaking for the silent mass of mankind everywhere who have yet had no place or opportunity to speak their real hearts out concerning the death and ruin they see to have come already upon the persons and the homes they hold most dear.

And in holding out the expectation that the people and Government of the United States will join the other civilized nations of the world in guaranteeing the permanence of peace upon such terms as I have named, I speak with the greater boldness and confidence because it is clear to every man who can think that there is in this promise no breach in either our traditions or our policy as a nation, but a fulfilment, rather, of all that we have professed or striven for.

I am proposing, as it were, that the nations should, with one accord, adopt the doctrine of President Monroe as the doctrine of the world: that no nation should seek to extend its polity over any other nation or people, but that every people should be left free to determine its own polity, its own way of development, unhindered, unthreatened, unafraid, the little along with the great and powerful.

I am proposing that all nations henceforth avoid entangling alliances which would draw them into competitions of power, catch them in a net of intrigue and selfish rivalry, and disturb their own affairs with influences intruded from without. There is no entangling alliance in a concert of power. When all unite to act in the same sense and with the same purpose all act in common interest, and are free to live their own lives under a common protection.

I am proposing government by the consent of the governed ; that freedom of the seas which in international conference after conference representatives of the people of the United States have urged with the eloquence of those who are the convinced disciples of liberty ; and that moderation of armaments which makes of armies and navies a power for order merely, not an instrument of aggression or of selfish violence.

These are American principles, American policies. We could stand for no others. And yet they are the principles and policies of forward-looking men and women everywhere, of every modern nation, of every enlightened community. They are the principles of mankind, and must prevail.

XII

THE LETTER OF THE EMPEROR CARL OF AUSTRIA, MARCH 31, 1917, AND THE PEACE DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN AGENTS OF THE AUSTRIAN AND THE FRENCH GOVERNMENTS, 1917-18.¹

[In a speech of April 2, 1918,² Count Czernin, Foreign Minister of Austria-Hungary, said :—

Some time before the beginning of the Western offensive M. Clemenceau inquired of me whether, and upon what basis, I was ready to negotiate. In agreement with Berlin, I at once replied that I was ready, and that, as regards France, I could see no obstacle to peace save France's desire for Alsace-Lorraine. Paris replied that negotiations were impossible on this basis. No choice then remained.

This passage elicited from M. Clemenceau the remark, "Czernin has lied!" and there followed the series of official notes here subjoined.]

¹ See Introduction, p. xviii.

² See below, No. LIII, p. 174.

AUSTRIAN OFFICIAL NOTE, APRIL 4, 1918.

On the instructions of the Foreign Minister, Councillor to Legation, Count Nikolaus Revertera, repeatedly had discussions in Switzerland with a confidential agent of M. Clemenceau, Count Armand, who was attached to the French War Ministry, and who was sent to Switzerland for an interview with Count Revertera. As the result of an interview between these two gentlemen which took place in Freiburg, Switzerland, on February 2nd,¹ the question was discussed as to whether, and upon what basis, a discussion on the bringing about of a general peace would be possible between the Foreign Ministers of Austria-Hungary and France, or between the official representatives of these two Ministers. Hereupon Count Revertera, after first obtaining instructions from the Austro-Hungarian Foreign Minister, towards the end of February declared, on behalf of the Minister, to Count Armand, for communication to M. Clemenceau, that Count Czernin was prepared for a discussion with a representative of France, and regarded such a conversation as both possible, and attended with some prospect of success, so soon as France renounced her plans of conquest in regard to Alsace-Lorraine. Count Revertera hereupon received a reply in the name of M. Clemenceau that the latter was not in a position to accept the proposed renunciation by France of this annexation, so that a meeting of the representatives at that time would, in the view of both parties, be useless.

FRENCH OFFICIAL STATEMENT, APRIL 6, 1918.

On assuming office,² M. Clemenceau found that conversations had been begun in Switzerland, on the initiative of Austria, between Count Revertera, a personal friend of the Austrian Emperor, and Major Armand, of the Second Bureau of the General Staff, who had been designated for the purpose by the Ministry in power at the time. M. Clemenceau did not consider it expedient to take the responsibility of interrupting conversations which had given no result, but which might furnish useful sources of information. Major Armand was therefore able to continue to visit Switzerland at the request of Count Revertera. The instruction which was given him in the presence of his

¹ 1918.

² November 17, 1917.

chief by M. Clemenceau was "to listen and to say nothing." When Count Revertera was finally convinced that his bait for a German peace was unsuccessful, he took the trouble, so as to denote the exact character of his mission, to hand to Major Armand on February 25th¹ a note written by himself, the first sentence of which reads: "In the month of August 1917 pourparlers had been entered into with the object of obtaining from the French Government, in view of a future peace, proposals addressed to the Austro-Hungarian Government which might be of such a nature that the latter could support them in Berlin."

Count Revertera, who approached us himself and was not approached by us, acknowledges in these words that it was a question of "obtaining from the French Government" peace proposals addressed to Austria, but destined to reach Berlin. Such are the facts revealed by this authentic document which Count Czernin dares to misrepresent in these terms: "M. Clemenceau some time before the beginning of the offensive on the Western front inquired of me whether I was ready to enter into negotiations and on what basis." In speaking thus, he has not only not told the truth, but has actually said what was directly contrary to the truth. In France we call this "a lie." It is only natural that M. Clemenceau is not able to restrain his indignation when he sees Count Czernin, naturally uneasy as to the final results of the offensive, boldly transposing the rôles, and representing the French Government as begging for peace at the very hour when we were preparing with our Allies to inflict a supreme defeat on the Central Powers. It would be easy to recall to what a degree Austria has wearied Rome, Washington, and London with its deceitful offers of a separate peace, which had no other object than to put us under the German yoke to which he professes to accommodate himself. Who has not heard the story of the recent meeting—which always takes place in Switzerland—between an Austrian ex-Ambassador and a high personality of the Entente? The conference lasted only a few minutes. In this case, too, it was not our Ally who asked for the interview. It was the Austrian Government. Perhaps Count Czernin will be able to recall to mind another attempt of the same kind made in Paris and London, only two months before the Revertera affair by a personage of a rank much above his own. In that case, as in the present instance, we have authentic but much more significant proofs.

¹ ? 23rd; see p. 34.

**M. PAINLEVÉ, THE EX-PREMIER, MADE IN ADDITION
THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT, APRIL 6, 1918.**

In the course of the year 1917 several attempts were made on the part of Austria to enter into semi-official conversations with personages of the Entente. In particular, in June 1917, I was informed by the Second Bureau that an Austrian of note, Count Revertera, had sought on several occasions through the mediation of a Swiss to secure a private interview with Major Armand, a member of the Second Bureau, a distant relative of his. M. Ribot, who was then Premier, having been notified, Count Revertera and Major Armand met in August 1917. The matter went no farther. There was no other interview after the month of August, and I knew of no other down to November 13, 1917, the date of the end of my Cabinet. What followed after this date naturally did not come before my notice, and I presume from the statement which has been made by the Premier that Count Revertera came back to the charge.

**TO THE FRENCH NOTE OF APRIL 6th THE AUSTRIAN
GOVERNMENT REPLIED APRIL 8, 1918.**

As against the first brief declaration of M. Clemenceau, in which he gave the lie direct to Count Czernin, it is now observed with satisfaction that the French Premier's official statement of April 6th admits that discussions on peace questions had taken place between two confidential agents of the Governments of Austria-Hungary and France. The account given by M. Clemenceau of the invitation, and the further course of these negotiations, and also the statement published by M. Painlevé in *L'Humanité* on the same subject, deviate, however, from the facts in many important points to such a degree that a detailed correction of the French official statement appears to be necessary.

In July 1917 Count Revertera was requested by an intermediary in the name of the French Government to state whether he was in a position to receive a communication from this Government to that of Austria-Hungary. When Count Revertera, after having obtained the sanction of the Austro-Hungarian Government, replied in the affirmative to this inquiry in the same month of July 1917, Major Count Armand was charged with such communication by the then French Premier, M. Ribot. He arrived on August 7, 1917, at Count Revertera's

private residence in Freiburg, the Count being distantly related to him. Major Armand then addressed to Count Revertera the question as to whether discussions between France and Austria-Hungary were possible. Thus the initiative of these discussions was taken from the French side. Count Revertera reported to the Austro-Hungarian Foreign Minister that this question had been put on the instructions of the French Government, and the Minister thereupon requested Count Revertera to enter into discussions with the French confidential agent, and in the course of these discussions to establish whether by this means a basis for bringing about a general peace could be secured. On August 22nd and 23rd Count Revertera entered into discussions with Major Armand, which, however, as M. Clemenceau quite correctly declares, yielded no result.

The negotiations were thereupon broken off. When M. Clemenceau asserts that the discussions between Count Revertera and Major Armand were proceeding on his entry into office, this is incorrect. Not until January 1918 did Major Armand, this time on instructions from M. Clemenceau, again get into touch with Count Revertera. The thread had been broken in August 1917 and was therefore again taken up by M. Clemenceau himself in January 1918. From this fresh contact there resulted the discussions referred to in the official *communiqué* of April 4, 1918.

It is, however, correct that during these discussions Count Revertera handed Major Armand on February 23,¹ 1918, the memorandum of which M. Clemenceau only cites the first sentence, and which confirms that, in the discussions with Major Armand which took place in August 1917, Count Revertera was charged with the task of finding out whether the proposals obtainable from the French Government, which had addressed Austria-Hungary, would offer a basis for a general peace, and also whether they would be such as Austria-Hungary could bring to the knowledge of its allies. It, therefore, entirely corresponded with the facts when Count Czernin, in his speech on April 2nd last, declared that M. Clemenceau had some time before the beginning of the Western offensive inquired of him whether he was prepared for negotiations, and on what basis.

The accusation of lying brought against Count Czernin by M. Clemenceau cannot therefore be maintained even in the restricted sense of the present French official statement.

Nothing is known to the Austro-Hungarian Government of the entreaties for the alleged separate peace with which Austria-

¹ ? 25th ; see p. 32.

Hungary wearied the Governments in Rome, Washington, and London. When M. Clemenceau asks the Austro-Hungarian Foreign Minister whether he remembers that two months before the Revertera affair, that is about a year ago, an attempt of a like nature was made by a personage of far higher rank, Count Czernin does not hesitate to reply in the affirmative. But for the sake of completeness and entire correctness it should be added that this attempt also led to no result. So much for the establishment of the facts.

For the rest, it need only be remarked that Count Czernin for his part would see no reason to deny it if in this, or any similar case, he had taken the initiative, because, in contrast to M. Clemenceau, he believes that it cannot be a matter for reproach for a Government to make attempts to bring about an honourable peace which would liberate all peoples from the terrors of the present war. This dispute raised by M. Clemenceau has, moreover, diverted attention from the real kernel of Count Czernin's statement. The essence of this statement was not so much as to who had suggested the discussions undertaken before the beginning of the Western offensive, but rather as to who had caused their collapse, and M. Clemenceau has, up to the present, not denied that he refused to enter into negotiations on the basis of the renunciation of the re-acquisition of Alsace-Lorraine.

TO THIS M. CLEMENCEAU REPLIED, APRIL 8, 1918.

A lie diluted is still a lie. Count Czernin's lie consists in him having said that some time before the offensive M. Clemenceau had caused him to be asked if he was ready to enter into negotiations and on what basis. M. Clemenceau set against this allegation the passage in Count Revertera's manuscript note, in which he said that Austria's object was to obtain from France peace proposals. The text of the "petitioner" is authentic. Count Czernin did not dare contest it. To cover his confusion he tries to maintain that the conversation was reopened at M. Clemenceau's request.

Unluckily for him, there is a point of fact which is enough to nullify his allegation, namely, that M. Clemenceau learnt of the matter on November 18, 1917 (i.e. on the day after he took over the Ministry of War), from a communication from the intermediary dated November 10th, and consequently destined for his predecessor. For Count Czernin to have said

the truth M. Clemenceau would have had to have taken the initiative in the matter before he became Prime Minister. After the personal contradiction, Count Czernin finds himself faced by the categorical contradiction of the facts.

He is reduced to maintaining that Major Armand was a confidential agent of M. Clemenceau. As a matter of fact M. Clemenceau had previous to this incident only seen this officer of the Department of Information once, and that was for five minutes, fifteen to twenty years ago, at the Fillis Riding School. Finally, Count Czernin's last resource is to say that the *démarche* which he imputes to M. Clemenceau is of no importance; the important point in the case, he affirms, is not so much to know who took the initiative in the conversations before the beginning of the offensive on the Western front, but who caused their collapse. Then why all this fuss? To discover that all French Governments, like France herself, are adamant on the question of Alsace-Lorraine? Who, then, would have thought that Count Revertera was needed to elucidate in Count Czernin's mind a question on which the Emperor of Austria had himself been the last to pronounce?

For the Emperor Charles indeed it was who, in a letter of March 1917, with his own hand recorded his adhesion to the "just French claims regarding Alsace-Lorraine." A second Imperial letter states that the Emperor was in agreement with his Government. It only remains for Count Czernin to receive the lie from himself.

THE AUSTRIAN GOVERNMENT THEN STATED, APRIL 10, 1918.

M. Clemenceau, by continual distortions of facts, endeavours to withdraw from the difficult position in which he is placed by denial of the statements in Count Czernin's speech of April 2nd. We consider it superfluous to make special reference to the falsehood of every individual claim, for we should thereby only subserve his obvious endeavour to divert by a discussion of the preliminaries to the Freiburg meeting, attention from the two facts, with which alone Count Czernin's speech was concerned, namely, that M. Clemenceau shortly before the opening of the last offensive in the West first sought a *rapprochement* with Austria-Hungary, and then gave it to be understood that France would have nothing to do with a peace without the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine.

Now M. Clemenceau attempts to divert attention from these two points by throwing into the discussion alleged political declarations, which the Emperor Charles committed to writing, and which, he claims, prove that "he was in agreement with the just desire of France for a retrocession of Alsace-Lorraine," and that his Foreign Minister shared this opinion. The absurdity of this claim is obvious. It is in direct conflict with all public speeches made by the responsible Minister for Foreign Affairs, which are known in France also. In particular, the fact, which cannot be denied, even by Clemenceau, that imperial and royal troops are fighting for Alsace-Lorraine on the Western front, shows more clearly than any argument the loyal disposition of our Monarch towards his Allies.

But it may be expressly stated that the assertions of M. Clemenceau with regard to the declarations by the Emperor Charles in a letter are lies from beginning to end.

From all Clemenceau's allegations one fact clearly stands out: that the war on the Western front continues because France wishes to annex Alsace-Lorraine.

A better proof that the Central Powers are fighting for the defence of their possessions could not have been given to the world by Clemenceau.

AND IN ADDITION THE AUSTRIAN EMPEROR TELEGRAPHED TO THE KAISER, APRIL 11, 1918.

The French Premier, driven into a corner, is endeavouring to escape from the net of lies wherein he has entangled himself by piling up more and more untruths, and he does not hesitate now to make the completely false and untrue statement that I recognized that France had a just claim to the re-acquisition of Alsace-Lorraine. I disavow this assertion with indignation. At a moment when Austro-Hungarian cannon are thundering jointly with German cannon on the Western front it hardly needs proof that I am fighting for these provinces, and am ready to continue fighting exactly as if it were a question of defending my own lands. Although in the face of this eloquent proof of full community of aims for which now for almost four years we have been waging war, I consider it to be superfluous to waste even a word on M. Clemenceau's false assertion, I desire nevertheless to take this opportunity of again assuring you of the complete solidarity which exists between you and me, and your Empire and mine. No intrigues, no attempts,

from whomsoever they may proceed, will imperil our loyal comradeship of arms, and we shall jointly force an honourable peace.

ON THE SAME DATE THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT ISSUED THE FOLLOWING.

The Emperor Charles under the eye of Berlin, in endorsing the lying contradictions of Count Czernin, places the French Government under the obligation of furnishing proofs. The following is the text of an autograph letter communicated on March 31, 1917, by Prince Sixte of Bourbon, the brother-in-law of the Emperor of Austria, to M. Poincaré, the President of the Republic, and forwarded immediately, with the assent of the Prince, to the French Prime Minister :—

MY DEAR SIXTE,

The end of the third year of this war, which has brought so much mourning and pain into the world, is approaching. All the peoples of my Empire are united more closely than ever in the common will to safeguard the integrity of the Monarchy, even at the price of heavier sacrifices. Thanks to their union and to the generous co-operation of all nationalities in my Empire, the Monarchy has been able to withstand for nearly three years the gravest assaults.

No one can dispute the military advantages won by my troops, especially in the Balkan theatre of war. France, on her side, has shown magnificent power of resistance and *élan*. We all unreservedly admire the admirable traditional bravery of her Army and the spirit of sacrifice of the whole French people. It is also particularly pleasant to me to see that, although they are for the moment opponents, no real divergence of views or aspirations separates my Empire from France, and that I am justified in being able to hope that my lively sympathies for France, joined to those which reign in the whole Monarchy, will prevent for ever a return to the state of war.

To this end, and to show in a precise manner the reality of these sentiments, I beg you to convey secretly and unofficially to Poincaré, President of the French Republic, that I shall support by every means, and using all my personal influence with my Allies, the French just claims regarding Alsace-Lorraine.

As for Belgium, she ought to be entirely re-established in

her sovereignty, keeping the whole of her African possessions, without prejudice to the compensation which she may receive for the losses which she has sustained.

In regard to Serbia, she shall be re-established in her sovereignty, and as a token of our goodwill we are ready to assure her an equitable and natural access to the Adriatic Sea, as well as wide economic concessions. On her side Austria-Hungary will demand as a primordial and absolute condition that the Kingdom of Serbia shall cease any relation, and shall suppress any society or group, the political aim of which tends towards the disaggregation of the Monarchy, especially the Narodna Obrana; that it shall loyally and by all means in its power prevent any kind of political agitation in this sense both in Serbia and outside her frontiers, and that it shall give an assurance thereof under the guarantee of the Entente Powers.

The events which have occurred in Russia compel me to reserve my ideas on the subject until the day when a legal and definitive Government shall be established there.

Having thus set forth my ideas, I will ask you to inform me in your turn, after referring the matter to these two Powers, of the opinion first of all of France and England, with a view to preparing the ground in the Entente, so that official negotiations might on that basis be opened and lead to a result to the satisfaction of all. Hoping that we shall thus soon be able on both sides to put an end to the sufferings of so many millions of men and so many families which are in grief and anxiety, I beg you to believe in my very lively and fraternal affection.

CHARLES.

Count Czernin having recognized in his Note of April 8th the existence of this negotiation, due to the initiative of a personage "of a rank far higher than his own," the Austrian Government is now placed under the necessity of giving an explanation in regard to the attempt admitted by it and regarding the details of the conversations of its delegate.

THE AUSTRIAN GOVERNMENT REPLIED TO THIS BY ALLEGING THAT THE LETTER WAS FALSIFIED, APRIL 13, 1918.

The letter by His Apostolic Majesty published by the French Premier in his *communiqué* of April 12, 1918, is falsified (*Verfälscht*). First of all, it may be declared that "the personalty

of far higher rank than the Foreign Minister," who, as admitted in the official statement of April 7th, undertook peace efforts in the spring of 1917, must be understood, and was understood, to be not His Apostolic Majesty, but Prince Sixte of Bourbon, who in the spring of 1917 was occupied with bringing about a *rapprochement* between the belligerent States. As regards the text of the letter published by M. Clemenceau, the Foreign Minister declares by All-Highest command that His Apostolic Majesty wrote a purely personal private letter in the spring of 1917 to his brother-in-law, Prince Sixte of Bourbon, which contained no instructions to the Prince to initiate mediation with the President of the French Republic or any one else, to hand on communications which might be made to him or to evoke and receive replies. This letter, moreover, made no mention of the Belgian question, and contained, relative to Alsace-Lorraine, the following passage: "I would have used all my personal influence in favour of the French claims for the return of Alsace-Lorraine if these claims were just. They are not, however."

The second letter of the Emperor mentioned in the French Premier's *communiqué* of April 8th, in which His Apostolic Majesty is said to have declared that he was "in accord with his Minister," is significantly not mentioned by the French *communiqué*.

THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT RETORTED, APRIL 14, 1918.

There are rotten consciences. The Emperor Charles, finding it impossible to save his face, falls into the stammerings of a man confounded. He is now reduced to accusing his brother-in-law of forgery, by fabricating with his own hand a lying text. The original document, the text of which has been published by the French Government, was communicated in the presence of M. Jules Cambon, Secretary-General of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and delegated for this purpose by the Minister for Foreign Affairs to the President of the Republic, who, with the authorization of the Prince, handed a copy of it to the Prime Minister.

The Prince spoke of the matter to M. Ribot [then Prime Minister] himself in terms which would have been devoid of sense if the text had not been that published by the French Government. Is it not evident that no conversation could have been opened and that the President of the Republic would

not even have received the Prince a second time if the latter, at Austria's instance, had been the bearer of a document which contested our rights instead of affirming them?

The Emperor Charles's letter, as we have quoted it, was shown by Prince Sixte himself to the Chief of the State. Moreover, two friends of the Prince can attest the authenticity of the letter, especially the one who received it from the Prince to copy it.

THE AUSTRIAN EMPEROR THEN SENT ANOTHER TELEGRAM TO THE KAISER, APRIL 13, 1918.

The charges brought against me by M. Clemenceau are so base that I have no mind to continue the discussion of the matter with France. Our further answer is in my guns on the West.

In loyal friendship,
KARL.

AND THE FOLLOWING FINAL STATEMENT WAS ISSUED BY THE AUSTRIAN GOVERNMENT, APRIL 15, 1918.

M. Clemenceau's latest statements alter nothing as regards the truth of the official declarations published by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Prince Sixte of Bourbon, whose character, which is well known to his Majesty, is proof against suspicion, was as little accused of falsification as any other individual, since the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is unable to establish where the substitution of the forged letter took place. The affair is herewith declared at an end.

Czernin's resignation, which was accepted April 15, 1918, closed this affair.

XIII

PRESIDENT WILSON ASKS FOR A DECLARATION OF WAR ON GERMANY, APRIL 2, 1917.¹

Our object is to vindicate the principles of peace and justice in the life of the world as against selfish autocratic power, and to set up amongst really free and self-governed peoples of the

¹ This is only an extract from the speech made by the President on that occasion.

world such a concert of purpose and action as will henceforth ensure the observance of these principles.

Neutrality is no longer feasible, or desirable where the peace of the world is involved and the freedom of its peoples, and the menace to that peace and freedom lies in the existence of autocratic governments backed by organized force which is controlled wholly by their will and not by the will of their people.

We have seen the last of neutrality in such circumstances. We are at the beginning of an age in which it will be insisted that the same standards of conduct and responsibility for wrong done shall be observed among nations and their governments that are observed among individual citizens of civilized States.

We have not quarrelled with the German people. We have no feeling towards them but one of sympathy and friendship. It was not upon their impulse that their Government acted in entering this war. It was not with their previous knowledge or approval. It was a war determined upon as wars used to be determined upon in the old unhappy days, when peoples were nowhere consulted by their rulers and wars were provoked and waged in the interest of dynasties or little groups of ambitious men, who were accustomed to use their fellow-men as pawns and tools.

Self-governed nations do not fill their neighbour States with spies or set in course an intrigue to bring about some critical posture of affairs which would give them an opportunity to strike and make a conquest. Such designs can be successfully worked only under cover where no one has a right to ask questions.

Cunningly contrived plans of deception or aggression, carried, it may be, from generation to generation, can be worked out and kept from light only within the privacy of Courts, or behind the carefully guarded confidences of a narrow privileged class. They are happily impossible where public opinion commands and insists upon full information concerning all the nation's affairs.

A steadfast concert for peace can never be maintained except by the partnership of democratic nations. No autocratic Government could be trusted to keep faith within it or observe its covenants. There must be a league of honour and partnership of opinion. Intrigue would eat its vitals away. Plottings by inner circles, who would plan what they would and render an account to no one, would be corruption seated at its very heart. Only free peoples can hold their purpose and their honour steady to the common end and prefer the interests of mankind to any narrow interest of their own.

XIV

**REPUDIATION OF IMPERIALISM BY THE RUSSIAN
PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT, APRIL 10, 1917.**

Having examined the military situation the Russian Government, in the name of duty to the country, has decided to tell the people directly and openly the whole truth.

The régime which has now been overthrown left the defence of the country in a badly disorganized condition. By its culpable inaction and its inept measures it introduced disorganization into our finances and into the provisioning and the transport and supply of munitions to the Army. It weakened the whole of our economic organization. The Provisional Government, with the active co-operation of the whole nation, will devote all its energies to the repair of these serious consequences of the old régime.

But time is pressing.

The blood of many sons of the Fatherland has been shed freely in the course of these two and a half long years of war, but the country is still capable of a powerful blow at the enemy, who occupies whole territories of our State, and is now, in the days of the birth of Russian liberty, threatening us with a new and decisive thrust. The defence, cost what it may, of our national patrimony and the deliverance of the country from the enemy who invades our borders constitute the capital and vital problem before our warriors, who are defending the liberty of the people in close union with our Allies.

The Government deems it to be its right and duty to declare now that Free Russia does not aim at dominating other nations, at depriving them of their national patrimony, or at occupying by force foreign territories: but that its object is to establish a durable peace on the basis of the rights of nations to decide their own destiny.

The Russian nation does not lust after the strengthening of its power abroad at the expense of other nations. Its aim is not to subjugate or to humiliate any one.

In the name of the higher principles of equity, it has removed the chains which weighed upon the Polish people.

But the Russian nation will not allow its Fatherland to come out of the great struggle humiliated and weakened in its vital forces.

These principles will constitute the basis of the foreign policy

of the Provisional Government, which will carry out unfailingly the popular will and safeguard the rights of our Fatherland, while observing the engagements entered into with our Allies.

The Provisional Government of Free Russia has no right to hide the truth. The State is in danger. Every effort must be made to save it.

Let the country respond to the truth, when it is told, not by sterile depression, not by discouragement, but by unanimous vigour, with a view to the creation of a united national will. This will give us new strength for the struggle and procure our salvation. In the hour of rude trial, let the whole country find in itself strength to consolidate the liberty won and to devote itself to untiring labour for the welfare of Free Russia.

The Provisional Government, which has given a solemn oath to serve the people, is firmly confident that, with the general and unanimous support of each and all, it will itself be able to do its duty to the country to the end.

(Signed) PRINCE LVOFF,
President of Council.

XV

THE REICHSTAG MAJORITY RESOLUTION, JULY 19, 1917.¹

As on August 4, 1914, so on the threshold of the fourth year of war, the word of the Speech from the Throne holds good for the German people : " We are not impelled by lust of conquest." For the defence of her freedom and independence, for the integrity of her territorial possessions (*territoriales Besitzstandes*), Germany took up arms. The Reichstag strives for a peace of understanding and the permanent reconciliation of the peoples. With such a peace forced acquisitions of territory and political, economic, or financial oppressions are inconsistent. The Reichstag also rejects all schemes which aim at economic barriers and hostility between the peoples (*Absper- rung und Verfeindung*) after the war. The freedom of the seas must be made secure (*sichergestellt werden*). Only economic peace will prepare the ground for a friendly intercourse between the nations. The Reichstag will actively promote the creation of International Law organizations.

So long, however, as the enemy Governments do not accept

¹ See Introduction, p. xxii.

such a peace, so long as they threaten Germany and her allies with conquests (*Eroberungen*) and oppression (*Vergewaltigung*), the German nation will stand together like one man, and unshakably hold out and fight until its own and its allies' right to life and development is secured (*gesichert*). The German nation is invincible in its unity. The Reichstag knows that it is at one in this statement with the men who in heroic fights are defending the Fatherland. The imperishable gratitude of the whole people is assured to them.

[This motion was carried by 214 votes to 116.]

XVI

RESOLUTION MOVED IN THE BRITISH HOUSE OF COMMONS IN SUPPORT OF THE REICHSTAG RESOLUTION, JULY 26, 1917.

That in view of the resolution passed by the representatives of the German people in the Reichstag, to the effect that, putting aside the thought of acquisitions by force, the Reichstag is striving for a peace of understanding and lasting reconciliation of nations, that, with such a peace, political, economic, and financial usurpations are incompatible, and that the Reichstag repudiates all plans which aim at the economic isolation and tying down of nations after the war, this House declares that this statement expresses the principles for which this country has stood throughout and calls upon the Government, in conjunction with the Allies, to restate their peace terms accordingly; and further it declares that the Allies shall accept the Russian proposal that the forthcoming Allied Conference on war-aims shall comprise representatives of the peoples, and not solely spokesmen of the Government.

[This resolution was proposed in the course of the discussion on the Consolidated Fund Bill. The motion before the House being "That the Bill be now read a second time" the proposal was to omit all the words after "That," and substitute the above. A motion "that the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Bill" was carried by 148 votes to 19. Thus the words of the resolution failed to secure adoption by that majority.]

XVII

MICHAELIS ON THE CHANCES OF PEACE,
JULY 19, 1917.¹

In every heart the burning question is how long yet the war is to last. That brings me to what forms the central point of interest to us all, and therefore the very heart of our business to-day. Germany did not will the war. She did not strive after conquests, after forcible extension of her power; and therefore she will not continue to wage war a single day after an honourable peace is to be had, merely to make conquests by force. What we wish primarily to do is to conclude peace as men who have successfully carried through their purpose.

The present generation and coming generations ought to keep in remembrance throughout the centuries this time of war-trial as a shining time of victory and of unexampled energy and joy in sacrifice on the part of our people and armies. A people, not amounting to even seventy millions, which shoulder to shoulder with its loyal Allies maintained itself before the frontiers of its countries with its arms in its hands against the manifold superiority of masses of peoples, has shown its invincibility. For me the following aims result from this. In the first place, the Fatherland's territory is inviolable. With an enemy who approaches us with the demand to take from us Imperial territory (*Reichsgebiet*) we cannot negotiate. If we make peace we must primarily achieve this, that the frontiers of the German Empire are for all time safeguarded (*sichergestellt*). We must by way of agreement and compromise guarantee (*garantieren*) the vital conditions of the German Empire on the Continent and overseas. The peace must provide the basis for a lasting reconciliation of the nations. It must, as your resolution puts it, prevent the further creation of hostility among the nations by economic barriers. It must provide a guarantee that the armed alliance of our enemies does not evolve into an economic offensive alliance against us. These ends are attainable within the limits of your resolution as I understand it.

We cannot again offer peace. We have loyally stretched out our hand once and met with no response, but with the entire nation, with the German Army and its leaders, who are in accord with this declaration, the Government has this in mind: If the enemy on their side abandon their lust for con-

¹ From his speech on his appointment as Chancellor in succession to Bethmann-Hollweg.

quest and their aims of subjugation, and wish to enter into negotiations, we shall listen, honestly and ready for peace, to what they have to say to us.

XVIII

NOTE OF HIS HOLINESS THE POPE TO THE BELLIGERENTS, AUGUST 1, 1917.

Since the beginning of our Pontificate, in the midst of the horrors of the terrible war let loose over Europe, we have constantly kept before us three things : To maintain perfect impartiality with respect to all the belligerents, as is appropriate for him who is the common Father, and who loves all his children with an equal affection ; to endeavour always to do the greatest possible amount of good to everybody without exception of persons, without distinction of nationality or religion, as is dictated to us both by the universal law of charity and by the supreme spiritual office entrusted to us by Christ ; finally, as is equally required for our pacificatory mission, to omit nothing, so far as it lay in our power, that might assist in hastening the end of this calamity by endeavouring to bring the peoples and their rulers to more moderate resolutions, to serene deliberations of peace—a “ just and durable ” peace.

Whoever has followed our work during these three grievous years which have just elapsed will easily have been able to recognize that while we have always remained faithful to our resolution as to absolute impartiality and to our benevolent action, we have never ceased to exhort the belligerent peoples and Governments to become brothers again, although publicity has not been given to all that we have done in order to attain this very noble end.

Towards the end of the first year of the war we addressed to the nations in strife the liveliest exhortations, and, moreover, we indicated the way to be followed in order to reach a peace that would be lasting and honourable for all. Unfortunately, our appeal was not heard, and the war has continued for two more years, with all its horrors ; it is becoming even more cruel, and is extending over the land, the sea, and even into the air ; one even sees it bringing desolation and death to undefended towns, tranquil villages, and the innocent populations. And now nobody can imagine how the suffering of everybody would be multiplied and aggravated if more months, or, worse

still, if other years should be added to this triennium of blood. Must the civilized world become nothing but a field of death? And Europe, so glorious and flourishing, is she, as though carried away by a universal madness, to rush into the abyss and aid in her own suicide?

In a situation so painful, in the presence of so serious a menace, we, who have no special political views, who do not listen to the suggestions or the interests of any of the belligerent parties, but are only urged by the feelings of our supreme duty as common Father of the faithful, by the prayers of our children who implore our intervention and our pacifying word, by the voice of humanity and of reason—we utter again a cry for peace and renew our pressing appeal to those who hold in their hands the destinies of the nations.

But in order not to keep within general terms, as circumstances had advised us to do in the past, we wish now to come to more concrete and practical proposals, and to invite the Governments of the belligerent peoples to come to an agreement upon the following points, which it would seem should be the bases of a just and lasting peace, leaving it to them to settle and complete the details.

In the first place, the fundamental point should be that the moral force of right should take the place of the material force of arms; whence should arise a just agreement amongst all for the simultaneous and reciprocal reduction of armaments, according to rules and guarantees to be established, in a measure sufficient and necessary for the maintenance of public order in each State. Then, as a substitute for arms, there should be the institution of arbitration, with its high pacificatory function according to standards to be agreed upon and sanctions to be determined against the State which should refuse either to submit international questions to arbitration or to accept the decision.

The supremacy of right thus being established, every obstacle to the means of communication between the peoples will be removed, thus assuring, by rules also to be established, the true liberty and community of the seas, which, on the one hand, would eliminate numerous causes of conflict, and, on the other hand, would open to everybody new sources of prosperity and progress.

As to the damage which has to be made good and the cost of the war, we see no other means of settling this question than laying down^{as} a general principle a complete and reciprocal condonation, which would be justified by the enormous benefits

derived from disarmament, and the more so because it would be impossible to understand the continuation of such carnage solely for economic reasons. If, as against this, there exist, in certain cases, special reasons, they should be considered in the light of justice and equity.

But these pacific agreements, with the immense advantages which proceed therefrom, are not possible without the reciprocal restitution of occupied territories. Consequently, on the part of Germany there should be the total evacuation of Belgium, together with a guarantee of her full political, military, and economic independence as regards any and every Power, the evacuation also of French territory, and on the part of the other belligerents a similar restitution of the German colonies.

So far as regards territorial questions, as, for example, those which are contested between Italy and Austria, between Germany and France, there is ground for hoping that, in consideration of the immense advantages of a lasting peace with disarmament, the parties in conflict will be willing to examine them in a conciliatory spirit, taking into account, as far as is just and possible, as we have already said, the aspirations of the people, and, as occasion offers, co-ordinating particular interests with the general well-being of the great human family.

The same spirit of equity and justice should direct the examination of the other territorial and political questions, and more especially those relating to Armenia, the Balkan States, and the territories forming part of the ancient kingdom of Poland, for which in particular the sympathies of the nations should justly be enlisted on account of its noble historical traditions, and the sufferings endured during the present war.

Such are the principal bases upon which we believe that the future reorganization of the peoples should be supported. They are of such a nature as to render impossible a repetition of similar conflicts, and to prepare the way for the solution of the economic question, which is of so much importance for the future and the material well-being of all the belligerent States. In presenting them to you, who at this tragic hour are the directors of the destinies of the belligerent States, we are inspired by a sweet hope—the hope that you will accept them, and of thereby seeing the termination as early as possible of the terrible struggle which seems more and more to be becoming a useless massacre.

On the other hand, all the world recognizes that on the one side, as on the other, the honour of arms is saved. Listen, then, to our prayer, accept the paternal invitation which we

address to you in the name of the Divine Redeemer the Prince of Peace. Reflect upon your very grave responsibility before God and before men : upon your decision depends the comfort and the joy of innumerable families, the life of thousands of young people, the happiness, in a word, of the nations whose well-being it is your absolute duty to procure. May the Lord inspire you to decisions in conformity with His holy will. Heaven grant that in meriting the approbation of your contemporaries you will also assure for yourselves the bestowal of the beautiful name of pacificators from future generations.

As for ourselves, closely united, in prayer and penitence, with all the faithful souls who sigh after peace, we implore the Divine Spirit to give you light and counsel.

XIX

PRESIDENT WILSON'S REPLY TO THE POPE'S PEACE NOTE, AUGUST 27, 1917.

WASHINGTON, D.C., *August 27, 1917.*

TO HIS HOLINESS BENEDICTUS XV, POPE.

In acknowledgment of the communication of your Holiness to the belligerent peoples, dated August 1, 1917, the President of the United States requests me to transmit the following reply:—

Every heart that has not been blinded and hardened by this terrible war must be touched by this moving appeal of his Holiness the Pope, must feel the dignity and force of the humane and generous motives which prompted it, and must fervently wish that we might take the path of peace he so persuasively points out. But it would be folly to take it if it does not in fact lead to the goal he proposes. Our response must be based upon the stern facts, and upon nothing else. It is not a mere cessation of arms he desires ; it is a stable and enduring peace. This agony must not be gone through with again, and it must be a matter of very sober judgment what will insure us against it.

His Holiness in substance proposes that we return to the *status quo ante bellum*, and that then there be a general condonation, disarmament, and a concert of nations based upon an acceptance of the principle of arbitration ; that by a similar concert freedom of the seas be established ; and that the territorial claims of France and Italy, the perplexing problems of the Balkan States, and the restitution of Poland be left to such conciliatory adjustments as may be possible in the new temper of such a peace, due regard being paid to the aspirations

of the peoples whose political fortunes and affiliations will be involved.

It is manifest that no part of this programme can be successfully carried out unless the restitution of the *status quo ante* furnishes a firm and satisfactory basis for it. The object of this war is to deliver the free peoples of the world from the menace and the actual power of a vast military establishment, controlled by an irresponsible Government, which, having secretly planned to dominate the world, proceeded to carry the plan out without regard either to the sacred obligations of treaty or the long-established practices and long-cherished principles of international action and honour; which chose its own time for the war; delivered its blow fiercely and suddenly; stopped at no barrier, either of law or of mercy; swept a whole continent within the tide of blood—not the blood of soldiers only, but the blood of innocent women and children also and of the helpless poor; and now stands balked, but not defeated, the enemy of four-fifths of the world.

This power is not the German people. It is the ruthless master of the German people. It is no business of ours how that great people came under its control or submitted with temporary zest to the domination of its purpose; but it is our business to see to it that the history of the rest of the world is no longer left to its handling.

To deal with such a power by way of peace upon the plan proposed by his Holiness the Pope would, so far as we can see, involve a recuperation of its strength and a renewal of its policy; would make it necessary to create a permanent hostile combination of nations against the German people, who are its instruments; and would result in abandoning the new-born Russia to the intrigue, the manifold subtle interference, and the certain counter-revolution which would be attempted by all the malign influences to which the German Government has of late accustomed the world.

Can peace be based upon a restitution of its power or upon any word of honour it could pledge in a treaty of settlement and accommodation?

Responsible statesmen must now everywhere see, if they never saw before, that no peace can rest securely upon political or economic restrictions meant to benefit some nations and cripple or embarrass others, upon vindictive action of any sort, or any kind of revenge or deliberate injury. The American people have suffered intolerable wrongs at the hands of the Imperial German Government, but they desire no reprisal upon

the German people, who have themselves suffered all things in this war, which they did not choose. They believe that peace should rest upon the rights of peoples, not the rights of Governments—the rights of peoples, great or small, weak or powerful—their equal right to freedom and security and self-government and to a participation upon fair terms in the economic opportunities of the world, the German people, of course, included, if they will accept equality and not seek domination.

The test, therefore, of every plan of peace is this : Is it based upon the faith of all the peoples involved, or merely upon the word of an ambitious and intriguing Government on the one hand, and of a group of free peoples on the other ? This is a test which goes to the root of the matter, and it is the test which must be applied.

The purposes of the United States in this war are known to the whole world—to every people to whom the truth has been permitted to come. They do not need to be stated again. We seek no material advantage of any kind. We believe that the intolerable wrongs done in this war by the furious and brutal power of the Imperial German Government ought to be repaired, but not at the expense of the sovereignty of any people—rather by a vindication of the sovereignty both of those that are weak and of those that are strong. Punitive damages, the dismemberment of empires, the establishment of selfish and exclusive economic leagues, we deem inexpedient, and in the end worse than futile, no proper basis for a peace of any kind, least of all for an enduring peace. That must be based upon justice and fairness and the common rights of mankind.

We cannot take the word of the present rulers of Germany as a guarantee of anything that is to endure unless explicitly supported by such conclusive evidence of the will and purpose of the German people themselves as the other peoples of the world would be justified in accepting. Without such guarantees treaties of settlement, agreements for disarmament, covenants to set up arbitration in the place of force, territorial adjustments, reconstitutions of small nations, if made with the German Government, no man, no nation, could now depend on.

We must await some new evidence of the purposes of the great peoples of the Central Powers. God grant it may be given soon, and in a way to restore the confidence of all peoples everywhere in the faith of nations and the possibility of a covenanted peace.

ROBERT LANSING,
Secretary of State of the United States of America.

XX

**THE GERMAN CHANCELLOR'S REPLY TO THE POPE'S
PEACE NOTE, SEPTEMBER 19, 1917.**

(The Note was addressed to Cardinal Gasparri and signed by Michaelis.)

BERLIN, *September 19, 1917.*

HERR CARDINAL,

Your Eminence has been good enough, with your letter of August 2nd, to transmit to the Kaiser and King, my most gracious master, the Note of his Holiness the Pope, in which his Holiness, filled with grief at the devastations of the world war, makes an emphatic appeal for peace to the heads of the belligerent peoples.

The Kaiser and King has deigned to acquaint me with your Eminence's letter and to entrust the reply to me.

His Majesty has been following for a considerable time with high respect and sincere gratitude his Holiness's efforts in a spirit of true impartiality to alleviate as far as possible the sufferings of the war and to hasten the end of hostilities. The Kaiser sees in the latest step of his Holiness a fresh proof of his noble and humane feelings, and cherishes a lively desire that for the benefit of the entire world the Papal appeal may meet with success.

The effort of Pope Benedict XV to pave the way to an understanding amongst the peoples might the more surely reckon on a sympathetic reception and whole-hearted support from his Majesty, seeing that the Kaiser, since taking over the Government, has regarded it as his principal and most sacred task to preserve the blessings of peace for the German people and the world. In his first speech from the throne at the opening of the German Reichstag on June 25, 1888, the Kaiser promised that love of the German Army and his position towards it should never lead him into the temptation to cut short the benefits of peace unless war were a necessity forced upon us by an attack on the Empire or its allies. The German Army should safeguard peace for us, and, should peace nevertheless be broken, be in a position to win it with honour. The Kaiser has, by his acts, fulfilled the promise he then made in twenty-six years of happy rule, despite provocations and temptations. In the crisis which led to the present world-conflagration his Majesty's efforts

were, up to the last moment, directed towards settling the conflict by peaceful means. After war had broken out, against his wish and desire, the Kaiser, in conjunction with his high Allies, was the first solemnly to declare his readiness to enter into peace negotiations.

The German people supported his Majesty in his efficacious desire for peace. Germany sought within her national frontiers free development of her spiritual and material possessions, and outside imperial territory unhindered competition with nations enjoying equal rights and equal esteem. The free play of forces in the world in peaceable wrestling with one another would have led to the highest perfecting of the noblest human possessions. A disastrous concatenation of events in the year 1914 absolutely broke off the hopeful course of development, and transformed Europe into a bloody battle arena.

Appreciating the importance of the declaration of his Holiness, the Imperial Government has not failed to submit the suggestions contained in it to earnest and scrupulous examination. The special measures which the Government has taken, in the closest contact with the representatives of the German people, to discuss and answer the questions raised prove how earnestly it desires, in unison (*Einklang*) with the desire of his Holiness, and with the peace resolution adopted by the Reichstag on July 19th, to find a practical basis for a just and lasting peace.

The Imperial Government welcomes with especial sympathy the leading ideas of the peace appeal, in which his Holiness clearly expresses his conviction that, in the future, the material power of arms must be superseded by the moral power of right. We also are convinced that the sick body of human society can only be healed by the fortifying moral strength of right. From this would follow, according to the view of his Holiness, the simultaneous diminution of the armed forces of all States, and the institution of obligatory arbitration in international disputes. We share the view of his Holiness that definite rules and certain safeguards for the simultaneous and reciprocal limitation of armaments on land and sea and in the air, as well as for the true freedom and community of the high seas, are the things in treating which the new spirit that in future should prevail in international relations should find its first hopeful expression. The task would then immediately arise of deciding international differences of opinion as they emerge, not by the use of armed forces, but by peaceful methods, especially by way of arbitration, the great peace-producing effect of which we, together

with his Holiness, fully recognize. The Imperial Government will, in this respect, support every proposal which is compatible with the vital interests of the German Empire and people. Germany, owing to her geographical situation and her economic requirements, has to rely on peaceful intercourse with her neighbours and distant countries. No people therefore has more reason than the German people to wish that, instead of universal hatred and battle, a conciliatory and fraternal spirit should prevail between the nations.

If the nations, guided by this spirit, will recognize to their salvation that the important thing is to lay more stress upon what unites them than upon what separates them in their relations, they will also succeed in settling individual points of conflict which are still undecided in such a way that conditions of existence which will be satisfactory to every nation will be created, and thereby a repetition of the great world catastrophe would appear to be impossible. Only on this condition can a lasting peace be founded which will promote a spiritual *rapprochement* and a return of human society to economic prosperity.

This serious and sincere conviction encourages our confidence that our enemies also may see, in the ideas submitted for consideration by his Holiness, a suitable basis for approaching nearer to the preparation of a future peace under conditions corresponding to the spirit of reasonableness and to the position of Europe (*die Lage Europas*).

XXI

**THE AUSTRIAN EMPEROR'S REPLY TO THE POPE'S
PEACE NOTE, SEPTEMBER 20, 1917.**

This Note was addressed to the Pope and signed by the Austrian Emperor. It was handed to the Papal Nuncio at Vienna, September 20, 1917.

HOLY FATHER,

With due veneration and deep emotion we have taken cognisance of the new representations which your Holiness, in fulfilment of the holy office entrusted to you by God, has made to us and the heads of other belligerent States with the noble intention of leading the sorely tried nations to unity that will restore peace to them. With thankful heart we have received

this fresh gift of paternal care which you, Holy Father, always bestow on all peoples without distinction, and from the depth of our heart we greet the moving exhortation which your Holiness addressed to the Governments of the belligerent peoples. During this cruel war we have always looked to your Holiness, as the highest personage who, in virtue of his mission, which reaches beyond earthly things, who, thanks to the high conception of the duties laid upon him, stands high above belligerent peoples, and who is inaccessible to all influence, would be able to find a way which may lead to the realization of our own desire for a lasting and honourable peace for all parties.

Since ascending the throne of our ancestors, and fully conscious of the responsibility which we bear before God and men for the fate of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, we have never lost sight of the high aim of restoring to our peoples as speedily as possible the blessings of peace. Soon after our accession to the throne, it was vouchsafed to us, in common with our Allies, to undertake a step which had been considered and prepared by our exalted predecessor, Francis Joseph, to pave the way for a lasting and honourable peace. We gave expression to this desire in the speech from the throne delivered at the opening of the Austrian Reichsrat, and so emphasized the fact that we are striving after a peace that shall free the future life of the nations from rancour and the thirst for revenge, and that shall secure them for generations to come from the employment of armed force. Our joint Government had in the meantime not failed in repeated and emphatic declarations, which could be heard by all the world, to give expression to our own will and that of the Austro-Hungarian peoples to prepare an end to bloodshed by a peace such as that contemplated by your Holiness. Happy in the thought that our desires from the first were directed towards the same object, which your Holiness to-day characterizes as the one we should strive for, we have taken into close consideration the concrete and practical suggestions of your Holiness, and have come to the following conclusions.

With deep-rooted conviction we greet the leading idea of your Holiness that the future arrangement of the world must be based on the elimination of armed force and on the moral force of right and on the rule of international justice and legality. We too are imbued with the hope that a strengthening of the sense of right would morally regenerate humanity. We support, therefore, your Holiness's view that negotiations between the belligerents should and could lead to an understanding by which, with the creation of appropriate guarantees, armaments

on land, sea, and air might be reduced simultaneously, reciprocally, and gradually to a fixed limit, and whereby the high seas, which rightly belong to all the nations of the earth, may be freed from any domination or paramountcy, and be opened equally for the use of all. Fully conscious of the importance for the promotion of peace of the method proposed by your Holiness, namely, to submit international disputes to compulsory arbitration, we are also prepared to enter into negotiations regarding this proposal.

If, as we most heartily desire, agreements should be arrived at between the belligerents which would realize this sublime idea and thereby give security to the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy for its unhampered future development, it can then not be difficult to find a satisfactory solution of the other questions which still remain to be settled between the belligerents in the spirit of justice and of a reasonable consideration of the conditions for the existence of both parties. If the nations of the earth were to enter, with a desire for peace, into negotiations with one another in the sense of your Holiness's proposals, then peace could blossom forth from them. The nations could attain complete freedom of movement on the high seas, heavy material burdens could be taken from them, and new sources of prosperity opened to them. Guided by the spirit of moderation and conciliation, we see in the proposals of your Holiness a suitable basis for initiating negotiations with a view to preparing a peace just to all and lasting, and we earnestly hope our present enemies may be animated by the same ideas. In this spirit we beg that the Almighty may bless the work of peace begun by your Holiness.

XXII

THE TSAR OF BULGARIA'S REPLY TO THE POPE'S PEACE NOTE, SEPTEMBER 26, 1917.

HOLY FATHER,

We have noted with reverential respect the invitation which your Holiness, true to your godly mission, has addressed to the heads of the States at war, requesting them to put an end to the bloodshed, and restore the benefit of peace to sorely tried mankind. Deeply moved by the fatherly solicitude which has prompted this fresh step, full of love and humanity, we have heard with filial devotion the voice which your Holiness has

raised in favour of peace and the brotherhood of nations. In the thirty years since divine Providence called us to guide the destiny of the Bulgarian people, we have not for a moment lost sight of the fateful vocation of the Bulgarian people, not for a moment failed to recognize the heavy responsibility which this highest duty imposes on us before God and man, and it has always been our most ardent wish to give this nation the possibility of peaceful development on the path of progress, in peace and good understanding with the other nations. Conscious of our duty, we have never failed to take the circumstances into consideration which could have accelerated the end of this war, the horrors of which are unparalleled. Guided by the same motives, our Government, in understanding with the Governments of our Allies, in December 1916, addressed to the countries at war with us the appeal well known to your Holiness, which was intended to restore peace in international relationships. Since then, as before, supported by our Government, we have unremittently endeavoured to insure the unity of the Bulgarian nation, animated by the desire to restore the benefits of peace to Bulgaria. As to this, we believe with your Holiness, that the conclusion of a lasting peace, capable of guaranteeing these benefits, will only be possible if the Governments agree on the measures proposed by your Holiness. Might will yield to right and reason in international relations, as soon as the States, penetrated with the humane feelings of your Holiness, shall have agreed simultaneously to reduce the footing of their fighting forces and accept the procedure of obligatory arbitration in all international conflicts—i.e. as soon as the States shall have recognized the same obligatory legal system amongst themselves which controls the private relations of their subjects. Convinced of this, and supported therein by our Government, we will promote with all our energy every such proposal as does not run counter to the vital interests of the Bulgarian nation and its unity. Situated in the centre of the Balkan peninsula, washed by the seas on the east and in the south, Bulgaria, in accordance with the necessary conditions for her economic development, guided by the principle of freedom of the seas, thanks to which she will be able to insure her prosperity, has no reason for not wishing that the hatred which divides the nations should be subdued and eradicated by peace, a peace founded on mutual understanding and moderation, a peace which will guarantee progress to all nations, because it protects the natural striving of all for greater freedom and for a greater measure of happiness and excludes all germs of fresh disagreements and catastrophes,

such as we are now experiencing. Full of gratification at the confirmation of the fact that our intentions, as now expressed, are in accordance with the desire of the Holy See, and in addition guided by the aspiration to live in peace and harmony with all nations, we wish with all our heart that the noble work your Holiness has undertaken may be crowned with the most brilliant triumph and that in these decisive moments those who direct the fate of the nations so cruelly tried by the horrors of war may be filled and illuminated by the Divine wisdom.

XXIII

**THE GERMAN CHANCELLOR'S ¹ SPEECH,
SEPTEMBER 28, 1917.**

The German Note, so far as can be ascertained up to the present, has been received with approval by our friends and Allies and with evident embarrassment by the majority of our opponents. As regards criticism from friendly or well-meaning sources, it is directed principally towards the fact that positive answers were not given in regard to specific questions. It is difficult to understand how persons acquainted with the international position and with international practice could ever have thought that we should be in a position to fix, to our own detriment, by a one-sided public declaration, the solution of such important questions which stand in indissoluble connection with the whole complex of questions which have to be discussed in the event of peace negotiations. Any public statement of that sort in the present state of affairs could only cause confusion and be harmful to German interests.

If we had entered into details, the watchword in the enemy camp (as may already be recognized with certainty from the attitude of the enemy Press) would have been "The German concessions are to be accounted a sign of growing weakness of Germany. They are things which absolutely go without saying, and therefore they are to be counted as valueless." We should not have advanced a step nearer to peace. On the contrary, the conviction on the side of our opponents that only the unfavourable state of our affairs could have induced us to adopt an attitude so completely inexplicable to any diplomatic expert would quite certainly have tended to prolong the war. I claim for the Imperial Government the right which the leading

¹ Michaelis. Only a portion of the speech is here printed.

statesmen in all enemy countries have claimed, and still, even lately, claim. I must state clearly the standpoint of the Imperial Government, from which we shall not allow ourselves to be forced. It is that we must at the present moment decline now to define our war aims, and thus to tie down our negotiators. If the members of the House and the Press would support us on this point, the situation would be made infinitely easier, and the way to peace would be freed from avoidable obstacles, to the blessing of the Fatherland.

(In concluding, the Chancellor adversely criticised President Wilson's reply to the Papal Note):—

The attempt of Wilson to sow dissension between the Government and the people in Germany has no chance of success. The Note has brought about a result opposite to that which was desired. It has bound us together more tightly in our determination to defy resolutely and powerfully all foreign interference in our affairs. The flaming protests, born of deep indignation, especially of the President of the Reichstag, have confirmed this. Just as little as the Wilson Note will any other enemy attempt succeed in breaking in the German people the spirit of the Fourth of August. That spirit will live and conquer as long as we are compelled by our opponents to fight in defence of our existence and our future.

XXIV

TERESHCHENKO¹ COMMENTS ON THE CENTRAL POWERS' REPLIES TO THE POPE'S PEACE NOTE, SEPTEMBER 28, 1917.

The published replies of the German and Austro-Hungarian Governments to the peace proposal of Pope Benedict XV constitute a new proof of the persistent refusal of our enemies to make a sincere step towards peace. The two notes amount as before to hypocritical assurances of the unalterable peaceableness of the Central Empires and their monarchs and of their readiness to accept the principle of limitation of armaments as a means of securing in the future a durable and just peace. Yet the replies do not contain the least indication as to what should be the foundation of that régime on which the future just peace is to be based. On the contrary, one is justified in inferring from certain expressions in the German note that,

¹ Minister for Foreign Affairs to the Kerensky Government.

in spite of the well-known resolution of the Reichstag, the German Government has not in the least abandoned the scheme of a German peace, which runs fundamentally counter to the main principles of right and justice. Indeed, the very mention by the note of the regulation of individual controversial questions, which are still open, points to the desire of Germany to exclude from an international discussion all such problems which it obviously regards as settled. Still more clearly can the sense of the German reply to the Pope's Note be seen in the concluding words, in which the hope is expressed that the opponents of Germany may see in the Pope's proposal a sufficient basis for beginning to prepare the future peace on conditions corresponding to the spirit of justice and to the situation in Europe. This reference to the situation in Europe can leave no doubt whatever that Germany intends to begin peace negotiations only on the basis of the so-called war map—that is, on the basis of actual occupation by her troops of vast territories of foreign States, having in mind perhaps to agree only to their partial restoration at the Peace Conference itself on certain conditions. It is not without significance that the reply passes over in silence even the problem, so important from the point of view of justice, as to the evacuation and restoration of heroic little countries. On the whole, the Austro-Hungarian reply to the Pope's proposal does not introduce the slightest change or clearness in the existing situation. The common objects of the war as pursued by the allied democracies have quite recently been clearly formulated by President Wilson in his reply to the Pope. New Russia has also proclaimed the principles for which the free Russian people is fighting. Nothing similar to these public declarations has been made by the Central Powers. They, as before, continue to hide their cards, and, while loudly proclaiming that right must be above might, are in reality only waiting for the moment when they could at the expense of right make secure the conquests carried out by them by force. The last word in the matter of putting an end to the present unparalleled bloodshed still belongs to Germany, and the further prolongation of this terrible war falls on her conscience.

I must also dwell upon the recent steps taken by Germany with regard to Poland.¹ The new rescript addressed to the Governor-General of Warsaw and the new letters patent with regard to Poland cannot but be considered as a substantial concession to the Poles, caused by the difficulty of Germany's position and by her surrender of her original plans for the

¹ Defining a temporary constitution ; see *Times*, September 18, 1917.

complete annexation of Poland under a fictitious form of independence. Nevertheless, it can scarcely be supposed that these concessions would satisfy the Poles, whose country still remains dismembered. Russia opposes to this policy the principle of national self-definition proclaimed by her. The Provisional Government confirms its unshakable determination to realize the principles announced by it in the appeal to the Poles of September 30th—that is, the restoration, on the basis of the free self-definition of the Polish people and with the maintenance of the ethnographic principle, of an independent Polish State formed by the unification of all lands containing a Polish majority of population. The Provisional Government has suggested to the Allied Powers the consideration of the question of the publication by the Allies of a special Act sanctioning the fundamental principles laid down in respect of Poland by our manifesto of March 30th. At the same time Russia is concerned that the future independent and integral Polish State should be secure in those conditions which are necessary for its economic and financial restoration, without, of course, prejudicing the question of compensating the Poles for the damages caused by the enemy invasion.

In conclusion, speaking of the future, I should like to express the hope that the general Russian policy will no longer be a policy of paradoxes, such as has caused us so much trouble during the last months. Indeed, we came forward in the name of peace: but in reality we have created such conditions as have protracted the war. We wanted to reduce the sacrifices, but as a result we have only increased the extent of the bloodshed. We worked in favour of a democratic peace, but instead we have only accelerated the triumph of German militarism. Such misunderstandings are inadmissible. In order to bring the war to an end in accordance with the principles proclaimed by the Provisional Government, it is necessary that all the leading forces in the country should unite and should enable the Government to carry on a real national policy.

XXV

THE SULTAN OF TURKEY'S REPLY TO THE POPE'S PEACE NOTE, SEPTEMBER 30, 1917.

We learnt with a sense of high respect and deep sympathy of the moving appeal addressed by your Holiness to myself as to the Heads of all belligerent States with the lofty intention

of putting an end to the present war, the most terrible which the world has ever experienced, and of thus introducing peace and harmony among nations.

The lofty ideas which beam from the communications of your Holiness and the feelings of deepest love for your neighbour which animate your Holiness with reference to suffering and crushed humanity, have moved us profoundly. The exhortations, full of warmth and loyalty, which the Holy See has repeatedly renewed with incontestable impartiality, so as to stop the cruel conflict which for more than three years has devastated the most vital forces of so many nations, have found us all the more receptive because our Government, as it always had the courage to declare, pursues no unjustifiable ends either in the domain of politics or of economics.

We were compelled to fight to preserve the existence and independence and the free development of our country. This absolutely justified aim, which chiefly consists in the assurance of the rights of our full and unlimited sovereignty over the whole territory within our national borders, is the aim which we are still pursuing to-day. We were always animated by the burning wish to allow our country to participate in the benefits of a permanent and just peace, and so, as always before, in harmony with the will of our people to secure the advance and the welfare of our Empire in all creative spheres in full harmony with the other States.

Controlled by these sentiments and in the consciousness of our duties to the God Almighty and to humanity, we had proposed to our enemies in union with our Allies in the course of the month of December of last year, to enter on negotiations for the bringing about of a just and honourable peace. Although our intentions in reference to this matter have since then found expression on various occasions they have yet until now met with no response. The proposal of your Holiness which, at bottom, aims at procuring a peace on a rational basis, a lasting peace such as we have always advocated, can therefore meet with nothing else than our agreement.

Your Holiness proclaims that the future world-organism must be founded on the exclusion of the power of arms, on the moral might of right, on the triumph of international justice and legality. The realization of this lofty thought, which would necessarily have as its practical consequence to assure actually and indifferently justice and equality for all States, in as far as they are members of the international community, appears to us to be the only means of protecting humanity from future

catastrophes and of avoiding suffering and destruction as the consequences of bloody conflicts between the nations.

Like your Holiness, we think that for the attainment of this aim, which is humane in the highest degree, future negotiations should aim at seeking and finding the most practical and effective means for gradually and reciprocally introducing a limitation of armaments by land, by sea, and in the air, and so of making the riches and resources of all nations serviceable for the development of the progress, the culture, and the prosperity of all mankind. These very negotiations ought, as your Holiness says, in a fair way to regulate the question of the freedom of the high seas which is the common wealth of all nations, and ought, finally, for the future to do away with the lust of predominance.

Your Holiness' proposal to submit international quarrels to an obligatory court of arbitration appeared to us also as of the highest significance. Convinced of the magnitude of this thought and of the beneficial results which its realization might produce, we do not hesitate for a moment to declare that we are ready on the occasion of peace negotiations to discuss the means of settling international disputes, while at the same time desiring to take into account the guarantees which have reference to the sovereign existence and the free development of nations.

We think then that the proposals of your Holiness contain a firm basis for ending the present conflict, and introducing a universal and lasting peace. We are also convinced that if our adversaries of to-day are animated by the same ideas and such feelings as harmonize with the justifiable aims we characterize above, nothing would stand in the way of the introduction of peace-negotiations such as your Holiness desires in the nobility of your heart. May the Almighty always preserve your Holiness and the noble sentiments of your heart. May the Almighty ever keep your Holiness in His divine care.

XXVI

BRAZILIAN REPLY TO THE POPE'S PEACE NOTE, NOVEMBER 13, 1917.

(The following note was addressed by the Brazilian Minister for Foreign Affairs to the Brazilian Minister at the Vatican.)

Your Excellency will say in your Note to his Holiness that the President of the Republic had not authorized you before to reply to his proposal of peace for the reason that it is not

until the present moment that Brazil has found herself in a state of war. Brazil is a nation that has never embarked upon a war of conquest ; which has written down compulsory arbitration as one of the articles of its Republican Constitution for the settlement of foreign disagreements ; which has endured no sufferings in the past, and has therefore no vengeance to seek in the future ; which has quietly settled all its boundary questions, knowing what belongs to it as its own property and recognizing the exact possible extension of its territory, which is great already, and keeps growing greater, thanks not only to the work of its citizens, who are anxious to prove that they deserve the honour of possessing so rich an inheritance, but also thanks to the work of those foreigners whom our hospitable shores soon make as true Brazilians as ourselves.

Brazil, your Excellency can tell his Holiness, would have kept apart from the European war, in spite of the sympathy of public opinion here for the cause of freedom championed by the Allies, had not Germany extended to America her violent acts of war, hindering the commerce of all neutral nations with the outside world. Brazil could not fail in her obvious duty as an American nation ; and in taking up, as a last resort, our position as a belligerent, we have done so without rancour and without hope of advantage, but solely for the defence of our flag and the fundamental rights of our Fatherland. Happily, to-day all the Republics of the New World, some more injured than others, but all threatened in their liberties and their sovereign rights, have drawn more closely together the bonds of solidarity that geography, economy, and history had already united, and which the sentiment of common defence and of national independence is about to make even stronger through motives of policy. Brazil therefore cannot to-day take up an attitude of isolation, nor can she speak as an individual, seeing the solidarity that ought to exist, and does exist, between her and the nations to whom she has joined herself.

Assuredly there was not a Brazilian heart that did not hear with the liveliest emotion that so eloquent appeal in which his Holiness urged the belligerent nations towards peace in the name of God. Although Brazil, in her State capacity, cannot be considered as the seat of any one form of religion, seeing that all religions there are free, none the less it can claim to be the third Catholic nation in the world, and to have had uninterrupted relations almost for centuries with the head of the Church. Brazil recognizes the generous feelings that prompted the appeal of his Holiness when he pleaded, together

with disarmament and arbitration, for the setting up of a régime in which the material force of arms should be replaced by the moral force of justice when once the territorial claims of France and Italy had been arranged and due consideration paid to the problems of the Balkans and the restoration of Polish liberty. It is for the peoples who are most directly concerned in these questions to say whether the honour of their arms is already satisfied in this war, or whether the suggested changes in the political map of Europe can assure it peace so long as the political and military organisation remains in power which has everywhere abrogated the laws of justice, brought to nothing those advances that the spirit of humanity had deemed lasting for the alleviation of the cruelties of war, and destroyed everything that Christian feeling had given to the fellowship of nations.

It is for them alone to say whether, now that all trust in treaties and international loyalty is gone, it may be possible to discover some force, if not a new spirit, capable of making a secure peace, unless from the deceit, suffering, and sadness of this war there may perhaps arise a better world. Only thus can we hope to establish a durable peace without political or economic restrictions, so that all the nations, great or small, should have their place in the sun, with equal rights of exchanging their ideas, exchanging their work and their merchandise, on the wide basis of justice and equity.

Please present to his Holiness the homage and profoundest veneration of the President of the Republic.

(Signed) NILO PEÇANHA.

XXVII

THE BELGIAN REPLY TO THE POPE'S PEACE NOTE, DECEMBER 24, 1917.

As soon as the Belgian Government received the message addressed by His Holiness, on August 1, 1917, to the heads of the belligerent peoples, it hastened to reply that it would examine with the greatest deference the proposals made in this document. It had at heart to express, at the same time, its gratitude for the particular interest of the Holy Father for the Belgian nation, of which this document has given a new and valuable proof.

At the commencement of this message his Holiness has

taken care to affirm that he has endeavoured to remain perfectly impartial towards all the belligerents. Such an attitude can only render more significant the judgment rendered by his Holiness when he claims the total evacuation of Belgium and the re-establishment of her full and complete independence, and when he recognizes, as shown by a declaration of the Cardinal Secretary of State, the right of Belgium to reparation for the damage caused and for the cost of the war. Already in his Consistorial allocution of January 22, 1915, the Holy Father proclaimed to the world that he condemned injustice, and he had deigned to assure the Belgian Government that, when he expressed this reprobation, it was the invasion of Belgium to which he directly alluded.

Honest men in every country will rejoice with the Belgian Government that the injustice of which Belgium was the victim, and the necessity for reparation, have been proclaimed by the highest moral authority of Christendom, who is anxious not to allow the idea of good and evil to be destroyed or altered amidst the passions and conflicts of mankind.

Prompted by the feeling of gratitude with which such declarations inspired them, and which is still increased by the many charitable interventions of the Holy Father in favour of Belgian victims of the enemy's violence, the Belgian Government has examined the possibility of contributing, as far as lies in its power, to the realization of the double wish which inspired the Pontifical message: to hasten the termination of the present war, and to render the return of a similar catastrophe impossible by the adoption of a set of guarantees destined to insure the supremacy of Right over Might.

As early as the beginning of September the Belgian Government informed the Holy See that it was obliged to reserve its decision concerning the possible consequences of the proposals made in the message until the Powers at war with Belgium should have made clear their war aims. The Government added that in any case Belgium would only declare her intentions concerning the general conditions of peace and the reorganization of relations between States in full agreement with those of the Powers guaranteeing her independence who had honoured their engagements towards her and whose armies fight, with her own, for the cause of right.

Nothing has occurred to modify the situation which existed when the Belgian Government informed the Holy See of these views. Belgium, however, eagerly seizes the opportunity which the noble effort of His Holiness gives her to repeat before the

civilized world what she wrote, nearly a year ago,¹ to the President of the United States: "Before the German ultimatum, Belgium only aspired to live on good terms with all her neighbours; she fulfilled with scrupulous loyalty towards every one of them the duties imposed upon her by her neutrality. How has she been rewarded by Germany for the confidence which she showed her? . . . If there is a country who has the right to say that she has taken arms to defend her existence, it is assuredly Belgium. . . . She passionately wishes that an end should be put to the untold sufferings of her population. But she could only accept a peace which would assure her, besides equitable reparation, securities and guarantees for the future."

The integrity of Belgian territory, metropolitan and colonial; political, economic, and military independence, without either condition or restriction; reparation for the damage done; guarantees against the renewal of the aggression of 1914—such are still the indispensable conditions of a just peace, as far as Belgium is concerned. Any arrangement ignoring them would undermine the very foundations of right, since it would be henceforth established that, in international affairs, the violation of right gives a claim to its author, and may become for him a source of profit.

Since the Belgian Government formulated, a year ago, the conditions which it has here recalled, the Reichstag has voted a so-called "peace" resolution; Chancellors and Ministers of Foreign Affairs have succeeded each other in the German Empire; more recently the Central Empires have published notes in answer to the message of the Holy See. But never a word has been uttered, never a line has been written which recognized frankly the unimpeachable rights of Belgium which the Holy See has never ceased to recognize and to proclaim.

XXVIII

SPEECH OF COUNT CZERNIN, FOREIGN MINISTER OF AUSTRIA-HUNGARY, AT BUDAPEST, OCTOBER 2, 1917.

To the great French statesman Talleyrand is ascribed the saying, "Words are given to conceal one's thoughts." It may be that this saying was true in regard to the diplomacy of his century, but for the present time I can hardly conceive

¹ See No. VII, above.

a phrase less accurate. Millions who are fighting either in the trenches or behind the lines wish to know why and for what they are fighting. They have the right to learn why peace, which the whole world desires, has not yet been reached.

When I was appointed to my post I took the first opportunity of declaring openly that we did not wish to exercise any oppression, but that on the other hand we would not suffer any oppression, and that we were prepared to enter upon peace negotiations as soon as our enemies were prepared to accept this standpoint in regard to a peace by agreement. I believe I presented in these words the peace aims of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy clearly, although in general outline. Many people at home and in friendly foreign countries blamed me for this plain speaking. The arguments of these censorious people have strengthened my belief in the correctness of my view. I withdraw nothing of what I said, being convinced that the overwhelming majority here and in Austria approves my standpoint. Having said this much, I feel compelled to-day to say something in public as to the Austro-Hungarian Government's ideas as regards the restoration of European relationships which have been completely shattered.

In broad outlines our programme for the re-establishment of order in the world (which might more accurately be described as the construction of a new order in the world) has been laid down in our reply to the Peace Note of our Holy Father. The only consideration to-day, therefore, is to complete this programme and, above all, to explain the considerations which determined us to set up these principles in opposition to the system hitherto prevailing. To many people it may appear astonishing and inconceivable that the Central Powers, especially Austria-Hungary, desire to make a renunciation in respect of military armaments, as, after all, in these heavy years, it was only in their military power that they found protection against manifold superiority.

The war has not only produced new facts and conditions, but has also led to new conceptions which have shaken the foundations of European politics as they existed before. Among many other political theses, the one which especially has crumbled is that which held that Austria-Hungary was a moribund State. It was the dogma of the impending dissolution of the Monarchy which made our position in Europe difficult, and from which sprang all lack of appreciation of our vital needs. By proving ourselves in this war thoroughly sound and at least equal to others, the result is that we can now reckon upon

a complete understanding of our vital needs in Europe, and hopes that we may be overthrown by force of arms are destroyed. Until the moment came when we had given proofs of this we could not give up the protection of our armaments and expose ourselves to spiteful treatment on questions vital to us by an Areopagus influenced by the legend of our impending collapse. Now, however, when this proof has been given we are in a position simultaneously with our Allies to lay aside our arms and regulate any future conflicts by arbitration and in a peaceful manner. This new conception which has forced its way into the world affords us the opportunity not only of accepting the idea of disarmament and arbitration, but, as you gentlemen know, of working as we have done for a considerable time past with all our energy towards its realization. Europe must, without doubt, after this war be placed on a new international basis of right, offering a guarantee of permanence. This basis of right, I believe, must essentially be fourfold. First, it must offer a security that a war of revenge cannot occur again on any side. We wish to achieve that much that we may be able to bequeath to our children's children as a legacy that they may be spared from the terrors of a terrible time such as we are now passing through. No shifting of power among the belligerent States can attain this end. The only way to attain it is that mentioned—namely, by international disarmament and by the recognition of arbitration. It is superfluous to state that this measure of disarmament must never be directed against any particular State or any group of Powers, and that it must, of course, comprise the land, sea, and air in the same degree. But war as an instrument of policy must be combated. On an international basis, under international control, universal, equal, and gradual disarmament of all States of the world must take place, and the defensive force be limited to what is absolutely necessary. I know very well that this goal is extraordinarily difficult to reach, and that the path leading to it is beset with difficulties; that it is long and thorny. Nevertheless, I am convinced that it must be trodden, and it shall be trodden, no matter whether individuals consider it desirable or not. It is a great mistake to believe that the world after this war will begin again where it left off in 1914. Catastrophes such as this war do not pass away without leaving deep traces behind, and the most terrible misfortune that could befall us would be if the competition in armaments were to continue after the conclusion of peace; for it would mean economic ruin for all States. Even before

this war our military burdens were oppressive, although we especially should remember that Austria-Hungary was far from being ready in a military sense when she was surprised by the war. Only during the war did she make up for her formerly neglected military equipment. In the event of unrestrained competition in armaments after this war the burdens for all States would be simply unbearable. This war has taught us that we must reckon on a great increase of former armaments. In order after this war, with unrestricted rivalry in armaments, to be adequately equipped, the nations would have to multiply everything by ten. They would need ten times as many guns, munition factories, ships, and submarines as before, and also incomparably more soldiers to man all this apparatus. The military estimates of all the Great Powers would amount to milliards. That is impossible. With all the burdens which all the belligerent States after the conclusion of peace would have to bear, this expenditure, I repeat, would mean the ruin of nations. To return, however, to the relatively small armaments prior to 1914 would for any one State be entirely impossible, because it would thereby fall so much behind that its military power would not count, and, consequently, its expenditure would be completely purposeless. Should, however, a general return to the relatively low armament level of 1914 be brought about, that would of itself mean an international reduction of armaments, but there would be no meaning in not going further and actually disarming.

Out of this difficulty there is only one way, namely, complete international disarmament. Gigantic fleets will have no further purpose when the nations of the world guarantee the freedom of the seas, and land armies would have to be reduced to the level required by the maintenance of internal order. Only on an international basis—that is, under international control—is this possible. Every State will have to give up something of its independence for the purpose of ensuring world peace. Probably the present generation will not live to see the end of this great pacific movement in its entirety. It can only be realized slowly, but I consider it our duty to place ourselves at the head of this movement and do everything humanly possible to accelerate its materialization. At the conclusion of peace its fundamental bases must be laid down.

If its first principle is that of obligatory international arbitration and general disarmament on land, its second principle is that of freedom on the high seas and naval disarmament. I purposely say the high seas, for I do not extend the idea to

the narrow seas, and I freely admit that for sea communications special rules and regulations must obtain. If these two first factors which I have mentioned are made clear, then every ground for territorial guarantees disappears, and this is the third fundamental principle of a new international basis of right. This is the fundamental idea of the beautiful and sublime Note which the Pope addressed to the whole world. We have not waged war to make conquests, and we contemplate no oppression. If the international disarmament which we long for from the bottom of our hearts is accepted by our present enemies, and becomes a fact, then we need no territorial guarantees. In this case we can renounce the enlargement of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, always provided that the enemy completely evacuates our territory.

The fourth principle, which must be observed to ensure the free and pacific development of the world after these evil times, is the free economic activity of all, and absolute avoidance of future economic war. Economic war must be absolutely eliminated from every future arrangement. Before we conclude peace we must have a positive certainty that our present opponents have relinquished this idea. These, gentlemen, are the basic principles of the new world order as they are present to my mind, and they are all founded on all-round disarmament. Even Germany, too, in answer to the Papal Note, has most emphatically professed adherence to the idea of all-round disarmament, and our present opponents also have made these principles at least in part their own. On most points I am of different opinion from Mr. Lloyd George, but on the point that there must never again be a war of revenge we are at one.

The question of indemnities, which the Entente is always putting forward, assumes a remarkable complexion when one considers the devastation which their armies have wrought in Galicia, the Bukovina, the Tyrol, on the Isonzo, in East Prussia, and in the Turkish territories and the German Colonies. Does the Entente intend to compensate us for all this, or is it so completely mistaken in its judgment of our psychology that it hopes for a one-sided indemnification? I could almost believe the latter judging from the numerous speeches which we have heard.

The Entente, as is well known, likes to adorn its programmes with strong words. In this respect I hold a different view. I believe that the strength of a State does not reside in the strong words of its leading men, but, on the contrary, stands usually in inverse ratio to them. This war will not be decided with

high-flown phrases. What have we not heard during these years of war? We have heard that Germany is to be annihilated and Austria-Hungary dismembered. Then the tone became more reasonable. It was to be sufficient to reform our internal conditions. Our enemies appear now to be in the third phase. They demand neither our life nor our right to decide our own destinies as a State, but they demand more or less large frontier rectifications. Further phases will follow, although the majority of the population of all enemy countries to-day already definitely take their stand on the basis of that peace by agreement which we in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy were the first to propose six months ago, and the fundamental principles of which I have just now stated.

We do not seek our strength in big words; we seek to find it in the strength of our glorious armies, in the firmness of our alliances, in the steadfastness of the population at home, and in the reasonableness of our war aims. And, as we do not demand Utopia, and as every citizen of the Monarchy, whether at the front or at home, knows what he fights for, we are certain of attaining our aim. We can neither be bent nor destroyed. Conscious of our power, and perfectly clear as to what we want and must attain, we go our ways. We in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy have not needed to pursue that retrogressive course which proceeds from the destruction of the enemy by various stages finally to far lower demands. We have from the beginning stated our aim and adhered to it until to-day. I leave it confidently to the world's judgment to decide on which side strength, on which side weakness, in this matter lies.

But let no one cherish the delusion that this pacific moderate programme of ours can and will hold good for ever. If our enemies compel us to continue the war, we shall be obliged to revise our programme and demand compensation. I speak for the present moment because I am convinced that a world peace can now come on a basis which I have set forth. If the war, however, continues, we reserve ourselves a free hand. I am absolutely convinced that our position in another year will be incomparably better than to-day, but I would consider it a crime to carry on the war for any material or territorial advantages for a single day longer than is necessary for the integrity of the Monarchy and future safety. On this ground alone I have been in favour of peace by understanding, and I am still to-day in favour of it. If our enemies, however, will not listen, and compel us to continue this murder, then we

reserve to ourselves the right to revise our programme, and reserve the freedom as to our terms.

I am not very optimistic as to the disposition of the Entente to conclude peace by agreement now on the above basis. The overwhelming majority of the entire world wants our peace by agreement, but some few men are preventing it. We shall in this case pursue our way with sangfroid and steady nerves. We know we can hold out at the front and at home. We were never downcast in the past heavy hours, and never overweening in victory. Our hour will come, and therewith a sure guarantee of the free and peaceful development of Austria-Hungary.

XXIX

FROM THE SPEECH OF BARON VON KÜHLMANN, GERMAN SECRETARY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, OCTOBER 9, 1917.

I now come, gentlemen, to the real subject of to-day's discussion. The efforts of the Papal Curia to pave the way for an exchange of views between the belligerents have made no essential progress since the reply of the Central Powers to the Papal Note, as I must acknowledge with regret. Whether the enemy will decide to answer the Note at all and to define their attitude to the clear, straightforward announcement of the Central Powers in favour of peace, cannot yet be ascertained with certainty. One thing, however, can already be said—and I again must express my regret—that the evidence of announcements by more or less responsible enemy statesmen and the views of enemy newspapers show hardly any prospect that a reply to the Papal Note would bring the world one step forward in the sense suggested by his Holiness, in spite of the fact that only quite recently my honoured political friend Count Czernin, Foreign Minister of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, in his great speech outlining his programme in Budapest, has not only once more emphasised the readiness of the Central Powers and their allies for an honourable peace, but has also brilliantly, looking far into the future in a way to which the preceding speaker has paid a well-merited tribute, indicated the foundations on which a new Europe may perhaps one day be built.

When I now proceed to discuss in detail some particularly characteristic utterances of enemy statesmen, I may say that

I think the speech which the former First Lord of the Admiralty, Winston Churchill, delivered in London¹ was one in which there was very little trace of the new spirit. The leader of the brilliant expedition to Antwerp expects an internal collapse of Germany, and says in his speech how thin may be the wall which separates Germany from final collapse. Statesmen, says Mr. Churchill, ought to learn from experience; if they did not do so, it was not only stupidity, but a crime. I shall not be so hard on him. Nevertheless, Winston Churchill ought to have learned in his second brilliant expedition, the objective of which was Constantinople and which found an inglorious end on the peninsula of Gallipoli before the bayonets of our brave Turkish allies, that even a thin partition can transform a victory dreamed of into a great defeat, if this wall is one of men. Between a "rat hole" in the North Sea, which in English means Horns Reef, and the Isonzo there stands the mighty rampart of the German people, inspired by a single iron will. It is, God be praised, a very thick and unshakable wall, and if Mr. Churchill is expecting its collapse, he must possess his soul in patience.

The speech of the Leader of the Liberal Opposition in the House of Commons, Mr. Asquith,² which, when I spoke in the Main Committee, was only available in a telegraphed version, reads no better in the complete text than in Reuter's version. The speech must be a lesson to those who thought from Asquith's question, thrown out in the course of a speech in Parliament, about Germany's intentions in Belgium that they could deduce a willingness for peace of this politician, for whom a great Liberal past assures great authority among his people. In his latest speech, as a Liberal paper, the *Manchester Guardian*, rightly points out, Mr. Asquith makes the demand for the return of Alsace-Lorraine of equal importance to that for the restitution of Belgium, and thus, moreover, sums up the situation in the same way as it appears to me with absolutely convincing clearness after a very thorough study of the whole position, and of reports from the most varied sources from neutral and enemy countries. The question for which the peoples of Europe are at present fighting and pouring forth their blood is not primarily the Belgian one. The quarrel over which Europe is being gradually transformed into a rubbish heap is over the future of Alsace-Lorraine.

According to reliable information which we possess, England

¹ To the Aldwych Club, October 3, 1917.

² At Leeds, September 26, 1917. Cf. speech at Liverpool, October 11, 1917.

has made a diplomatic pledge to France to champion with all her authority and strength the demand for the return of Alsace-Lorraine so long as France herself holds to this demand.

This, gentlemen, is the real situation, and it seems to me appropriate to state the German attitude calmly, clearly, but firmly, as it is a remarkable fact that not only among the enemy, but occasionally among neutrals also, doubts have been raised about our attitude on this fundamental question. We have only one answer to the question, "Can Germany make France any concessions in Alsace-Lorraine?" No! Never! As long as a German hand can hold a rifle the integrity of the Empire, which we have received as a glorious heritage from our fathers, cannot be the subject of any negotiations or concessions. Alsace-Lorraine is Germany's scutcheon and the symbol of German unity. Every one from Left to Right will agree, I am sure—I am not one of those who believe that a frank and clear statement of such a fact could in any way injure the growth of a just willingness for peace in the world. On the contrary, I believe that such a righteous will for peace can only flourish on the soil of absolute clearness, and therefore I think it necessary to emphasize this point with all possible vigour and distinctness to those at home and still more to those abroad, in contrast to other questions which have recently occupied so much space in public discussion. What we are fighting for—and shall fight till the last drop of blood—is not fantastic conquests; it is the integrity of the German Empire.

In France, when it seemed advisable to adopt the formula of "no annexations" invented in Russia, the statesmen used the transparent artifice of concealing what is really naked, forceful conquest under the name "disannexation." The artifice is really too crude to be really worth a reply. One must, however, call the attention of the fathers of this idea to the fact that it is nowhere written what year of the world's history is to be considered the year of *ne varietur*, and if we Germans look back on history and want to go on the *ne varietur* principle, we come upon fine, pleasant-sounding names like Toul and Verdun.

One view I must briefly answer, as it frequently crops up in the enemy Press. I am thinking especially of an article in the English Liberal paper the *Manchester Guardian*, in which it is claimed that the political attitude of Germany will become more defined as soon as the military results of the great autumn battles are known. It is an absolutely erroneous conception of German policy to think that we play high or low, become

ciliatory or stubborn according to the results of individual military enterprises. This is absolutely false. The essential lines of our political attitude are defined by all factors after thorough and careful consultation, and, as far as I am able to survey the world position, there would be no absolute obstacle to peace except French wishes regarding Alsace-Lorraine, no problem which could not be solved by discussion and give and take in a way which would justify the expenditure of so much blood and wealth before the eyes of the nations and of history.

A further fundamental mistake made by the enemy, and one which is sometimes made in our discussions at home, is the idea that even at the last stage of this tremendous struggle the political situation could be considerably improved by public declarations from the rostrum. Public announcements have, from their nature, severe defects for the attainment of such an object. They have to be comparatively simple. Just because all questions under discussion are bound up with one another and mutually presume one another and are interdependent, public announcements can only in a limited way do justice to the demands of the moment. Public announcements and the discussion of such questions in open Parliament have also the practical disadvantage that the responsible enemy reply is lacking. Public announcements completely bind the side which makes them, but leave the enemy absolute freedom of action.

We must not forget one essential point which the enemy have always obscured, with the great tactical skill which is peculiar to them. They have not yet announced their war aims in a way which even approximately agrees with the existing facts. What they have announced to the world is an absolutely Utopian maximum programme of conquests which can only be carried out after Germany and her Allies are utterly overthrown. We have no inducement to follow them on this path. The German Government has so far declined to do this and will continue to do so. Our policy is concrete and moderate, and takes facts as they are. If the enemy take up the attitude that they can get no clear idea of what the Government and the German people wish and intend, this is hypocrisy. Our answer to the Papal Note and the declarations made on it by general agreement of the parties in Parliament, as I would like again to emphasize, can leave no doubts with any one, who wishes to hear and understand, as to the essential principles of the German peace programme.

One thing I have emphasized in the Main Committee, and although it perhaps only indirectly lies within the sphere of foreign politics, I should like you to allow me once more to emphasize it after the debates we have listened to. Foreign policy can only be successful if it is supported by the approval of the great masses of the German people, if it represents and embodies the will of the people in their essential unity. And therefore the person entrusted with the representation of the Foreign Office must constantly remind the people that, however high the waves of domestic political differences may rise, in this earnest and fateful hour, every one is called upon to give our foreign policy that weight and unanimity which it requires to attain victory and peace through toil and endurance.

XXX

**M. RIBOT, FRENCH MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
REPLIES TO KÜHLMANN, OCTOBER 12, 1917.**

Baron von Kühlmann, in a resounding declaration, affirmed that Germany would never return Alsace-Lorraine to us. I prefer this language, which has the merit of frankness, and the clearness of which will put an end to uncertainty. Our soldiers have made up their minds—we shall gain the victory, we shall regain Alsace-Lorraine. The question is brought forward as a condition precedent to a peace founded on justice. There would be no peace which would guarantee our children from a renewal of such a terrible war if the injustice of Alsace-Lorraine were not repaired. Our loyal Allies have baffled the German manœuvre. Mr. Lloyd George and Mr. Asquith have both said that Alsace-Lorraine shall be returned to France. The King of Italy, who visited the reconquered regions of Alsace, saw that there is no need for a plébiscite nor for any formality in order that the population may become French at heart. King Victor Emmanuel gave expression to this in a telegram to President Poincaré, in which he said that the soul of Italy is at one with the soul of France. We swear not to listen to any proposal for peace without immediately communicating it to our Allies. We will not repulse any advances, but we do not want these to be made treacherously in order to separate us. Resolved to remain loyal and united, we shall be victorious over force as over treachery.

XXXI

PEACE TERMS OF THE RUSSIAN COUNCIL OF WORKMEN'S AND SOLDIERS' DELEGATES, OCTOBER 20, 1917.

(These are the instructions given to Skobelev, the Russian representative appointed to the Inter-Allied Conference.)

Skobelev is to insist that the new treaty between the Allies must be based upon the principles of no annexations and indemnities, with the right of nations to dispose of their own fate. An indispensable condition of peace must be the evacuation of all Russian territories occupied by German troops, and that Russia grants Poland, Lithuania, and Livland the right to determine their own political organization. Turkish Armenia is to receive complete autonomy, and the right, after all the local authorities have been withdrawn and the necessary international sanction has been given, to determine its own political form of government. The question of Alsace-Lorraine is to be settled on the basis of a free plébiscite of the population, organized by local authorities after the withdrawal of the troops of either coalition from the territory. Belgium is to be restored in its previous frontiers, and reparation for damages is to be made from an international fund. The same applies to Serbia and Montenegro, the former, in addition, obtaining access to the Adriatic. Bosnia and Herzegovina are to receive autonomy, while all the disputed districts in the Balkans will be given provisional autonomy pending the holding of a plébiscite. Rumania is to be restored in its former frontiers, with the obligation to grant the Dobrudja provisional autonomy, followed by a plébiscite, and to carry out the provisions of the Treaty of Berlin respecting the Jews by granting them equal rights with Rumanian citizens. Provisional autonomy with a subsequent plébiscite is also to be granted to the Italian districts of Austria. German colonies are to be returned, and Greece and Persia are to be restored. All straits which give access to inland seas, including the Suez and Panama Canals, are to be neutralized, and mercantile navigation is to be free. The right of capture of private property at sea is to be abolished, and the torpedoing of merchant ships is to be prohibited. All belligerents are to renounce the claim for compensation and pecuniary reparation, whether covert or overt, and all con-

tributions exacted during the war are to be repaid. Commercial treaties are not to form part of the terms of peace, and each country is to be autonomous in its economic policy. No obligation to conclude or not to conclude any treaty of commerce is to be imposed upon any one by the treaty of peace, but all the Powers are to pledge themselves by the terms of the peace treaty not to carry on an economic blockade after the war, not to conclude separate customs unions, or to grant to any one specially the most favoured nation terms. Peace is to be made at the peace conference through plenipotentiaries elected by the Parliaments, which are also to sanction ultimately the terms of peace. Secret diplomacy is to be abolished, and all countries are to pledge themselves not to conclude any secret treaties, which henceforth will be declared illegal and non-valid from the point of view of International Law. Treaties will remain invalid until they have been sanctioned by the Parliaments. A gradual disarmament on land and at sea is to take place, and a militia system is to be introduced as a transitional measure. The league of peace suggested by President Wilson can only be a valuable acquisition of International Law if all the States compulsorily participate in it with equal rights and if foreign policy is democratized. Whatever the concrete terms of peace may be, the treaty between the Allies must provide, and the provision must be made public, that the Allies are prepared to begin peace negotiations as soon as the other side proclaims its consent to the principle of renunciation by all parties of all forcible conquests. Lastly, the Allies must pledge themselves not to begin any secret peace negotiations, and not to make peace otherwise than at a congress attended by representatives of all the neutral countries.

XXXII

**NOTE OF TROTSKY, COMMISSARY FOR FOREIGN
AFFAIRS TO THE BOLSHEVIK GOVERNMENT,
CONTAINING PROPOSALS FOR AN ARMISTICE,
NOVEMBER 22, 1917.**

The following Note was addressed to all diplomatic representatives at Petrograd :—

MONSIEUR L'AMBASSADEUR,

I have the honour to announce that the Congress of Councils of Workmen's, Soldiers', and Peasants' Delegates of

All the Russias instituted on November 8th a new Government of the Republic of All the Russias.

Having been appointed Commissary of Foreign Affairs in this Government, I beg to call to the attention of your Excellency the following words, which have been approved by the Congress of the Delegates of the Councils, and contain proposals for a truce and for a democratic peace without annexation and without indemnities, based on the principle of the independence of nations, and of their right to determine the nature of their own development themselves. I have the honour to suggest that you should consider this document in the light of an official proposal for an immediate truce upon all the fronts, and to take immediate steps to set on foot negotiations for peace. The Government, in the name of the Republic of All the Russias, is addressing the same proposal to all the nations and their Governments. Pray accept the assurance of the most perfect respect on the part of the Government of the Councils towards the people of [France], which still keeps aloof from peace aspirations, as well as to all other nations who are drained of their blood and exhausted by the prolonged carnage.

(Signed) L. TROTSKY.

PETROGRAD, November 22nd.

(The proposals referred to in this note were adopted at the Congress of Soviets on November 8th and are as follows):—

The Workmen's and Peasants' Government, established by the Revolution of October 24th to 25th (November 6th to 7th), supported by the Soviets of Workmen's, Soldiers', and Peasants' Deputies, invites all the belligerent nations and their Governments without delay to begin negotiations for a just and democratic peace.

A just and democratic peace, such as is longed for by the overwhelming majority of the working and labouring classes of all the belligerent countries, who are exhausted, wearied, and distressed by this war; a peace which was most definitely and insistently demanded by the Russian Workmen and Peasants after the deposition of the Tsarian Monarchy—the Government considers that a peace like this will be an immediate peace without annexations (i.e. without conquests of foreign territories, without forcible incorporations of foreign nationalities) and without indemnities.

The Government proposes the immediate conclusion of such a peace to all the belligerent nations, expressing its readi-

ness without any delay to take all the decisive steps at once, until the final confirmation of all the conditions of such a peace, by the plenipotent assemblies of the representatives of the people of all countries and all nations.

The Government understands annexations and conquests of foreign territories according to the lawful judgment of democracy in general, and of the labouring classes in particular, to mean any uniting of a smaller or weaker nation to a greater or stronger Power, irrespective of the time when this enforced incorporation was accomplished, equally irrespective as to how greatly advanced or behindhand the nation forcibly incorporated or forcibly retained within the boundaries of this Power appears to be; finally, irrespective as to whether this nation is in Europe or in countries far overseas.

If any nation whatsoever is being retained within the boundaries of any Power by force; if, contrary to its expressed will, irrespective of whether this will is expressed by the Press, by the national assemblies, by party resolutions, or by revolts and risings against the oppression, if it is not afforded the right to decide the question of its national life without any constraint, by free voting, and with a complete withdrawal of the troops of the incorporating or stronger nation, then its incorporation is an annexation—i.e. conquest and violence.

The continuation of this war in order that the powerful and richer nations should divide among themselves the weaker nations they have conquered, the Government considers to be a most grievous crime, and solemnly declares its readiness without delay to sign the terms of peace which will end this war, on the above-mentioned conditions, which are equally just for all nations, without any exceptions.

At the same time the Government declares that it does not consider the above-mentioned conditions to be at all in the nature of an ultimatum—i.e. it agrees to consider any other terms of peace, insisting only that they should be proposed as soon as possible by any one of the belligerent countries, and that there should be complete clearness, with the unconditional exclusion of any ambiguity or any secrecy in the proposal of these terms of peace.

The Government abolishes all secret diplomacy, in its turn expressing its firm intention of conducting all negotiations quite openly in view of all the people, straightway beginning the publication in full of all the secret treaties confirmed or concluded by the Government of landlords and capitalists from February until October 25th (November 7th), 1917. The

Government declares all the contents of these secret treaties to be immediately and unconditionally cancelled wherever, as is most frequently the case, they are intended to yield gains or privileges to Russian landowners and capitalists, or directed to the retention or augmentation of the annexations of the Great-Russians.

Appealing to the Governments and peoples of all countries with an offer to begin open negotiations for the conclusion of peace, the Government expresses its readiness to conduct these negotiations, whether they be in the form of letters, or telegrams, or by means of negotiations between representatives of the different countries, or conferences of these representatives. In order to facilitate these negotiations the Government is appointing plenipotentiary representatives in the neutral countries.

The Government proposes the immediate conclusion of an armistice by all Governments and peoples of all the belligerent countries, and at the same time considers it desirable that this armistice should be concluded for no less than three months—that is to say, for a period during which it will be quite possible to complete the negotiations for peace with the participation of representatives of all nations and nationalities who have been drawn into the war, or forced to take part in it, and also to accomplish the convocation of assemblies of representatives of the people of all countries for the final confirmation of the terms of peace.

The Provisional Workmen's and Peasants' Government of Russia, in making this offer of peace to the Governments and peoples of all the belligerent countries, also appeals in particular to the intelligent workmen of the three foremost nations of the world, the largest of the countries participating in this war—England, France, and Germany.

The workmen of these countries have done great service to the cause of progress and Socialism, by the glorious example of the Chartist movement in England, in the ranks of the Revolution achieved by the French proletariat, which had worldwide historical meaning, and finally in the heroic struggle against the exceptional law in Germany, and in the protracted, but persistent, disciplined work of forming proletarian organizations of the masses in Germany, which are an example to the workpeople of the whole world. All these instances of proletarian heroism and historical creative power serve as an assurance for us that the workmen of the countries named will understand the problems now set before them regarding the deliverance of humanity from the horrors of war and its

consequences, and that these workmen, by the general determination and limitless energy of their activity, will help us to carry through the business of this peace successfully, and likewise the business of liberating the labouring and exploited masses of the population from all bondage and exploitation.

XXXIII

**LORD LANSDOWNE'S FIRST LETTER,
NOVEMBER 28, 1917.**

SIR,

We are now in the fourth year of the most dreadful war the world has known ; a war in which, as Sir W. Robertson has lately informed us, " the killed alone can be counted by the million, while the total number of men engaged amounts to nearly twenty-four millions." Ministers continue to tell us that they scan the horizon in vain for the prospect of a lasting peace. And without a lasting peace we all feel that the task we have set ourselves will remain unaccomplished.

But those who look forward with horror to the prolongation of the war, who believe that its wanton prolongation would be a crime, differing only in degree from that of the criminals who provoked it, may be excused if they too scan the horizon anxiously in the hope of discovering there indications that the outlook may after all not be so hopeless as is supposed.

The obstacles are indeed formidable enough. We are constantly reminded of one of them. It is pointed out with force that, while we have not hesitated to put forward a general description of our war aims, the enemy have, though repeatedly challenged, refused to formulate theirs, and have limited themselves to vague and apparently insincere professions of readiness to negotiate with us.

The force of the argument cannot be gainsaid, but it is directed mainly to show that we are still far from agreement as to the territorial questions which must come up for settlement in connection with the terms of peace. These are, however, by no means the only questions which will arise, and it is worth while to consider whether there are not others, also of first-rate importance, with regard to which the prospects of agreement are less remote.

Let me examine one or two of these. What are we fighting for? To beat the Germans? Certainly. But that is not an end in itself. We want to inflict signal defeat upon the

Central Powers, not out of mere vindictiveness, but in the hope of saving the world from a recurrence of the calamity which has befallen this generation.

What, then, is it we want when the war is over? I know of no better formula than that more than once made use of, with universal approval, by Mr. Asquith in the speeches which he has from time to time delivered. He has repeatedly told his hearers that we are waging war in order to obtain reparation and security. Both are essential, but of the two security is perhaps the more indispensable. In the way of reparation much can no doubt be accomplished, but the utmost effort to make good all the ravages of this war must fall short of completeness, and will fail to undo the grievous wrong which has been done to humanity. It may, however, be possible to make some amends for the inevitable incompleteness of the reparation if the security afforded is, humanly speaking, complete. To end the war honourably would be a great achievement; to prevent the same curse falling upon our children would be a greater achievement still.

This is our avowed aim, and the magnitude of the issue cannot be exaggerated. For, just as this war has been more dreadful than any war in history, so we may be sure would the next war be even more dreadful than this. The prostitution of science for purposes of pure destruction is not likely to stop short. Most of us, however, believe that it should be possible to secure posterity against the repetition of such an outrage as that of 1914. If the Powers will, under a solemn pact, bind themselves to submit future disputes to arbitration; if they will undertake to outlaw, politically and economically, any one of their number which refuses to enter into such a pact, or to use their joint military and naval forces for the purpose of coercing a Power which breaks away from the rest, they will, indeed, have travelled far along the road which leads to security.

We are, at any rate, right to put security in the front line of our peace demands, and it is not unsatisfactory to note that in principle there seems to be complete unanimity upon this point.

In his speech at the banquet of the League to Enforce Peace, on May 28, 1916, President Wilson spoke strongly in favour of "a universal association of nations . . . to prevent any war from being begun either contrary to treaty covenants or without warning and full submission of the cause to the opinion of the world."

Later in the same year the German Chancellor, at the sitting

of the Main Committee of the Reichstag, used the following language :—

“ When, as after the termination of the war, the world will fully recognize its horrible devastation of blood and treasure, then through all mankind will go the cry for peaceful agreements and understandings which will prevent, so far as is humanly possible, the return of such an immense catastrophe. This cry will be so strong and so justified that it must lead to a result. Germany will honourably co-operate in investigating every attempt to find a practical solution and collaborate towards its possible realization.”

The Papal Note communicated to the Powers in August last places in the front rank “ the establishment of arbitration on lines to be concerted and with sanction to be settled against any State that refuses either to submit international disputes to arbitration or to accept its awards.”

This suggestion was immediately welcomed by the Austrian Government, which declared that it was conscious of the importance for the promotion of peace of the method proposed by his Holiness, viz. “ to submit international disputes to compulsory arbitration,” and that it was prepared to enter into negotiations regarding this proposal. Similar language was used by Count Czérnin, the Austro-Hungarian Foreign Minister, in his declaration on foreign policy made at Budapest in October, when he mentioned as one of the “ fundamental bases ” of peace that of “ obligatory international arbitration.”

In his dispatch covering the Allied Note of Jan. 10, 1917, Mr. Balfour mentions as one of the three conditions essential to a durable peace the condition that “ behind International Law and behind all treaty arrangements for preventing or limiting hostilities some form of international sanction might be devised which would give pause to the hardiest aggressor.”

Such sanction would probably take the form of coercion applied in one of two modes. The “ aggressor ” would be disciplined either by the pressure of superior naval and military strength, or by the denial of commercial access and facilities.

The proceedings of the Paris Conference show that we should not shrink from such a denial, if we were compelled to use the weapon for purposes of self-defence. But while a commercial “ boycott ” would be justifiable as a war measure, and while the threat of a “ boycott,” in case Germany should show herself utterly unreasonable, would be a legitimate threat, no reasonable man would, surely, desire to destroy the trade of the Central Powers, if they will, so to speak, enter into recognisances to keep

the peace, and do not force us into a conflict by a hostile combination. Commercial war is less ghastly in its immediate results than the war of armed forces; but it would certainly be deplorable if after three or four years of sanguinary conflict in the field, a conflict which has destroyed a great part of the wealth of the world, and permanently crippled its resources, the Powers were to embark upon commercial hostilities certain to retard the economic recovery of all the nations involved.

That we shall have to secure ourselves against the fiscal hostility of others, that we shall have to prevent the recurrence of the conditions under which, when war broke out, we found ourselves short of essential commodities, because we had allowed certain industries, and certain sources of supply, to pass entirely under the control of our enemies, no one will doubt, subject, however, to this reservation, that it will surely be for our interest that the stream of trade should, so far as our own fiscal interests permit, be allowed to flow strong and uninterrupted in its natural channels.

There remains the question of territorial claims. The most authoritative statement of these is to be found in the Allies' Note of January 10, 1917. This statement must obviously be regarded as a broad outline of the desiderata of the Allies, but is any one prepared to argue that the sketch is complete, or that it may not become necessary to re-examine it?

Mr. Asquith, speaking at Liverpool in October last, used the following language:—

“No one pretends that it would be right or opportune for either side to formulate an ultimatum, detailed, exhaustive, precise, with clauses and sub-clauses, which is to be accepted verbatim et literatim, chapter and verse, as the indispensable preliminary and condition of peace.”

“There are many things,” he added, “in a world-wide conflict such as this, which must of necessity be left over for discussion and negotiation, for accommodation and adjustment, at a later stage.”

It is surely most important that this wise counsel should be kept in mind. Some of our original desiderata have probably become unattainable. Others would probably now be given a less prominent place than when they were first put forward. Others, again, notably the reparation due to Belgium, remain, and must always remain, in the front rank; but when it comes to the wholesale rearrangement of the map of South-Eastern Europe we may well ask for a suspension of judgment and for the elucidation which a frank exchange of views between the Allied Powers can alone afford,

For all these questions concern our Allies as well as ourselves, and if we are to have an Allied Council for the purpose of adapting our strategy in the field to the ever-shifting developments of the war, it is fair to assume that, in the matter of peace terms also, the Allies will make it their business to examine, and if necessary to revise, the territorial requirements.

Let me end by explaining why I attach so much importance to these considerations. We are not going to lose this war, but its prolongation will spell ruin for the civilized world, and an infinite addition to the load of human suffering which already weighs upon it. Security will be invaluable to a world which has the vitality to profit by it ; but what will be the value of the blessings of peace to nations so exhausted that they can scarcely stretch out a hand with which to grasp them ?

In my belief, if the war is to be brought to a close in time to avert a world-wide catastrophe, it will be brought to a close because on both sides the peoples of the countries involved realize that it has already lasted too long.

There can be no question that this feeling prevails extensively in Germany, Austria, and Turkey. We know beyond doubt that the economic pressure in those countries far exceeds any to which we are subject here. Ministers inform us in their speeches of " constant efforts " on the part of the Central Powers " to initiate peace talk." †

If the peace talk is not more articulate, and has not been so precise as to enable his Majesty's Government to treat it seriously, the explanation is probably to be found in the fact, first, that German despotism does not tolerate independent expressions of opinion, and second, that the German Government has contrived, probably with success, to misrepresent the aims of the Allies, which are supposed to include the destruction of Germany, the imposition upon her of a form of government decided by her enemies, her destruction as a great commercial community, and her exclusion from the free use of the seas.

An immense stimulus would probably be given to the peace party in Germany if it were understood :—

1. That we do not desire the annihilation of Germany as a Great Power ;
2. That we do not seek to impose upon her people any form of government other than that of their own choice ;
3. That, except as a legitimate war measure, we have no desire to deny to Germany her place among the great commercial communities of the world ;

† Sir E. Geddes at the Mansion House, November 9th.

4. That we are prepared, when the war is over, to examine, in concert with other Powers, the group of international problems, some of them of recent origin, which are connected with the question of "the freedom of the seas";

5. That we are prepared to enter into an international pact under which ample opportunities would be afforded for the settlement of international disputes by peaceful means.

I am under the impression that authority could be found for most of these propositions in ministerial speeches. Since the above lines were written, 1, 2, and 3 have been dealt with by our own Foreign Minister at the public meeting held in honour of M. Venizelos at the Mansion House.

The question of "the freedom of the seas" was amongst those raised at the outset by our American Allies. The formula is an ambiguous one, capable of many inconsistent interpretations, and I doubt whether it will be seriously contended that there is no room for profitable discussion.

That an attempt should be made to bring about the kind of pact suggested in 5 is, I believe, common ground to all the belligerents, and probably to all the neutral Powers.

If it be once established that there are no insurmountable difficulties in the way of agreement upon these points, the political horizon might perhaps be scanned with better hope by those who pray, but can at this moment hardly venture to expect, that the New Year may bring us a lasting and honourable peace.

XXXIV

PRESIDENT WILSON'S ADDRESS TO CONGRESS, DECEMBER 4, 1917.

GENTLEMEN OF CONGRESS,

Eight months have elapsed since I last had the honour of addressing you. They have been months crowded with events of immense and grave significance for us. I shall not undertake to retail, or even to summarize, those events. The practical particulars of the part we have played in them will be laid before you in the reports of the Executive Departments. I shall discuss only our present outlook upon these vast affairs, our present duties, and the immediate means of accomplishing the objects we shall hold always in view.

I shall not go back to debate the causes of the war. The intolerable wrongs done and planned against us by the sinister

masters of Germany have long since become too grossly obvious and odious to every true American to need to be rehearsed. But I shall ask you to consider again and with a very grave scrutiny our objectives and the measures by which we mean to attain them ; for the purpose of discussion here in this place is action, and our action must move straight towards definite ends.

Our object is, of course, to win the war, and we shall not slacken or suffer ourselves to be diverted until it is won. But it is worth while asking and answering the question, When shall we consider the war won ?

From one point of view it is not necessary to broach this fundamental matter. I do not doubt that the American people know what the war is about and what sort of an outcome they will regard as a realization of their purpose in it. As a nation we are united in spirit and intention. I pay little heed to those who tell me otherwise. I hear the voices of dissent—who does not ? I hear the criticism and the clamour of the noisily thoughtless and troublesome. I also see men here and there fling themselves in impotent disloyalty against the calm, indomitable power of the nation. I hear men debate peace who understand neither its nature nor the way in which we may attain it with uplifted eyes and unbroken spirits. But I know that none of these speak for the nation. They do not touch the heart of anything. They may safely be left to strut their uneasy hour and be forgotten.

But from another point of view I believe that it is necessary to say plainly what we here at the seat of action consider the war to be for and what part we mean to play in the settlement of its searching issues. We are the spokesmen of the American people, and they have a right to know whether their purpose is ours. They desire peace by the overcoming of evil, by the defeat once for all of the sinister forces that interrupt peace and render it impossible, and they wish to know how closely our thought runs with theirs, and what action we propose. They are impatient with those who desire peace by any sort of compromise—deeply and indignantly impatient—but they will be equally impatient with us if we do not make it plain to them what our objectives are and what we are planning for in seeking to make conquest of peace by arms.

I believe that I speak for them when I say two things. First, that this intolerable thing of which the masters of Germany have shown us the ugly face, this menace of combined intrigue and force which we now see so clearly as the German power,

a thing without conscience, or honour, or capacity for covenanted peace, must be crushed and, if it be not utterly brought to an end, at least shut out from the friendly intercourse of the nations ; secondly, that when this thing and its power are indeed defeated and the time comes that we can discuss peace—when the German people have spokesmen whose word we can believe, and when those spokesmen are ready in the name of their people to accept the common judgment of the nations as to what shall henceforth be the bases of law and of covenant for the life of the world—we shall be willing and glad to pay the full price for peace, and pay it ungrudgingly. We know what the price will be. It will be full, impartial justice, justice done at every point and to every nation that the final settlement must effect, our enemies as well as our friends.

You catch, with me, the voices of humanity that are in the air. They grow daily more audible, more articulate, more persuasive ; and they come from the hearts of men everywhere. They insist that the war shall not end in vindictive action of any kind, that no nation or people shall be robbed or punished because the irresponsible rulers of a single country have themselves done deep and abominable wrong. It is this thought that has been expressed in the formula : “ No annexations, no contributions, no punitive indemnities.” Just because this crude formula expressed the instinctive judgment as to the right of plain men everywhere it has been made diligent use of by the masters of German intrigue to lead the people of Russia astray—and the people of every other country their agents could reach—in order that a premature peace might be brought about before autocracy has been taught its final and convincing lesson and the people of the world put in control of their own destinies.

But the fact that a wrong use has been made of a just idea is no reason why a right use should not be made of it. It ought to be brought under the patronage of its real friends. Let it be said again that autocracy must first be shown the utter futility of its claims to power or leadership in the modern world. It is impossible to apply any standard of justice so long as such forces are unchecked and undefeated as the present masters of Germany command. Not until that has been done can right be set up as arbiter and peacemaker among the nations. But when that has been done—as, God willing, it assuredly will be—we shall at last be free to do an unprecedented thing, and this is the time to avow our purpose to do it. We shall be free to base peace on generosity and justice, to the exclusion of selfish claims to advantage, even on the part of the victors.

Let there be no misunderstanding. Our present and immediate task is to win the war, and nothing shall turn us aside from it until it is accomplished. Every power and resource we possess, whether of men, of money, or of materials, is being devoted, and will continue to be devoted, to that purpose until it is achieved. Those who desire to bring peace about before that purpose is achieved I counsel to carry their advice elsewhere. We will not entertain it. We shall regard the war as won only when the German people say to us, through properly accredited representatives, that they are ready to agree to a settlement based upon justice and a reparation of the wrongs their rulers have done.

They have done a wrong to Belgium which must be repaired. They have established a power over other lands and peoples than their own—over the great Empire of Austria-Hungary, over the hitherto free Balkan States, over Turkey and within Asia—which must be relinquished.

Germany's success by skill, by industry, by knowledge, by enterprise we did not grudge or oppose, but admired rather. She had built up for herself a real Empire of trade and influence secured by the peace of the world. We were content to abide the rivalries of manufacture, science, and commerce that were involved for us in her success, and stand or fall as we had or did not have the brains and the initiative to surpass her. But at the moment when she had conspicuously won her triumphs of peace she threw them away, to establish in their stead what the world will no longer permit to be established, military and political domination by arms, by which to oust where she could not excel the rivals she most feared and hated.

The peace we make must remedy that wrong. It must deliver the once fair lands and happy peoples of Belgium and Northern France from the Prussian conquest and the Prussian menace, but it must also deliver the peoples of Austria-Hungary, the peoples of the Balkans, and the peoples of Turkey, alike in Europe and in Asia, from the impudent and alien dominion of the Prussian military and commercial autocracy. We owe it, however, to ourselves to say that we do not wish in any way to impair or to rearrange the Austro-Hungarian Empire. It is no affair of ours what they do with their own life, either industrially or politically. We do not propose or desire to dictate to them in any way. We only desire to see that their affairs are left in their own hands in all matters, great or small. We shall hope to secure for the peoples of the Balkan Peninsula and for the people of the Turkish Empire the right and opportunity to

make their own lives safe, their own fortunes secure, against oppression or injustice, and from the dictation of foreign Courts or parties.

And our attitude and purpose with regard to Germany herself are of a like kind. We intend no wrong against the German Empire, no interference with her internal affairs. We should deem either the one or the other absolutely unjustifiable, absolutely contrary to the principles we have professed to live by and to hold most sacred throughout our life as a nation.

The people of Germany are being told by the men whom they now permit to deceive them, and to act as their masters, that they are fighting for the very life and existence of their Empire, a war of desperate self-defence against deliberate aggression. Nothing could be more grossly or wantonly false, and we must seek by the utmost openness and candour as to our real aims to convince them of its falseness. We are, in fact, fighting for their emancipation from fear along with our own—from the fear, as well as from the fact, of unjust attacks by neighbours or rivals or schemers after world empire. No one is threatening the existence or the independence or the peaceful enterprise of the German Empire.

The worst that can happen to the detriment of the German people is this—that if they should still after the war is over continue to be obliged to live under ambitious and intriguing masters interested to disturb the peace of the world, or classes of men whom the other peoples of the world could not trust, it might be impossible to admit them to the partnership of nations which must henceforth guarantee the world's peace. That partnership must be a partnership of peoples, not a mere partnership of Governments. It might be impossible also in such untoward circumstances to admit Germany to the free economic intercourse which must inevitably spring out of the other partnership of a real peace. But there would be no aggression in that, and such a situation, inevitable because of distrust, would in the very nature of things sooner or later cure itself by processes which would assuredly set in.

The wrongs, the very deep wrongs, committed in this war will have to be righted. That, of course. But they cannot, and must not, be righted by the commission of similar wrongs against Germany and her allies. The world will not permit the commission of similar wrongs as a means of reparation and settlement. Statesmen must by this have learned that the opinion of the world is everywhere wide awake and fully comprehends the issues involved. No representative of any self-

governed nation will dare disregard it by attempting any such covenants of selfishness and compromise as were entered into at the Congress of Vienna.

The thought of the plain people here and everywhere throughout the world, the people who enjoy no privilege and have very simple and unsophisticated standards of right and wrong, is the air all Governments must henceforth breathe if they would live. It is in the full disclosing light of that thought that all policies must henceforth breathe if they would live. It is in the full disclosing light of that thought that all policies must be conceived and executed in this midday hour of the world's life.

German rulers have been able to upset the peace of the world only because the German people were not suffered under their tutelage to share the comradeship of the other peoples of the world, either in thought or in purpose. They were allowed to have no opinion of their own which might be set up as a rule of conduct for those who exercised authority over them. But the Congress that concludes this war will feel the full strength of the tides that run now in the hearts and consciences of free men everywhere. Its conclusion will run with those tides.

All these things have been true from the very beginning of this stupendous war ; and I cannot help thinking that if they had been made plain at the very outset the sympathy and enthusiasm of the Russian people might have been once and for all enlisted on the side of the Allies, suspicion and distrust swept away, and a real and lasting union of purpose effected. Had they believed these things at the very moment of their revolution and had they been confirmed in that belief since, the sad reverses which have recently marked the progress of their affairs towards an ordered and stable Government of free men might have been avoided. The Russian people have been poisoned by the very same falsehoods that have kept the German people in the dark, and the poison has been administered by the very same hands. The only possible antidote is the truth. It cannot be uttered too plainly or too often.

From every point of view, therefore, it has seemed to be my duty to speak these declarations of purpose, to add these specific interpretations to what I took the liberty of saying to the Senate in January. Our entrance into the war has not altered our attitude towards the settlement that must come when it is over. I said in January that the nations of the world were entitled not only to free pathways upon the sea, but also to assured and unmolested access to those pathways. I was thinking, and I

am thinking now, not of the smaller and weaker nations alone, which need our countenance and support, but also of the great and powerful nations, and of our present enemies, as well as our present associates in the war. I was thinking, and am thinking now, of Austria herself, among the rest, as well as of Serbia and of Poland. Justice and equality of rights can be had only at a great price. We are seeking permanent, not temporary, foundations for the peace of the world, and must seek them candidly and fearlessly. As always, the right will prove to be the expedient.

What shall we do, then, to push this great war of freedom and justice to its righteous conclusion? We must clear away with a thorough hand all impediments to success, and we must make every adjustment of law that will facilitate the full and free use of our whole capacity and force as a fighting unit. One very embarrassing obstacle that stands in our way is that we are at war with Germany but not with her allies. I, therefore, very earnestly recommend that the Congress immediately declare the United States in a state of war with Austria-Hungary.

Does it seem strange to you that this should be the conclusion of the argument I have just addressed to you? It is not. It is, in fact, the inevitable logic of what I have said. Austria-Hungary is for the time being not her own mistress, but simply the vassal of the German Government. We must face the facts as they are and act upon them without sentiment in this stern business. The Government of Austria-Hungary is not acting upon its own initiative, or in response to the wishes and feelings of its own peoples, but as the instrument of another nation. We must meet its force with our own, and regard the Central Powers as but one. The war can be successfully conducted in no other way. The same logic would lead also to a declaration of war against Turkey and Bulgaria. They also are the tools of Germany. But they are mere tools, and do not yet stand in the direct path of our necessary action. We shall go wherever the necessities of this war carry us, but it seems to me that we should go only where immediate and practical considerations lead us, and not heed any others.

We can do this with all the greater zeal and enthusiasm because we know that for us this is a war of high principle, debased by no selfish ambition of conquest or spoliation; because we know, and all the world knows, that we have been forced into it to save the very institutions we live under from corruption and destruction. The purposes of the Central Powers

strike straight at the very heart of everything we believe in ; their methods of warfare outrage every principle of humanity and of knightly honour ; their intrigue has corrupted the very thought and spirit of many of our people ; their sinister and secret diplomacy has sought to take our very territory away from us and disrupt the union of the State. Our safety would be at an end, our honour for ever sullied and brought into contempt were we to permit their triumph. They are striking at the very existence of democracy and liberty.

It is because it is for us a war of high, disinterested purpose, in which all the free peoples of the world are banded together for the vindication of right, a war for the preservation of our nation and of all that it has held dear of principle and of purpose, that we feel ourselves doubly constrained to propose for its outcome only that which is righteous and of irreproachable intention, for our foes as well as for our friends. The cause being just and holy, the settlement must be of like motive and quality. For this we can fight, but for nothing less noble or less worthy of our traditions. For this cause we entered the war, and for this cause will we battle until the last gun is fired.

I have spoken plainly, because this seems to me the time when it is most necessary to speak plainly, in order that all the world may know that, even in the heat and ardour of the struggle, and when our whole thought is of carrying this war through to its end, we have not forgotten any ideal or principle for which the name of America has been held in honour among the nations, and for which it has been our glory to contend in the great generations that went before us.

A supreme moment of history has come. The eyes of the people have been opened and they see. The hand of God is laid upon the nations. He will show them favour, I devoutly believe, only if they rise to the clear heights of His own justice and mercy.

XXXV

FROM COUNT CZERNIN'S SPEECHES OF DECEMBER 4 AND 6, 1917.

DECEMBER 4TH.

When I now say that I regard as a possibility the conclusion of peace in the near future, I claim for our Central Powers the credit of having created that possibility. Until December

1916 the word "peace" was penalized in every belligerent State. Conscious of our generally acknowledged invincibility, supported by the righteousness of our cause, and acting in conjunction with our Allies, we first of all took courage at the aforementioned date to extend to our opponents the hand of reconciliation and to propose the initiation of peace negotiations. This proof of our moral strength was not understood by our enemies. We have not shrunk from the maintenance of the position we then assumed. Always we have been ready for a just and honourable peace. The only Government which took up our idea was the Provisional Government of Russia, which on April 11th¹ declared that Russia had no intention of lording it over other nations, or forcibly invading foreign territory, but that her people were aiming at a lasting peace. On this declaration of the Provisional Russian Government the Governments of the Central Powers were able to establish the similarity of their own and the Russian aims. If, in the issue, despite this identity in the conception of the peace question on our own part and that of Russia, there is no general acceptance of the negotiations for peace, the blame will rest exclusively on the Western Powers of the Entente, who not only hold fast to the idea of themselves carrying on a war of conquest and annihilation, but in Russia exert all their influence in the direction of hindering the continuance of the Government's peace policy. The step towards peace taken by his Holiness the Pope in his Note of August 1st was most warmly received by our group of Powers and regarded as "a suitable basis for the initiation of negotiations by way of preparation for a just and lasting peace." On the enemy side there was no echo to the Holy Father's call to peace. From declarations made by myself and others in responsible positions in the allied countries the standpoint from which we view the peace question is very evident. For us the present war is a war of defence, our aim is to conclude a peace whereby the freedom, independence, and territorial integrity of Austria-Hungary shall be maintained inviolate, etc. It is not possible for me to bind myself for all future time as regards our unselfish war aims, as against the openly admitted annexation desires of those enemies who would insist on the continuation of the war. As you, the Hon. Delegates, will have realized from my statements, it is my foremost aim to guide the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy to a peace which, by the preservation of the rights we have so successfully defended and with guarantees of our future, will bring lasting reconciliation to the nations. In this

¹ See No. XIV.

desire I feel that I am at one with you, and with the overwhelming majority of the people of Austria-Hungary. I can therefore bespeak your support in the attainment of this aim, this peace which we see in vision.

DECEMBER 6TH.

Eminent Hungarian party leaders have addressed questions to me which I should like, as far as possible, to answer immediately. Count Andrassy spoke with the warmth one might expect from him of the alliance with Germany, and he asked whether and how far we are at one with Germany in our war aims. I can answer this question positively. We are at one with Germany on the basis which holds good for Germany and Austria-Hungary—on the basis of a defensive war, which here in this exalted assembly found undivided approval, which was laid down in the German Reichstag as the guiding line for our war aims, and which in my opinion Baron von Kühlmann in his last speech very clearly and exactly stated when he said: "There is no other obstacle to peace than Alsace-Lorraine." Of course, when we compare our situation with that of our German allies we should not forget one thing: that in certain respects we are in a better position than they are; we have practically our entire territory in our hands, whereas Germany's colonies are to-day in the hands of the enemy, and it is self-evident that Germany will not and cannot conclude peace until she is sure of receiving her colonies back.

When I am now reproached from many sides with weakness in my policy, which is said to be in tow of Germany—whatever these phrases may be—when it is said that this policy forces us to continue the war longer than would otherwise be the case, and that we are even forced to fight for German aims of conquest, I say emphatically, No. We are fighting for the defence of Germany, just as Germany is fighting for our defence. In this respect I know no territorial boundaries. If any one should ask whether we are fighting for Alsace-Lorraine I would reply, Yes, we are fighting for Alsace-Lorraine, just as Germany is fighting for us and fought for Lemberg and Trieste. I know of no difference between Strassburg and Trieste. If the general situation of the European war should assume a different aspect—that does not appear impossible—if on other fronts big events should occur, then (I say it frankly and feel myself in doing so at one with Count Tisza) I would heartily welcome the moment that found us fighting on other fronts together with our Allies. If therefore after the course which we have

taken since the outbreak of the war and which we are pursuing with the full consent of the overwhelming majority of Austria as well as of Hungary, if after our taking this course there should still be people on the side of the Entente living under the impression that they might succeed in separating us from our Allies, then there remains nothing else for me to say than that those who believe that are bad psychologists and persons of childish minds.

XXXVI

NOTE OF TROTSKY TO THE EMBASSIES OF THE ALLIED GOVERNMENTS, DECEMBER 7, 1917.

The negotiations opened between the delegates of Germany, Austria-Hungary, Turkey, and Bulgaria, on the one hand, and the delegates of Russia, on the other, have been interrupted on the initiative of our delegation for one week in order to give us an opportunity to inform the peoples and the Governments of the allied countries of the fact of the negotiations and of their tendency. Russia has proposed: (1) to declare that the projected armistice has for its aim the conclusion of peace on democratic principles as formulated in the manifesto of the All-Russian Congress of the Soviets¹; (2) to pledge the two parties not to transfer any troops from one front to another during the armistice; and (3) evacuation of the islands of the Moon Sound. On the question of the war aims, the delegates of the opposite side have evaded a direct answer on the plea that they had been instructed only to deal with the military aspect of the armistice. In the same way, on the question of a general armistice, the delegates of the opposite side pleaded the absence of authority to discuss the question of an armistice with the Powers whose delegates did not take part in the negotiations. The delegates of the opposite side, on their part, offered an armistice from the Baltic to the Black Sea for a period of twenty-eight days, and pledged themselves at the same time to transmit to their respective Governments the proposal of the Russian delegation immediately to address to all the belligerent Powers—that is, to all the Allied Powers except Russia—a proposal to take part in the negotiations. Our delegation being reluctant to sign a formal armistice in the present stage of negotiations, we have again decided upon a week's suspension of military operations and upon an

¹ See No. XXXII.

interruption for the same period of the negotiations for an armistice. There is thus between the first Decree of the Soviet Government on peace and the day of the renewal of the peace negotiations a space of time exceeding one month. Such a period, even in the present disorganized state of means of international communication, is quite sufficient to give the Governments of the Allied Powers an opportunity to define their attitude towards the peace negotiations—that is, to proclaim their readiness or refusal to take part in the pourparlers for an armistice and peace, and in case of refusal publicly before the whole world to proclaim clearly and definitely for what objects the nations of Europe are to bleed during the fourth year of the war.

XXXVII

**THE GENERAL STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES AT
BREST LITOVSK, DECEMBER 22, 1917.**

I. PRINCIPLES OF THE RUSSIAN DELEGATES.

At the sitting of December 22nd the Russian Delegation had declared that it started from the standpoint of the clearly expressed will of the peoples of Russia to attain as soon as possible the conclusion of a general and just peace, equally acceptable for all. Appealing to the resolution of the All-Russian Congress of Workmen and Soldiers' Deputies and the All-Russian Peasant Congress, the Russian Delegation pointed out that it considered the continuation of the war merely with the object of annexations a crime.

Starting from these principles, it proposed that the peace negotiations should be based on the following six points:—

1. No forcible union of territories conquered during the war shall be permitted. The troops occupying such territories shall be withdrawn within the shortest period.

2. The political independence of peoples that have lost their independence during the war shall be restored in its fullest extent.

3. National groups which before the war were not politically independent shall be guaranteed the possibility of deciding by referendum the question of belonging to one State or another or enjoying their political independence. This referendum must be arranged in such a manner that complete independence in voting is guaranteed for the entire population of the region in question, including emigrants and refugees.

4. In regard to territory of mixed nationality, the right of the minority shall be protected by special law giving it independence of national culture, and, if practicable, autonomous administration.

5. None of the belligerent countries shall be obliged to pay another country any so-called war costs. Contributions already levied are to be paid back. Regarding the indemnification of losses suffered by private persons in consequence of the war, these shall be met out of a special fund, to which the belligerents shall proportionally contribute.

6. Colonial questions shall be decided in conformity with the principles laid down in points 1 to 4.

Supplementing the foregoing, the Russian Delegation proposed to the contracting parties to brand every kind of covert combating of the freedom of weak nations by strong as not permissible, as, for example, by economic boycott, economic predominance of one country over another on the ground of forced commercial treaties, by special tariff treaties which restrict freedom of trade with a third country, or by a sea blockade which does not pursue a direct war aim, etc.

2. PRINCIPLES OF THE CENTRAL POWERS.

On December 25th Count Czernin made the following statement in the name of the Delegations of the Quadruple Alliance:—

The Delegations of the Allied Powers proceed from the clearly expressed will of their Governments and peoples to reach as soon as possible the conclusion of a general and just peace. The Delegations of the Allies are (in accord with the repeatedly announced standpoint of their Governments) of opinion that the main lines (Leitsätze) of the Russian proposals form a discussable basis for such a peace. The Delegations of the Quadruple Alliance are in accord with an immediate general peace without forcible acquisitions of territory and without war indemnities. When the Russian Delegation condemns a war prosecuted only for purposes of conquest, the Delegations of the Allies are in accord with its view. The statesmen of the Allied Governments in their programmes have repeatedly emphasized that the Allies would not prolong the war a day in order to make conquests. The Governments of the Allies have without deviation adhered to this standpoint. They solemnly declare their determination to sign without delay a peace that will end this war on the foregoing basis without exception and with the same just conditions for all the belligerent Powers. It must, however, be expressly pointed out that all the Powers now participating in the war

must within a suitable period, without exception and without any reserve, bind themselves to the most precise adherence to conditions binding all nations in the same manner, if the suppositions of the Russian *exposé* are to be fulfilled ; for it would not do for the Powers of the Quadruple Alliance negotiating with Russia one-sidedly to tie themselves to these conditions without a guarantee that Russia's Allies will recognize and will carry out these conditions honestly and without reserve also as regards the Quadruple Alliance.

This having been stated beforehand, the following observations must be made regarding the six points which are proposed by the Russian Delegation as a basis for negotiations.

1. It is not the intention of the Allied Governments to appropriate forcibly territories which are at present occupied. The question of the troops in occupied territories must be settled in the sense of the withdrawal of troops from such and such places.

2. It is not the intention of the Allies to rob of its independence any of the nations which in the course of this war have lost their political independence.

3. The question of the State allegiance of national groups which possess no State independence cannot, in the opinion of the Quadruple Alliance, be regulated as between States, but is, if required, to be solved by every State with its peoples independently in a constitutional manner.

4. Likewise, according to the declarations of the statesmen of the Quadruple Alliance, protection of the right of minorities forms an essential component part of the constitutional right of peoples to self-determination. The Allied Governments also grant validity to this principle everywhere in so far as it is practically realizable.

5. The Allied Powers have frequently emphasized the possibility that not only could both sides renounce indemnification for war costs, but also indemnification for war damage. Accordingly, every belligerent Power would only have to indemnify for the expenditure for its nationals who have become prisoners of war, as well as for damage done in their own territory by illegal acts of force committed against civilian nationals belonging to the enemy. The Russian Government's proposal for the creation of a special fund for this purpose could only be taken into consideration if other belligerent Powers were within a suitable period to join in the peace negotiations.

6. Regarding this point Germany is the only one of the four Allied Powers that disposes of overseas colonies. On this sub-

ject the German Delegation, in full accord with the Russian proposals, makes the following declaration: The return of colonial territory, forcibly occupied and captured during the war, is an essential component part of the German demands, which under no circumstances can be departed from. The Russian demand for the speedy evacuation of such regions as are occupied by the enemy likewise corresponds with German views. In view of the nature of the German colonial territory, the form proposed by the Delegation on the basis of the principle previously discussed seems at present impracticable. The fact that the natives of the German colonies, despite the greatest difficulties and the slight prospects of success in the struggle against an enemy many times superior, and disposing of unlimited overseas reinforcements, have through thick and thin loyally adhered to their German friends, is proof of their attachment and their resolve under all circumstances to remain with Germany, a proof which in seriousness and in weight far exceeds every possible demonstration of wishes by voting. The principles for economic intercourse propounded by the Russian Delegation in association with the six points just discussed meets with the unconditional agreement of the Delegations of the Allied Powers, which have always advocated the exclusion of all economic oppression, and which see in the restoration of a regular economic intercourse, which takes fully into account the interests of all concerned, one of the important requisites for consolidating friendly relations between the present belligerents.

Following this declaration, Count Czernin, basing himself on the principles just laid down, said: "We are ready to enter into negotiations with all our enemies, but in order to avoid unnecessary loss of time the Allies are ready to enter upon the consideration of those special points the examination of which seems in any case necessary for both the Russian Government and the Allies."

3. THE RUSSIAN REPLY.

The leader of the Russian Delegation, replying, said: "The Delegation notes with satisfaction that the reply of the Delegations of Germany, Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria, and Turkey accepted the principle of a general democratic peace without annexations. The Delegation recognises the enormous importance of this advance on the road to a general peace. It must, however, observe that the reply contains an important reservation on point three. The Russian Delegation has further noted with satisfaction in the declaration of the four allied Powers

on point five the recognition of the principle of no indemnities. It has made a reservation, however, regarding indemnification for the support of war prisoners."

The Russian Delegation further declared that it attached importance to the indemnification from an international fund of private persons who have suffered from acts of war. The Delegation also recognized that the evacuation by the enemy of occupied German colonies corresponds to the principles it has laid down, and it proposed that the question whether the principle of the free expression of the people's will is applicable to colonies should be reserved for a special commission. Finally, the head of the Russian Delegation declared that, despite the differences mentioned, the Delegation is of opinion that the frank statement contained in the reply of the four Allied Powers, namely, that no aggressive intentions are entertained, offers a real possibility of an immediate start with the negotiations for a general peace between the belligerent States. The Russian Delegation therefore proposed that negotiations be interrupted for ten days from December 25th until January 4th so that the peoples whose Governments have not yet joined in the negotiations proceeding here for a general peace may have an opportunity of making themselves acquainted with the principles of such a peace as now set forth. After the expiry of this period the negotiations must under all circumstances be continued.

XXXVIII

TROTSKY'S INVITATION TO THE ALLIED PEOPLES AND GOVERNMENTS, DECEMBER 29, 1917.

THE peace negotiations at Brest-Litovsk between the Delegation of the Russian Republic and the Delegations of Germany, Austria-Hungary, Turkey, and Bulgaria are interrupted for ten days till January 8th, with the purpose of giving the Allied countries the last possibility of taking part in the subsequent negotiations and of securing themselves against all consequences of a separate peace between Russia and the enemy countries. Two programmes have been formulated at Brest-Litovsk. The first expresses the views of the All-Russian Congress of the Workmen's, Soldiers', and Peasants' Deputies. The second is in the name of the Governments of Germany and its allies.

The programme of the Russian Government is a programme

of an ultimate Socialistic democracy. This programme has for its object the creation of such conditions, first, that every nationality, independently of its strength and the level of its general evolution, should have complete freedom for its national progress, and, secondly, that all the people should be united in economical and cultural co-operation.

The programme of the Governments of the countries at war with us is characterized by the declaration that the Allied Powers (Germany, Austria-Hungary, Turkey, and Bulgaria) have not in view the forcible annexation of territories occupied during the war; that is to say, that the enemy countries are ready—in accordance with a peace treaty—to clear themselves away from the now occupied territories of Belgium, the Northern Departments of France, Serbia, Montenegro, Rumania, Poland, Lithuania, and Courland with the purpose that the future destinies of territories the nature of whose Governments is a matter of contest should be settled by the respective populations themselves. This step, which the enemy Governments are taking under the pressure of circumstances, and chiefly under the pressure of their own labouring classes to meet the demands of Democracy, consists in the renouncing of new violent annexations and indemnities.

But, renouncing new annexations, the enemy Governments have the idea that the old annexations and the old violences over the people are sanctioned by historical prescription. This means that the destinies of Alsace-Lorraine, Transylvania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and so on, upon the one side, and of Ireland, Egypt, India, Indo-China, and so on, on the other side, should not be subject to revision. Such a programme is profoundly inconsequent, and represents a compromise resting on no basis of principle between the pretensions of Imperialism and the demands of the Labouring Democracy. Nevertheless, the submission of such a programme is a big step forward.

The Governments of the Allied peoples (those in alliance with Russia) have not joined in the peace negotiations up to the present, and they have sternly refused to state clearly the reasons for their attitude. It is impossible now to affirm that the war is for freeing Belgium, the Northern Departments of France, Serbia, and so on, because Germany and her allies are expressing their willingness to withdraw from these territories if a general peace is concluded.

Now that the enemies have declared their peace conditions it is impossible to solve the existing difficulties by general expressions as to the necessity of carrying the war on to the end.

It is necessary to state clearly what is the peace programme of France, Italy, Great Britain, and the United States. Are they asking, like we ourselves, that the right of the determination of their own destinies should be given to the peoples of Alsace-Lorraine, Galicia, Posen, Bohemia, and South Slavonia? If they are doing so, are they willing also to recognize the right to the determination of their own destinies in the case of the peoples of Ireland, Egypt, India, Madagascar, Indo-China, and other countries, just as under the Russian Revolution this right has been given to the peoples of Finland, Ukrainia, White Russia, and other districts? It is clear that to demand that the right of self-determination be given to peoples who are a part of the enemy States, and to refuse this right to peoples of their own States or their own colonies, would mean the putting forward of the programmes of the most cynical Imperialism.

If the Governments of the Allied countries would express their readiness, together with the Russian Government, to found a peace upon the complete and unconditional recognition of the principle of self-determination for all peoples in all States, if they would begin by the giving of this right to the oppressed people of their own States, this would create such international conditions that when the inherently contradictory programmes of Germany, and especially Austro-Hungary, were shown in all their weakness objection would be overcome by the pressure of all the interested peoples. But up to the present, the Allied Governments have in no way shown, and, in view of their class character, they could not show, their readiness to accept a really democratic peace. They are not less suspicious and hostile in regard to the principle of national self-determination than are the Governments of Germany and Austro-Hungary. Upon this point the awakened proletariat of the Allied countries have as few illusions as ourselves. With the existing attitude of the Governments, all that is possible is that the programme of Imperialistic compromise which is the basis of the peace conditions of Germany should be met by another programme of Imperialistic compromise or the war be continued. But now when at Brest-Litovsk two programmes are before us, it becomes necessary to give a clear and categorical reply. Ten days are given for the continuation of the peace negotiations. Russia is not depending in these negotiations upon having the agreement of the Allied Governments. If these continue to be opposed to a general peace, the Russian delegation will nevertheless continue the peace negotiations. A separate peace signed by Russia undoubtedly will be a severe blow to the

Allied countries, first of all to France and to Italy. The prevision of the inevitable consequences of a separate peace must determine the policy not only of Russia, but also of France and Italy and all the other Allied countries. The Russian Government has striven all the time for a general peace. Nobody can deny the importance of the results obtained in this respect, but as to the future, all depends upon the Allied peoples themselves. To force their own Governments to state immediately their peace programmes and to participate in the peace negotiations has become a matter of national self-preservation with the various Allied peoples. The Russian Revolution has opened the way to an immediate general peace on the basis of agreement. If the Allied Governments are willing to make use of the last opportunity, general negotiations could be started immediately in one of the neutral countries. In these negotiations, with the condition that there should be complete publicity, the Russian Delegation would continue to defend the programme of international Socialistic Democracy as opposed to the Imperialistic programme of the Governments, Allied and enemy alike. The success of our programme will depend upon the degree in which the will of the Imperialistic class will be paralysed by the work of the revolutionary proletariat in every country. If the Allied Governments, with the blind tenacity which is characteristic of decadent perishing classes, again refuse to take part in peace negotiations, then the working classes will be placed under the iron necessity of grasping the authority from the hands of those who cannot or will not give peace to the peoples.

In these ten days the destinies of hundreds of thousands and of millions of human lives will be settled. If on the French and Italian fronts an armistice is not concluded now, a new offensive, irrational, pitiless, and useless, like all those that have proceeded, will demand new and incalculable sacrifices on both sides. This war, begun by the dominating classes, logically is leading to the complete destruction of European nations. But the people will live and they have the right to live. They must overthrow all those who are not permitting them to live freely. Addressing the Governments with the present proposal to take part in peace negotiations, we promise every support to the working classes of every country which will rise against their own national Imperialists, chauvinists, and militarists, under the banner of peace, the brotherhood of peoples, and the Socialist reconstruction of society.

XXXIX

SPEECH OF MR. LLOYD GEORGE, JANUARY 5, 1918.

When the Government invite organized Labour in this country to assist them to maintain the might of their armies in the field, its representatives are entitled to ask that any misgivings and doubts which any of them may have about the purpose to which this precious strength is to be applied should be definitely cleared ; and what is true of organized Labour is equally true of all citizens in this country without regard to grade or avocation. When men by the million are being called upon to suffer and die, and vast populations are being subjected to the sufferings and privations of war on a scale unprecedented in the history of the world, they are entitled to know for what cause or causes they are making the sacrifice. It is only the clearest, greatest, and justest of causes that can justify the continuance even for one day of this unspeakable agony of the nations. And we ought to be able to state clearly and definitely not only the principles for which we are fighting, but also their definite and concrete application to the war map of the world.

We have arrived at the most critical hour in this terrible conflict, and before any Government takes the fateful decision as to the conditions under which it ought either to terminate or continue the struggle, it ought to be satisfied that the conscience of the nation is behind these conditions, for nothing else can sustain the effort which is necessary to achieve a righteous end to this war. I have, therefore, during the last few days taken special pains to ascertain the view and the attitude of representative men of all sections of thought and opinion in the country. Last week I had the privilege not merely of perusing the declared war aims of the Labour Party, but also of discussing in detail with the Labour leaders the meaning and intention of that declaration. I have also had an opportunity of discussing this same momentous question with Mr. Asquith and Viscount Grey. Had it not been that the Nationalist leaders are in Ireland, engaged in endeavouring to solve the tangled problem of Irish self-government, I should have been happy to exchange views with them ; but Mr. Redmond, speaking on their behalf, has, with his usual lucidity and force, in many of his speeches, made clear what his ideas are as to the object and purpose of the war. I have also had the opportunity of consulting certain representatives of the great Dominions overseas. I am glad to be able to say, as a

result of all these discussions, that, although the Government are alone responsible for the actual language I propose using, there is national agreement as to the character and purpose of our war aims and peace conditions, and in what I say to you to-day, and through you to the world, I can venture to claim that I am speaking not merely the mind of the Government but of the nation and of the Empire as a whole.

We may begin by clearing away some misunderstandings and stating what we are *not* fighting for. We are not fighting a war of aggression against the German people. Their leaders have persuaded them that they are fighting a war of self-defence against a league of rival nations bent on the destruction of Germany. That is not so. The destruction or disruption of Germany or the German people has never been a war aim with us from the first day of this war to this day. Most reluctantly—and, indeed, quite unprepared for the dreadful ordeal—we were forced to join in this war in self-defence, in defence of the violated public law of Europe, and in vindication of the most solemn treaty obligations on which the public system of Europe rested, and on which Germany had ruthlessly trampled in her invasion of Belgium. We had to join in the struggle or stand aside and see Europe go under, and brute force triumph over public right and international justice. It was only the realization of that dreadful alternative that forced the British people into the war. And from that original attitude they have never swerved. They have never aimed at the break-up of the German peoples or the disintegration of their State or country. Germany has occupied a great position in the world. It is not our wish or intention to question or destroy that position for the future, but rather to turn her aside from hopes and schemes of military domination and to see her devote all her strength to the great beneficent tasks of the world. Nor are we fighting to destroy Austria-Hungary or to deprive Turkey of its capital, or of the rich and renowned lands of Asia Minor and Thrace which are predominantly Turkish in race.

Nor did we enter this war merely to alter or destroy the Imperial constitution of Germany, much as we consider that military autocratic Constitution a dangerous anachronism in the twentieth century. Our point of view is that the adoption of a really democratic Constitution by Germany would be the most convincing evidence that in her the old spirit of military domination had indeed died in this war, and would make it much easier for us to conclude a broad democratic peace with her. But after all that is a question for the German people to

decide. It is now more than a year since the President of the United States, then neutral, addressed to the belligerents a suggestion that each side should state clearly the aims for which they were fighting. We and our Allies responded by the Note of January 10, 1917. To the President's appeal the Central Empires made no reply, and in spite of many adjurations both from their opponents and from neutrals, they have maintained a complete silence as to the objects for which they are fighting. Even on so crucial a matter as their intention with regard to Belgium, they have uniformly declined to give any trustworthy indication.

On December 25th¹ last, however, Count Czernin, speaking on behalf of Austria-Hungary and her Allies, did make a pronouncement of a kind. It is, indeed, deplorably vague. We are told that "it is not the intention" of the Central Powers "to appropriate forcibly" any occupied territories or "to rob of its independence" any nation which has lost its "political independence" during the war. It is obvious that almost any scheme of conquest and annexation could be perpetrated within the literal interpretation of such a pledge. Does it mean that Belgium, Serbia, Montenegro, and Roumania will be as independent and as free to direct their own destinies as the Germans or any other nation? Or does it mean that all manner of interferences and restrictions, political and economic, incompatible with the status and dignity of a freed self-respecting people, are to be imposed. If this is the intention, then there will be one kind of independence for a great nation and an inferior kind of independence for a small nation. We must know what is meant, for equality of right amongst nations, small as well as great, is one of the fundamental issues this country and her Allies are fighting to establish in this war. Reparation for the wanton damage inflicted on Belgian towns and villages and their inhabitants is emphatically repudiated. The rest of the so-called "offer" of the Central Powers is almost entirely a refusal of all concessions. All suggestions about the autonomy of subject nationalities are ruled out of the peace terms altogether. The question whether any form of self-government is to be given to Arabs, Armenians, or Syrians is declared to be entirely a matter for the Sublime Porte. A pious wish for the protection of minorities "in so far as it is practically realizable" is the nearest approach to liberty which the Central statesmen venture to make.

On one point only are they perfectly clear and definite. Under

¹ See p. 101.

no circumstances will the "German demand" for the restoration of the whole of Germany's colonies be departed from. All principles of self-determination or, as our earlier phrase goes, government by consent of the governed, here vanish into thin air. It is impossible to believe that any edifice of permanent peace could be erected on such a foundation as this. Mere lip service to the formula of no annexations and no indemnities or the right of self-determination is useless. Before any negotiations can even be begun the Central Powers must realize the essential facts of the situation. The days of the Treaty of Vienna are long past. We can no longer submit the future of European civilization to the arbitrary decisions of a few negotiators striving to secure by chicanery or persuasion the interests of this or that dynasty or nation. The settlement of the new Europe must be based on such grounds of reason and justice as will give some promise of stability. Therefore it is that we feel that government with the consent of the governed must be the basis of any territorial settlement in this war. For that reason, also, unless treaties be upheld, unless every nation is prepared, at whatever sacrifice, to honour the national signature, it is obvious that no treaty of peace can be worth the paper on which it is written.

The first requirements, therefore, always put forward by the British Government and their Allies, has been the complete restoration, political, territorial, and economic, of the independence of Belgium, and such reparation as can be made for the devastation of its towns and provinces. This is no demand for war indemnity, such as that imposed on France by Germany in 1871. It is not an attempt to shift the cost of warlike operations from one belligerent to another, which may or may not be defensible. It is no more and no less than an insistence that, before there can be any hope for a stable peace, this great breach of the public law of Europe must be repudiated, and, so far as possible, repaired. Reparation means recognition. Unless international right is recognized by insistence on payment for injury done in defiance of its canons it can never be a reality. Next comes the restoration of Serbia, Montenegro, and the occupied parts of France, Italy, and Roumania. The complete withdrawal of the alien armies and the reparation for injustice done is a fundamental condition of permanent peace. We mean to stand by the French democracy to the death in the demand they make for a reconsideration of the great wrong of 1871, when, without any regard to the wishes of the population, two French provinces were torn from the side of France and

incorporated in the German Empire. This sore has poisoned the peace of Europe for half a century, and until it is cured healthy conditions will not have been restored. There can be no better illustration of the folly and wickedness of using a transient military success to violate national right.

I will not attempt to deal with the question of the Russian territories now in German occupation. The Russian policy since the revolution has passed so rapidly through so many phases that it is difficult to speak without some suspension of judgment as to what the situation will be when the final terms of European peace come to be discussed. Russia accepted war with all its horrors because, true to her traditional guardianship of the weaker communities of her race, she stepped in to protect Serbia from a plot against her independence. It is this honourable sacrifice which not merely brought Russia into the war, but France as well. France, true to the conditions of her treaty with Russia, stood by her ally in a quarrel which was not her own. Her chivalrous respect for her treaty led to the wanton invasion of Belgium ; and the treaty obligations of Great Britain to that little land brought us into the war. The present rulers of Russia are now engaged, without any reference to the countries whom Russia brought into the war, in separate negotiations with their common enemy. I am indulging in no reproaches ; I am merely stating facts with a view to making it clear why Britain cannot be held accountable for decisions taken in her absence and concerning which she has not been consulted or her aid invoked.

No one who knows Prussia and her designs upon Russia can for a moment doubt her ultimate intention. Whatever phrases she may use to delude Russia she does not mean to surrender one of the fair provinces or cities of Russia now occupied by her forces under one name or another ; and the name hardly matters—these Russian provinces will henceforth be in reality part of the dominions of Prussia. They will be ruled by the Prussian sword in the interests of Prussian autocracy, and the rest of the people of Russia will be partly enticed by specious phrases and partly bullied by the threat of continued war against an impotent army into a condition of complete economic and ultimate political enslavement to Germany. We all deplore the prospect. The democracy of this country mean to stand to the last by the democracies of France and Italy and all our other Allies. We shall be proud to fight to the end side by side with the new democracy of Russia, so will America, and so will France and Italy. But if the present rulers of Russia take action which is independent of their Allies we have no means of inter-

vening to arrest the catastrophe which is assuredly befalling their country. Russia can only be saved by her own people.

We believe, however, that an independent Poland, comprising all those genuinely Polish elements who desire to form part of it, is an urgent necessity for the stability of Western Europe. Similarly, though we agree with President Wilson that the break-up of Austria-Hungary is no part of our war aims, we feel that, unless genuine self-government on true democratic principles is granted to those Austro-Hungarian nationalities who have long desired it, it is impossible to hope for the removal of those causes of unrest in that part of Europe which have so long threatened its general peace. On the same grounds we regard as vital the satisfaction of the legitimate claims of the Italians for union with those of their own race and tongue. We also mean to press that justice be done to men of Roumanian blood and speech in their legitimate aspirations. If these conditions are fulfilled Austria-Hungary would become a Power whose strength would conduce to the permanent peace and freedom of Europe instead of being merely an instrument to the pernicious military autocracy of Prussia, that uses the resources of its Allies for the furtherance of its own sinister purposes. Outside Europe we believe that the same principles should be applied. While we do not challenge the maintenance of the Turkish Empire in the homelands of the Turkish race, with its capital at Constantinople—the passage between the Mediterranean and the Black Sea being internationalized and neutralized—Arabia, Armenia, Mesopotamia, Syria, and Palestine are, in our judgment, entitled to a recognition of their separate national conditions. What the exact form of that recognition in each particular case should be need not here be discussed, beyond stating that it would be impossible to restore to their former sovereignty the territories to which I have already referred. Much has been said about the arrangements we have entered into with our Allies on this and on other subjects.¹ I can only say that as new circumstances, like the Russian collapse and the separate Russian negotiations, have changed the conditions under which those arrangements were made, we are, and always have been, perfectly ready to discuss them with our Allies.

With regard to the German colonies, I have repeatedly declared that they are held at the disposal of a Conference whose decision must have primary regard to the wishes and interests of the native inhabitants of such colonies. None of those territories are inhabited by Europeans. The governing consideration,

¹ See Introduction, p. xiv.

therefore, in all these cases must be that the inhabitants should be placed under the control of an Administration, acceptable to themselves, one of whose main purposes will be to prevent their exploitation for the benefit of European capitalists or Governments. The natives live in their various tribal organizations under chiefs and councils who are competent to consult and speak for their tribes and members, and thus to represent their wishes and interests in regard to their disposal. The general principle of national self-determination is therefore as applicable in their cases as in those of occupied European territories. The German declaration, that the natives of the German colonies have, through their military fidelity in the war, shown their attachment and resolve under all circumstances to remain with Germany, is applicable not to the German colonies generally, but only to one of them, and in that case (German East Africa), the German authorities secured the attachment, not of the native population as a whole, which is and remains profoundly anti-German, but only of a small warlike class, from whom their Askaris or soldiers were selected. These they attached to themselves by conferring on them a highly privileged position as against the bulk of the native population, which enabled these Askaris to assume a lordly and oppressive superiority over the rest of the natives. By this and other means they secured the attachment of a very small and insignificant minority, whose interests were directly opposed to those of the rest of the population, for whom they have no right to speak. The German treatment of their native populations in their colonies has been such as amply to justify their fear of submitting the future of those colonies to the wishes of the natives themselves.

Finally, there must be reparation for injuries done in violation of International Law. The Peace Conference must not forget our seamen and the services they have rendered to, and the outrages they have suffered for, the common cause of freedom. One omission we notice in the proposal of the Central Powers which seems to us especially regrettable. It is desirable, and, indeed, essential, that the settlement after this war shall be one which does not in itself bear the seed of future war. But that is not enough. However wisely and well we may make territorial and other arrangements, there will still be many subjects of international controversy. Some, indeed, are inevitable. The economic conditions at the end of the war will be in the highest degree difficult. Owing to the diversion of human effort to warlike pursuits, there must follow a world shortage of raw materials, which will increase the longer the

war lasts, and it is inevitable that those countries which have control of the raw materials will desire to help themselves and their friends first. Apart from this, whatever settlement is made will be suitable only to the circumstances under which it is made, and, as those circumstances change, changes in the settlement will be called for.

So long as the possibility of dispute between nations continues—that is to say, so long as men and women are dominated by passionate ambition and war is the only means of settling a dispute—all nations must live under the burden not only of having from time to time to engage in it, but of being compelled to prepare for its possible outbreak. The crushing weight of modern armaments, the increasing evil of compulsory military service, the vast waste of wealth and effort involved in warlike preparation, these are blots on our civilization of which every thinking individual must be ashamed. For these and other similar reasons we are confident that a great attempt must be made to establish by some international organization an alternative to war as a means of settling international disputes. After all, war is a relic of barbarism, and, just as law has succeeded violence as the means of settling disputes between individuals, so we believe that it is destined ultimately to take the place of war in the settlement of controversies between nations. If, then, we are asked what we are fighting for, we reply as we have often replied—we are fighting for a just and a lasting peace, and we believe that before permanent peace can be hoped for three conditions must be fulfilled.

First, the sanctity of treaties must be re-established.

Secondly, a territorial settlement must be secured, based on the right of self-determination or the consent of the governed.

Lastly, we must seek by the creation of some international organization to limit the burden of armaments and diminish the probability of war.

On these conditions the British Empire would welcome peace; to secure these conditions its peoples are prepared to make even greater sacrifices than those they have yet endured.

XL

FROM COUNT HERTLING'S COMMENT ON MR. LLOYD GEORGE'S SPEECH OF JANUARY 5th. JANUARY 8, 1918.

Peace conditions at the expense of Germany's Allies are unacceptable. Likewise unacceptable are peace terms offering

the German colonies in exchange for the reinforcement of the British position in Asia. The last speech of Lloyd George's will have made clear to Germany's Allies that the German armies in the West are fighting at least as much for their interests as they are for those of Germany.

XLI

**PRESIDENT WILSON'S FOURTEEN POINTS
JANUARY 8, 1918.**

Once more, as repeatedly before, the spokesmen of the Central Empires have indicated their desire to discuss the objects of the war and the possible bases of a general peace. Parleys have been in progress at Brest-Litovsk between representatives of the Central Powers, to which the attention of all the belligerents has been invited for the purpose of ascertaining whether it may be possible to extend these parleys into a general conference with regard to terms of peace and settlement. The Russian representatives presented not only a perfectly definite statement of the principles upon which they would be willing to conclude peace, but also an equally definite programme of the concrete application of these principles. The representatives of the Central Powers on their part presented an outline of settlement which, if much less definite, seemed susceptible of liberal interpretation until their specific programme of practical terms was added.

That programme proposed no concessions at all either to the sovereignty of Russia or to the preferences of the populations with whose fortunes it dealt, but meant, in a word, that the Central Empires were to keep every foot of territory their armed forces had occupied—every province, every city, every point of vantage—as a permanent addition to their territories and their power.¹

It is a reasonable conjecture that the general principles of settlement which they at first suggested originated with the more liberal statesmen of Germany and Austria, the men who have begun to feel the forces of their own peoples' thought and purpose, while the concrete terms of actual settlement came from the military leaders, who have no thought but to keep what they have got. The negotiations have been broken off. The Russian representatives were sincere and in earnest. They cannot entertain such proposals of conquest and domination.

¹ But see p. 102 (1).

The whole incident is full of significance. It is also full of perplexity. With whom are the Russian representatives dealing? For whom are the representatives of the Central Empires speaking? Are they speaking for the majorities of their respective Parliaments or for the minority parties, that military and Imperialistic minority which has so far dominated their whole policy and controlled the affairs of Turkey and of the Balkan States which have felt obliged to become their associates in this war?

The Russian representatives have insisted very justly, very wisely, and in the true spirit of modern democracy, that the conferences they have been holding with the Teutonic and Turkish statesmen should be held within open, not closed, doors, and all the world have been the audience as was desired. To whom have we been listening, then? To those who speak the spirit and intention of the resolutions of the German Reichstag of July 19th last, the spirit and intention of the Liberal leaders and parties of Germany, or to those who resist and defy that spirit and intention and insist upon conquest and subjugation? Or are we listening in fact to both, unreconciled and in open and hopeless contradiction? These are very serious and pregnant questions. Upon the answer to them depends the peace of the world.

But whatever the results of the parleys at Brest-Litovsk, whatever the confusion of counsel and of purpose in the utterances of the spokesmen of the Central Empires, they have again attempted to acquaint the world with their objects in the war, and have again challenged their adversaries to say what their objects are and what sort of settlement they would deem just and satisfactory.

There is no good reason why that challenge should not be responded to, and responded to with the utmost candour. We did not wait for it. Not once, but again and again, we have laid our whole thought and purpose before the world, not in general terms only, but each time with sufficient definition to make it clear what sort of definitive terms of settlement must necessarily spring out of them. Within the last week Mr. Lloyd George has spoken with admirable candour and in admirable spirit for the people and Government of Great Britain.

There is no confusion of counsel among the adversaries of the Central Empires, no uncertainty of principle, no vagueness of detail. The only secrecy of counsel, the only lack of fearless frankness, the only failure to make a definite statement of the objects of the war, lies with Germany and her allies. The issues

of life and death hang upon these definitions. No statesman who has the least conception of his responsibility ought for a moment to permit himself to continue this tragical and appalling outpouring of blood and treasure unless he is sure beyond a peradventure that the objects of the vital sacrifice are part and parcel of the very life of society and that the people for whom he speaks think them right and imperative as he does.

There is, moreover, a voice calling for these definitions of principle and of purpose which is, it seems to me, more thrilling and more compelling than any of the many moving voices with which the troubled air of the world is filled. It is the voice of the Russian people. They are prostrate and all but helpless, it would seem, before the grim power of Germany, which has hitherto known no relenting and no pity. Their power apparently is shattered. And yet their soul is not subservient. They will not yield either in principle or in action. Their conception of what is right, of what is human and honourable for them to accept, has been stated with a frankness, a largeness of view, a generosity of spirit, a universal human sympathy, which must challenge the admiration of every friend of mankind; and they have refused to compound their ideals or desert others that they themselves may be safe. They call to us to say what it is that we desire, in what, if in anything, our purpose and our spirit differ from theirs; and I believe that the people of the United States would wish me to respond with utter simplicity and frankness.

Whether their present leaders believe it or not, it is our heartfelt desire and hope that some way may be opened whereby we may be privileged to assist the people of Russia to attain their utmost hope of liberty and ordered peace.

It will be our wish and purpose that the processes of peace, when they are begun, shall be absolutely open, and that they shall involve and permit thenceforth no secret understandings of any kind. The day of conquest and aggrandizement is gone by; so is also the day of secret covenants entered into in the interest of particular Governments and likely at some unlooked-for moment to upset the peace of the world.

It is this happy fact, now clear to the view of every public man whose thoughts do not still linger in an age that is dead and gone, which makes it possible for every nation whose purposes are consistent with justice and the peace of the world to avow now or at any other time the objects it has in view.

We have entered this war because violations of right had occurred which touched us to the quick and made the life of our

own people impossible unless they were corrected and the world secured once for all against their recurrence.

What we demand in this war, therefore, is nothing peculiar to ourselves. It is that the world be made fit and safe to live in, and particularly that it be made safe for every peace-loving nation which, like our own, wishes to live its own free life, determine its own institutions, be assured of justice and fair dealing by the other peoples of the world, as against force and selfish aggression. All the peoples of the world are in effect partners in this interest, and for our own part we see very clearly that unless justice be done to others it will not be done to us.

The programme of the world's peace, therefore, is our programme, and that programme, the only possible one as we see it, is this:—

1. Open covenants of peace openly arrived at, after which there shall be no private international undertakings of any kind, but diplomacy shall proceed always frankly and in the public view.

2. Absolute freedom of navigation upon the seas outside territorial waters alike in peace and in war, except as the seas may be closed in whole or in part by international action for the enforcement of international covenants.

3. The removal, so far as possible, of all economic barriers and the establishment of an equality of trade conditions among all the nations consenting to the peace and associating themselves for its maintenance.

4. Adequate guarantees given and taken that national armaments will be reduced to the lowest point consistent with domestic safety.

5. A free, open-minded, and absolutely impartial adjustment of all colonial claims based upon a strict observance of the principle that in determining all such questions of sovereignty the interests of the populations concerned must have equal weight with the equitable claims of the Government whose title is to be determined.

6. The evacuation of all Russian territory, and such a settlement of all questions affecting Russia as will secure the best and freest co-operation of the other nations of the world in obtaining for her an unhampered and unembarrassed opportunity for the independent determination of her own political development and national policy, and assure her of a sincere welcome into the society of free nations under institutions of her own choosing, and more than a welcome assistance also of every kind that she may need and may herself desire. The treatment accorded

Russia by her sister nations in the months to come will be the acid test of their good will, of their comprehension of her needs as distinguished from their own interests, and of their intelligent and unselfish sympathy.

7. Belgium, the whole world will agree, must be evacuated and restored without any attempt to limit the sovereignty which she enjoys in common with all other free nations. No other single act will serve as this will serve to restore confidence among the nations in the laws which they have themselves set and determined for the government of their relations with one another. Without this healing act the whole structure and validity of International Law is for ever impaired.

8. All French territory should be freed, and the invaded portions restored, and the wrong done to France by Prussia in 1871 in the matter of Alsace-Lorraine, which has unsettled the peace of the world for nearly fifty years, should be righted in order that peace may once more be made secure in the interest of all.

9. A readjustment of the frontiers of Italy should be effected along clearly recognizable lines of nationality.

10. The peoples of Austria-Hungary, whose place among the nations we wish to see safeguarded and assured, should be accorded the first opportunity of autonomous development.

11. Rumania, Serbia, and Montenegro should be evacuated, occupied territories restored, Serbia accorded free access to the sea, and the relations of the several Balkan States to one another determined by friendly counsel along historically established lines of allegiance and nationality, and international guarantees of the political and economic independence and territorial integrity of the several Balkan States should be entered into.

12. The Turkish portions of the present Ottoman Empire should be assured a secure sovereignty, but the other nationalities which are now under Turkish rule should be assured an undoubted security of life and an absolutely unmolested opportunity of autonomous development, and the Dardanelles should be permanently opened as a free passage to the ships and commerce of all nations under international guarantees.

13. An independent Polish State should be erected which should include the territories inhabited by indisputably Polish populations, which should be assured a free and secure access to the sea, and whose political and economic independence and territorial integrity should be guaranteed by international covenant.

14. A general association of nations must be formed under specific covenants for the purpose of affording mutual guarantees of political independence and territorial integrity to great and small States alike.

In regard to these essential rectifications of wrong and assertions of right we feel ourselves to be intimate partners of all Governments and peoples associated together against the Imperialists. We cannot be separated in interest or divided in purpose. We stand together until the end. For such arrangements and covenants we are willing to fight until they are achieved, but only because we wish the right to prevail and desire a just and stable peace, such as can be secured only by removing the chief provocations to war, which this programme does remove.

We have no jealousy of German greatness and there is nothing in this programme that impairs it. We grudge her no achievement or distinction of learning or of pacific enterprise, such as have made her record very bright and enviable. We do not wish to injure her or to block in any way her legitimate influence or power. We do not wish to fight her either with arms or with hostile arrangements of trade if she is willing to associate herself with us and the other peace-loving nations of the world in covenants of justice and law and fair-dealing. We wish her only to accept a place of equality among the peoples of the world—the new world in which we now live—instead of a place of mastery. Neither do we presume to suggest to her any alteration or modification of her institutions.

But it is necessary, we must frankly say, and necessary as a preliminary to any intelligent dealings with her on our part, that we should know whom her spokesmen speak for when they speak to us, whether for the Reichstag majority or for the military party and the men whose creed is Imperial domination.

We have spoken now surely in terms too concrete to admit of any further doubt or question. An evident principle runs through the whole programme I have outlined. It is the principle of justice to all peoples and nationalities and their right to live on equal terms of liberty and safety with one another, whether they be strong or weak.

Unless this principle be made its foundation no part of the structure of international justice can stand. The people of the United States could act upon no other principle, and to the vindication of this principle they are ready to devote their lives, their honour, and everything they possess. The moral

climax of this, the culminating and final war for human liberty, has come, and they are ready to put their own strength, their own highest purpose, their own integrity and devotion to the test.

XLII

**COUNT CZERNIN REPLIES TO PRESIDENT WILSON'S
ADDRESS OF JANUARY 8th. JANUARY 24, 1918.**

I have been confirmed anew in this opinion by the peace offer which the President of the United States of America has addressed to the whole world. This is a peace offer, for in fourteen points Mr. Wilson develops those principles on which he wishes to bring about a general peace. It goes without saying that no such offer can present an *exposé* acceptable in every detail. Were this the case negotiations would be entirely superfluous and peace could then be concluded by a simple acceptance, a simple "Yes" and "Amen." Of course that is not the case.

I have no hesitation in declaring that I find in the latest proposals of President Wilson a significant approximation to the Austro-Hungarian standpoint, and that among his proposals there are some which we could agree to with great joy.

If I may now be permitted to go into these proposals in greater detail, I must premise two things. In so far as the proposals relate to our Allies—German possessions, Belgium, and the Turkish Empire are dealt with in them—I declare that I, loyal to the obligations of alliance undertaken, am firmly determined to go to the extreme in defence of the Allies. We will defend the pre-war possessions of our Allies as our own; that is the standpoint as between the four Allies, as to which there is complete reciprocity.

Secondly, I have to remark that I courteously but decidedly reject the advice as to how we should administer our internal affairs. We have in Austria a Parliament elected by universal, equal, direct, and secret franchise. There is no more democratic Parliament in the world, and this Parliament, together with the other competent constitutional factors, alone has the right to decide as to Austria's internal affairs. I speak only of Austria because I do not speak of the internal affairs of the Hungarian State in the Austrian Delegation. I should not consider that constitutional. Neither do we interfere in American concerns, but just as little do we desire a foreign protectorate by any other

State whatever. With this premise I permit myself to reply to the still remaining points as follows :—

As to the points which speak of the abolition of "secret diplomacy," and of full publicity of negotiations, I have no remark to make. From my point of view, in so far as it is a question of public negotiation, I have nothing against it, provided it is based on complete reciprocity, although I have very great doubts whether it is the most practical and the quickest way of arriving at a result, under all circumstances. Diplomatic treaties are simply matters of business. I can easily imagine cases when, e.g., commercial and political agreements might be made between two States without its being desirable to inform the whole world beforehand of the still incomplete result. In such negotiations, naturally, both sides begin by screwing their demands as high as possible in order by degrees to turn each demand to profit as compensation, until finally that equipoise of opposed interests is forthcoming which must be reached to make the conclusion of an agreement possible. If such negotiations were to be conducted before the great public, it would inevitably follow that the public would take sides passionately for each individual one of these demands, so that every renunciation of such a demand, even if only put forward for tactical reasons, would be regarded as a defeat. If the public pleads with particular vehemence for such and such a demand a treaty may become impossible, or if ultimately reached, be felt as a defeat perhaps by both sides. Instead of promoting peaceful neighbourliness, this would have the contrary effect of increasing friction between the States. What applies to commercial treaties applies also to political agreements, which deal with political business. If by the suppression of secret diplomacy is meant that there should no longer be any secret treaties, that treaties without the knowledge of the public cannot exist, I have no objection to make to the realization of this principle, although I do not know how the carrying out and control of this principle is contemplated. If the Governments of two States agree, they will always be able to conclude a secret treaty without any one knowing anything about it. But those are side issues. I am no stickler for formulas, and no reasonable arrangement will ever be frustrated by me on the ground of a more or less formal question. Therefore Point 1 is open to discussion.

Point 2 concerns the freedom of the seas. In this postulate the President has spoken from the heart of all, and I fully and entirely subscribe to this wish of America, particularly as the President adds the clause, "outside territorial waters"; that

means, therefore, the freedom of the high seas, but, of course, no forcible interference in this respect with the territorial rights of our faithful Turkish ally. Their point of view in this question will be ours.

Point 3, which declares itself definitely against a future economic war, is so right, so reasonable, and has so often been demanded by us, that I have likewise nothing to add to it.

Point 4, which demands general disarmament, states in particularly well chosen, clear language, the necessity of reducing the freedom of competition in armaments, after this war, to the degree demanded by the internal security of States. Wilson says this quite plainly. I took the liberty of developing the same idea, a few months ago, in my Budapest speech¹; it forms part of my political creed, and I most thankfully welcome every voice raised in the same sense.

As regards the reference to Russia, we are already proving by deeds that we are anxious to create friendly neighbourly relations.

As to Italy, Serbia, Rumania, and Montenegro, I can only reiterate the point of view which I have already expressed in the Hungarian Delegation. I refuse to act as security for enemy military adventures. I refuse to make one-sided concessions to our enemies, who obstinately adhere to the standpoint of "the fight to final victory," concessions which permanently prejudice the Monarchy, and give the enemy the incalculable advantage of being able to drag on the war endlessly at relatively no risk. If Mr. Wilson cares to exercise the great influence which he undoubtedly possesses over his Allies, so that they, for their part, may state the conditions under which they are prepared to treat, he will have gained the inestimable merit of having called into being negotiations for a general peace. Just as openly and freely as I now answer Mr. Wilson shall I speak with all who are themselves willing to speak, but, naturally, time, and the continuance of the war, cannot fail to influence the situation in this respect. I have already said this once, Italy is in this matter a speaking instance. Before the war, Italy had the opportunity of making a great territorial acquisition without firing a shot. She refused, came into the war, has lost hundreds of thousands of dead, milliards in war expenditure and destruction of property, has brought distress and misery on her own people, and all merely for the sake of losing an advantage for ever which she could once have had.

Finally, as regards Point 13 it is an open secret that we are advocates of the idea that "an independent Polish State which

¹ No. XXVIII above.

should include the territories inhabited by indisputably Polish populations" should be erected. On this point also I believe we should quickly come to an understanding with Mr. Wilson. And when the President crowns his proposals with the idea of a universal League of Nations, he will, I suppose, nowhere meet with opposition in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy on this question.

As will be seen from this comparison of my views with those of Mr. Wilson, we agree essentially, not only in the broad principles according to which the world should be reorganized on the conclusion of this war, but our views also approximate in several concrete questions of peace. The differences of opinion which still remain do not appear to me so great that a discussion of these points would not lead to elucidation and approximation. This situation, which doubtless arises from the fact that Austria-Hungary on the one side and the United States of America on the other are the Powers in the two enemy groups of States whose interests are least at variance with one another, suggests the consideration whether an exchange of views precisely between these two Powers might not form a starting-point for a conciliatory discussion between all those States which have not yet joined in discussions on peace. So much for Wilson's proposals.

XLIII

COUNT HERTLING'S REPLY TO PRESIDENT WILSON AND MR. LLOYD GEORGE, JANUARY 24, 1918.

Instead of the reply which was then expected, but was not forthcoming, two declarations of enemy statesmen have been made, as all of you gentlemen are aware, namely, Mr. Lloyd George's speech of January 5th and President Wilson's message on the following day.¹ I willingly admit that Mr. Lloyd George has altered his tone. He no longer indulges in abuse, and thereby appears desirous again to demonstrate his capacity to negotiate, which I formerly doubted. I cannot, however, go so far as public opinion in many neutral countries, which would read in this speech of Mr. Lloyd George a serious will to peace and even a friendly disposition. It is true that he declares he does not desire to destroy Germany and never desired to destroy her. He even finds words of respect for our political, economic, and cultural position. But other expressions are also not lacking, and the idea continually comes to the surface that he has to pronounce judgment on guilty Germany,

¹ On January 8th; see No. XLI.

guilty of all possible crimes—a disposition, gentlemen, with which we can, of course, have nothing to do, and in which we can as yet discover no trace of a serious will to peace. We are to be the guilty ones on whom the Entente now sits in judgment. That obliges me to give a short retrospect of the situation and the events preceding the war, at the risk of repeating once more what has long since been known.

The establishment of the German Empire in the year 1871 had made an end of the old disintegration. By the union of its stocks the German Empire in Europe had acquired that position which corresponded to its economic and cultural achievements and the claims founded thereon. Prince Bismarck crowned his work by the alliance with Austria-Hungary. It was a purely defensive alliance, and was so conceived and so willed by the exalted Allies from the first. Not even the slightest thought of its misuse for aggressive aims has ever emerged in the course of decades. The defensive alliance between Germany and the Danube Monarchy, in close alliance, and bound to us in old tradition by common interests, was to serve especially for the maintenance of peace.

But Prince Bismarck had even then, as he was often reproached for having, the obsession of coalitions, and the events of a subsequent time have shown that it was no mere terrified nightmare. The danger of hostile coalitions which menaced the allied Central Powers often made its appearance. By King Edward's encircling policy the dream of coalitions became a reality. The German Empire, upward-striving, and growing in strength, stood in the way of British Imperialism. In the French lust of revenge and in Russian aspirations of expansion this British Imperialism found only all too ready aid, and thus plans for the future, dangerous to us, were prepared.

The geographical situation of Germany in itself had always brought the danger of war on the two fronts near to us, and now it became increasingly visible. Between Russia and France an alliance was concluded, the participants in which were twice as numerous as the population of the German Empire and Austria-Hungary. France, republican France, lent the Russia of the Tsar milliards to construct strategical railways in the Kingdom of Poland in order to facilitate an advance against us. The French Republic drew on its last man for three years' service, and thus France, with Russia, created an armament extending to the limit of her capacities. In this way both pursued aims which our enemies now term imperialistic.

It would have been a neglect of duty had Germany remained

a calm spectator of this game, and had we not also endeavoured to create an armament which would protect us against future enemies.

Gentlemen, I may perhaps recall that I myself, as a member of the Reichstag, very frequently spoke on these matters, and on the occasion of new expenditure on armaments I always pointed out that the German people in consenting to these armaments solely desired to pursue a policy of peace, and that such armaments were only imposed upon us to ward off the danger threatening us from a possible enemy. It does not appear that any regard was paid to these words abroad. And now Alsace-Lorraine!

Alsace-Lorraine, of which Mr. Lloyd George now speaks again! Again he speaks of the wrong that Germany did in 1871 to France. Alsace-Lorraine—you gentlemen do not need to be told, but abroad they appear still to be ignorant of the facts—Alsace-Lorraine comprises, as is known, for the most part purely German regions which by century-long violence and illegality were severed from the German Empire, until finally in 1789 the French Revolution swallowed up the last remnant. Then they were French provinces. When, then, in the war of 1870, we demanded back districts which had been wickedly wrested from us, that was not a conquest of foreign territory, but, rightly and properly speaking, what to-day is called disannexation, and this disannexation was then expressly recognized by the French National Assembly, the constitutional representatives of the French people at that time, March 29, 1871, by a large majority of votes.

And in England, too, gentlemen, quite other language was heard than is heard to-day. I can appeal to a classic witness. It is none other than the famous British historian and author Thomas Carlyle, who in a letter to *The Times* in December 1870 wrote as follows: "No people has had such a bad neighbour as Germany has possessed during the last four hundred years in France. Germany would have been mad had she not thought of erecting such a frontier wall between herself and such a neighbour"—I remark that I, for my part, have not now repeated the very hard expressions which Carlyle used in this connection about France—"of erecting such a frontier-wall, when she had the opportunity. I know of no law of nature, no heavenly Act of Parliament, by which France alone of all earthly beings was not obliged to restore a part of stolen territories if the owners from whom they were snatched had an opportunity of reconquering them." And respected English

Press organs expressed themselves in a like sense. I mention, for example, the *Daily News*.

I now come to President Wilson. Gentlemen, here, too, I recognize that the tone appears to have changed, and that the then unanimous rejection of Mr. Wilson's attempt, in his reply to the Pope's Note, to sow discord between the German Government and the German people has had its effect. This unanimous rejection might in itself lead Mr. Wilson to the right path, and the beginning has perhaps been made, for now there is, at any rate, no longer any talk about the oppression of the German people by an autocratic Government, and the former attacks on the House of Hohenzollern have not been repeated. I will not now enlarge upon the distorted representation of German policy which even now is contained in Mr. Wilson's message, but will deal in detail with the points which Mr. Wilson puts forward.

There are no fewer than fourteen points in which he formulates his peace programme, and I beg your indulgence in dealing with these fourteen points as briefly as possible.

The first point demands that there shall be no more secret international agreements. Gentlemen, history shows that we could be the first to declare our agreement with a far-reaching publicity of diplomatic agreements. I recall that our defensive alliance with Austria-Hungary has been known since 1888 to the whole world, while the offensive agreement between the enemy States first saw the light of publicity during the war, and lately through the revelation of the Russian secret archives. The negotiations at Brest-Litovsk also, which are being conducted with full publicity, prove that we are quite ready to accept this proposal and to declare publicity of negotiations to be a general political principle.

In his second point Mr. Wilson demands the freedom of the seas. Complete freedom of shipping on the seas in war and peace is also demanded by Germany as one of the first and most important requirements of the future. There is, therefore, here no difference of opinion. The limitation introduced by Mr. Wilson at the end, which I need not quote textually, is not quite intelligible, and appears superfluous, and would therefore be best left out. It would, however, be highly important for the freedom of shipping in the future if strongly fortified naval bases on important international routes, such as England maintains at Gibraltar, Malta, Aden, Hong-Kong, the Falkland Islands, and many other places, were to be renounced.

On the third point, the removal of all economic barriers. We,

too, are in thorough accord with the removal of economic barriers, which interfere with trade in a superfluous manner. We too condemn an economic war, which would inevitably bear within it the causes of future warlike complications.

On the fourth point, limitation of armaments. As has already been declared by us, the idea of the limitation of armaments is thoroughly capable of being discussed. The financial position of all the European States after the war might well most effectively promote a satisfactory solution.

It is therefore clear, gentlemen, that an understanding might be reached without difficulty on the four first points of this programme.

I come now to the fifth point, namely, the settlement of all colonial claims and disputes. The practical realization of President Wilson's principle in the realm of reality will encounter some difficulties. In any case, I believe that for the present it may be left to England, who has the greatest colonial empire, to come to terms with this proposal of her Ally (*wie es sich mit diesem Vorschlag abfinden will*). This point of President Wilson's programme will also have to be discussed in due time at the reconstitution (*Neugestaltung*) of the world's colonial possessions, which we also absolutely demand.

The sixth point concerns the evacuation of Russian territory. Now that the Entente States have refused, within the period agreed upon by Russia and the Quadruple Alliance, to join in the negotiations, I must, in the latter's name, decline all subsequent interference. We are dealing here with questions which concern Russia alone and the four Allied Powers. I hold fast to the hope that, with the recognition of the principle of self-determination for the Western frontier peoples of the former Russian Empire, good relations will be established both with these as well as with the rest of Russia, for whom we wish most urgently a return of ordered peace and conditions guaranteeing the welfare of the country.

Point 7 refers to the Belgian question. Regarding the Belgian question, my predecessors in office have repeatedly declared that at no time during the war did the incorporation by violence of Belgium in Germany constitute a programmatic point of German policy. The Belgian question belongs to the complex of questions the details of which will have to be settled by the war and peace negotiations.

So long as our opponents do not unreservedly take up the stand-

point that the integrity of the Allies' territory can offer the only possible basis of peace discussions, I must adhere to the standpoint which has always been adopted hitherto, and refuse to agree to the removal in advance of the Belgian affair from the entire discussion.

The eighth point relates to the liberation of the French territory.

The occupied parts of France are a valuable pawn in our hands. Here, too, incorporation by violence also forms no part of official German policy. The conditions and modalities of the evacuation, which conditions must take into account Germany's vital interests, must be agreed upon between Germany and France. I can only again expressly emphasize that there can never be any question of a cession of Imperial German territory. Under no fine phrases of any kind shall we permit the enemy again to take the Reichsland from us, which has since then ever more intimately linked itself to Germanism, and which has in a highly gratifying manner and in ever-increasing measure developed economically, of which more than 87 per cent. speak the German mother-tongue.

As for the questions treated by Wilson in points 9-12: Italian frontiers, nationality questions of the Danube Monarchy, Balkan States, they affect, both with the Italian frontier questions and with those of the future development of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and the questions of the future of the Balkan States, points in which for the great part the political interests of our Ally, Austria-Hungary, are predominant. Where German interests, however, are concerned we shall most energetically defend them, but I may leave the answer to President Wilson's proposals on these points, in the first place, to the Foreign Minister of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. Our close union with the allied Dual Monarchy forms the kernel of our present policy, and it must be our guiding principle for the future. Our loyal comradeship in arms which has so brilliantly withstood the test in war-time, must continue to have its effect (*nachwirken*) in peace time. We shall, therefore, for our part do everything for the attainment of peace by Austria-Hungary, which takes into account her just claims.

Similarly in the matters referred to under point 12, "Turkey," which affect our loyal, brave, and powerful Ally, Turkey, I would in no wise forestall her statesmen's attitude. The integrity of Turkey and also the safeguarding of her capital, which is closely connected with the question of the Straits, are important vital interests of the German Empire also.

Our Ally can, in this matter, always count upon our energetic support.

Point 13 deals with Poland. It was not the Entente, which had only had empty words for Poland, and before the war had never interceded for Poland with Russia, but the German Empire and the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, which liberated Poland from the Tsaristic régime, which was crushing her national individuality. It may thus be left to Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Poland to come to an agreement on the future shaping of this country. As the negotiations and communications of the last year prove, we are now fairly on the road to this goal.

The last point of President Wilson's programme deals with the League of Nations. As regards this point, I am sympathetically disposed, as my past political activity shows, towards every idea which eliminates, for the future, the possibility and probability of war, and which will promote peaceful and harmonious collaboration between nations. If the idea of a League of Nations, as suggested by President Wilson, proves on more detailed exposition and closer examination to be really conceived in a spirit of complete justice and complete impartiality towards all, then the Imperial German Government is gladly ready, after all other pending questions have been settled, to approach the examination of the basis of such an association of nations.

Gentlemen, you have already acquainted yourselves with the speech of Mr. Lloyd George and the proposals of President Wilson. I must repeat what I said at the commencement: we must now ask ourselves whether out of these speeches and proposals comes to meet us a serious and honourable will to peace.

They certainly contain definite principles for a general world peace to which we also can assent, and which could constitute the basis and aims (*Ausgangs- und Zielpunkte*) of negotiations. When, however, concrete questions arise, points which for us and our Allies are of decisive importance, then a will to peace on the part of our adversaries is less discernible. Our enemies profess that they do not desire to "destroy" Germany; nevertheless, they cast covetous eyes on parts of our own and of our Allies' territories. They speak with respect of Germany's position, but their conception ever again emerges that we are the guilty, who must do penance and promise an improvement. Thus still ever speaks the victor to the vanquished, and thus speaks he who interprets all our former expressions of readiness

for peace as merely signs of weakness. The leaders of the Entente must therefore first free themselves from this point of view and this self-deception. And in order to facilitate this aim I would like to recall what the position really is. They may take it from me that our military position has never been so favourable as it is at the present time.

Our brilliant military leaders face the future with undiminished confidence in victory. Unbroken joy of battle inspires the entire army—officers and men. I may recall what I said here in this House on November 29th last. The readiness for peace which we have repeatedly expressed, the spirit of conciliatoriness which breathes from our proposals, cannot be *carte blanche* for the Entente to prolong the war for ever. If the enemy force us to this, they will have to bear the consequences resulting from it.

If the leaders of the enemy Powers are really inclined to peace, they should again revise their programme, or, as Mr. Lloyd George said, let there be a "reconsideration." If they will do that and come with fresh proposals, then we will also earnestly examine them, for our aim is no other than the restoration of a lasting general peace. But this lasting general peace is not possible so long as the integrity of the German Empire, as well as the security of its vital interests and the dignity of our Fatherland, does not remain preserved. Until then the watchword is "Stand calmly together and wait." As to our aim, gentlemen, we are all at one. Concerning methods and modalities, there may be varying opinions. But let us now put all these differences of opinion in the background.

Let us not dispute about formulas which can never keep pace with the rushing course of world events. Let us, looking beyond dividing party antagonisms, keep the one, common goal in view—the welfare of the Fatherland. Let us stand together, Government and people, and victory will be ours, a good peace will, and must, come. The German people is in a wonderful way bearing the sufferings and burdens of the war, now in its fourth year. In respect of those burdens and sufferings, I think very particularly of the sufferings of the small artisans and low-salaried officials. They all, however, men and women, have the will to persist and persevere. Politically ripe, they do not allow themselves to be duped by catchwords, and know how to distinguish between the realities of life and dreams of happiness. Such a people cannot go under. God is with us, and will continue to be with us.

XLIV

**STATEMENT ISSUED BY THE SUPREME WAR COUNCIL
AT VERSAILLES, FEBRUARY 4, 1918.**

The Supreme War Council gave the most careful consideration to the recent utterances of the German Chancellor and of the Austro-Hungarian Minister for Foreign Affairs, but was unable to find in them any real approximation to the moderate conditions laid down by all the Allied Governments. This conviction was only deepened by the impression made by the contrast between the professed idealistic aims with which the Central Powers entered upon the present negotiations at Brest-Litovsk and their now openly disclosed plans of conquest and spoliation.

In the circumstances, the Supreme War Council decided that the only immediate task before them lay in the prosecution, with the utmost vigour and in the closest and most effective co-operation, of the military effort of the Allies until such a time as the pressure of that effort shall have brought about in the enemy Governments and peoples a change of temper which would justify the hope of the conclusion of peace terms which would not involve the abandonment, in face of an aggressive and unrepentant militarism, of all the principles of freedom, justice, and the respect for the law of nations which the Allies are resolved to vindicate.

The decisions taken by the Supreme War Council in pursuance of this conclusion embraced not only the general military policy to be carried out by the Allies in all the principal theatres of war, and more particularly the closer and more effective co-ordination under the Council of all the efforts of the Powers engaged in the struggle against the Central Empires.

The functions of the Council itself were enlarged and the principles of unity of policy and action initiated at Rapallo in November last received still further concrete and practical development. On all these questions a complete agreement was arrived at after the fullest discussion with regard both to the policy to be pursued and to the measures for its execution.

The Allies are united in heart and will, not by any hidden designs, but by their open resolve to defend civilization against an unscrupulous and brutal attempt at domination. This unanimity, confirmed by a unanimity no less complete both as regards the military policy to be pursued and as regards the

measures needed for its execution, will enable them to meet the violence of the enemy's onset with firm and quiet confidence, with the utmost energy, and with the knowledge that neither their strength nor their steadfastness can be shaken.

The splendid soldiers of our free democracies have won their place in history by their immeasurable valour. Their magnificent heroism and the no less noble endurance with which our civilian populations are bearing their daily burden of trial and suffering testify to the strength of those principles of freedom which will crown the military success of the Allies with the glory of a great moral triumph.

XLV

PRESIDENT WILSON'S ADDRESS TO CONGRESS DISCUSSING THE SPEECHES OF COUNT HERTLING AND COUNT CZERNIN, FEBRUARY 11, 1918.

GENTLEMEN OF THE CONGRESS,

On January 8th I had the honour of addressing you on the subjects of the war as our people conceive them. The Prime Minister of Great Britain had spoken in similar terms on January 5th. To these addresses the German Chancellor replied on the 24th, and Count Czernin for Austria on the same day. It is gratifying to have our desire so promptly realized that all exchanges of view on this great matter should be made in the hearing of all the world.

Count Czernin's reply, which is directed chiefly to my own address of January 8th, is uttered in a very friendly tone. He finds in my statement a sufficiently encouraging approach to the views of his own Government to justify him in believing that it furnishes a basis for a more detailed discussion of purposes by the two Governments. He is represented to have intimated that the views he was expressing had been communicated to me beforehand, and that I was aware of them at the time he was uttering them. But in this I am sure he was misunderstood. I had received no intimation of what he intended to say. There was, of course, no reason why he should communicate privately with me. I am quite content to be one of his public audience.

Count von Hertling's reply is, I must say, very vague and very confusing. It is full of equivocal phrases and leads it is not clear where. But it is certainly in a very different tone

from that of Count Czernin and apparently of an opposite purpose. It confirms, I am sorry to say, rather than removes the unfortunate impression made by what we had learned of the conferences at Brest-Litovsk. His discussion and acceptance of our general principles lead him to no practical conclusion. He refuses to apply them to the substantive items which must constitute the body of any final settlement. He is jealous of any international action and of international counsel. He accepts, he says, the principle of public diplomacy, but he appears to insist that it be confined, at any rate in this case, to generalities, and that the several particulars, questions of territory and sovereignty, the several questions upon whose settlement must depend the acceptance of peace by the twenty-three States now engaged in the war, must be discussed and settled not in general council, but severally by the nations most immediately concerned by interest or neighbourhood.

He agrees that the seas should be free, but looks askance at any limitation to that freedom by international action in the interest of the common order. He would without reserve be glad to see economic barriers removed between nation and nation, for that could in no way impede the ambitions of the military party, with whom he seems constrained to keep on terms. Neither does he raise objection to a limitation of armaments. That matter will be settled of itself, he thinks, by economic conditions which must follow the war period. But the German colonies he demands must be returned without debate. He will discuss with no one but the representative of Russia what disposition shall be made of the peoples and the lands of the Baltic provinces, with no one but the Government of France the "conditions" under which French territory shall be evacuated, and only with Austria what shall be done with Poland. In the determination of all questions affecting the Balkan States he defers, as I understand him, to Austria and Turkey, and with regard to the agreements to be entered into concerning the non-Turkish peoples of the present Ottoman Empire to the Turkish authorities themselves.

After a settlement all round effected in this fashion by individual barter and concession he would have no objection, if I correctly interpret his statement, to a League of Nations which would undertake to hold the new Balance of Power steady against external disturbance.

It must be evident to every one who understands what this war has wrought in the opinion and temper of the world that no general peace, no peace worth the infinite sacrifices of these

years of tragical suffering, can possibly be arrived at in any such fashion. The method the German Chancellor proposes is the method of the Congress of Vienna. We cannot and will not return to that. What is at stake now is the peace of the world. What we are striving for is a new international order based upon the broad and universal principles of right and justice—no mere peace of shreds and patches. Is it possible that Count von Hertling does not see that, does not grasp it, is in fact living in his thought in a world dead and gone? Has he utterly forgotten the Reichstag resolutions of July 19th, or does he deliberately ignore them? They spoke of the conditions of a general peace, not of national aggrandizement or of arrangements between State and State.

The peace of the world depends upon the just settlement of each of the several problems to which I adverted in my recent address to the Congress. I, of course, do not mean that the peace of the world depends upon the acceptance of any particular set of suggestions as to the way in which those problems are to be dealt with. I mean only that those problems, each and all, affect the whole world, that unless they are dealt with in a spirit of unselfish and unbiased justice, with a view to the wishes, the natural connections, the racial aspirations, the security, and the peace of mind of the peoples involved, no permanent peace will have been attained. They cannot be discussed separately or in corners. None of them constitutes a private or separate interest from which the opinion of the world may be shut out. Whatever affects the peace affects mankind, and nothing settled by military force, if settled wrong, is settled at all. It will presently have to be reopened.

Is Count von Hertling not aware that he is speaking in the court of mankind, and that all the awakened nations of the world now sit in judgment on what every public man, of whatever nation, may say on the issues of a conflict which has spread to every region of the world? The Reichstag resolutions of July themselves frankly accepted the decisions of that court. There shall be no annexations, no contributions, no punitive damages. Peoples are not to be handed about from one sovereignty to another by an international conference or an understanding between rivals and antagonists. National aspirations must be respected; peoples may now be dominated and governed only by their own consent. "Self-determination" is not a mere phrase. It is an imperative principle of action which statesmen will henceforth ignore at their peril.

We cannot have a general peace for the asking or by the mere

arrangement of a peace conference. It cannot be pieced together out of individual understandings between powerful States. All the parties to this war must join in the settlement of every issue anywhere involved in it, because what we are seeking is a peace that we can all unite to guarantee and maintain, and every item of it must be submitted to the common judgment whether it be right and fair and an act of justice rather than a bargain between Sovereigns.

The United States has no desire to interfere in European affairs, or to act as arbiter in European territorial disputes. She would disdain to take advantage of any internal weakness or disorder to impose her own will upon another people. She is quite ready to be shown that the settlements she has suggested are not the best or the most enduring. They are only her own provisional sketch of principles and of the way in which they should be applied. But she entered this war because she was made a partner, whether she would or not, in the sufferings and indignities inflicted by the military masters of Germany against the peace and security of mankind, and the conditions of peace will touch her as nearly as they will touch any other nation to which is entrusted a leading part in the maintenance of civilization. She cannot see her way to peace until the causes of this war are removed, its renewal rendered as nearly as may be impossible.

This war had its roots in the disregard of the rights of small nations and of nationalities which lacked the union and the force to make good their claim to determine their own allegiance and their own forms of political life. Covenants must now be entered into which will render such things impossible for the future, and those covenants must be backed by the united force of all the nations that love justice, and are willing to maintain it at any cost. If territorial settlements, and the political relations of great populations which have not the organized power to resist, are to be determined by the contracts of the powerful Governments, which consider themselves most directly affected, as Count von Hertling proposes, why may not economic questions also? It has come about in the altered world in which we now find ourselves that justice and the rights of people affect the whole field of international dealing as much as access to raw materials and fair and equal conditions of trade.

Count von Hertling wants the essential bases of commercial and industrial life to be safeguarded by common agreement and guarantee, but he cannot expect that to be conceded him if the other matters to be determined by the articles of peace are not

handled in the same way as items in the final accounting. He cannot ask the benefit of common agreement in the one field without according it in the other. I take it for granted that he sees that separate and selfish compacts with regard to trade and the essential materials of manufacture would afford no foundation for peace. Neither, he may rest assured, will separate and selfish compacts with regard to provinces and peoples.

Count Czernin seems to see the fundamental elements of peace with clear eyes and does not seek to obscure them. He sees that an independent Poland made up of all the indisputably Polish peoples who lie contiguous to one another is a matter of European concern and must, of course, be conceded; that Belgium must be evacuated and restored, no matter what sacrifices and concessions that may involve; and that national aspirations must be satisfied even within his own Empire in the common interest of Europe and mankind. If he is silent about questions which touch the interest and purpose of his Allies more clearly than they touch those of Austria only, it must, of course, be because he feels constrained, I suppose, to defer to Germany and Turkey in the circumstances. Seeing and conceding, as he does, the essential principles involved and the necessity of candidly applying them, he naturally feels that Austria can respond to the purpose of peace as expressed by the United States with less embarrassment than could Germany. He would probably have gone much farther had it not been for the embarrassments of Austria's alliances, and of her dependence upon Germany.

After all, the test of whether it is possible for either Government to go any farther in this comparison of views is simple and obvious.

The principles to be applied are these:—

First, that each part of the final settlement must be based upon the essential justice of that particular case and upon such adjustments as are most likely to bring a peace that will be permanent.

Second, that peoples and provinces are not to be bartered about from sovereignty to sovereignty as if they were mere chattels and pawns in a game, even the great game, now for ever discredited, of the Balance of Power; but that,

Third, every territorial settlement involved in this war must be made in the interest and for the benefit of the populations concerned, and not as a part of any mere adjustment or compromise of claims amongst rival States.

Fourth, that all well-defined national aspirations shall be

accorded the utmost satisfaction that can be accorded them without introducing new or perpetuating old elements of discord and antagonism that would be likely in time to break the peace of Europe, and consequently of the world.

A general peace erected upon such foundations can be discussed. Until such a peace can be secured we have no choice but to go on. So far as we can judge, these principles that we regard as fundamental are already everywhere accepted as imperative except among the spokesmen of the military and annexationist party in Germany. If they have anywhere else been rejected the objectors have not been sufficiently numerous or influential to make their voices audible. The tragical circumstance is that this one party in Germany is apparently willing and able to send millions of men to their death to prevent what all the world now sees to be just.

I would not be a true spokesman of the people of the United States if I did not say once more that we entered this war upon no small occasion, and that we can never turn back from a course chosen upon principle. Our resources are in part mobilized now, and we shall not pause until they are mobilized in their entirety. Our armies are rapidly going to the fighting front, and will go more and more rapidly. Our whole strength will be put into this war of emancipation—emancipation from the threat and attempted mastery of selfish groups of autocratic rulers—whatever the difficulties and present partial delays.

We are indomitable in our power of independent action, and can in no circumstances consent to live in a world governed by intrigue and force. We believe that our own desire for a new international order, under which reason and justice and the common interests of mankind shall prevail, is the desire of enlightened men everywhere. Without that new order the world will be without peace, and human life will lack tolerable conditions of existence and development. Having set our hand to the task of achieving it, we shall not turn back.

I hope that it is not necessary for me to add that no word of what I have said is intended as a threat. That is not the temper of our people. I have spoken thus only that the whole world may know the true spirit of America, that men everywhere may know that our passion for justice and for self-government is no mere passion of words, but a passion which once set in action must be satisfied. The power of the United States is a menace to no nation or people. It will never be used in aggression or for the aggrandizement of any selfish interests of our own. It springs out of freedom, and is for the service of freedom.

XLVI

MR. BALFOUR'S SPEECH IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS, FEBRUARY 13, 1918.

The SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (MR. BALFOUR): My hon. friend who has just sat down parenthetically observed that he was confident he was giving no information in his speech which would be of value to the enemy. My hon. friend is absolutely right. Nothing which was said in his speech would be of the slightest value to the enemy. He has attempted to give, on what information I know not, an account of certain events about which without doubt the enemy know the true version, and which version is utterly at variance with everything that fell from my hon. friend. He has entirely mistaken the whole character and scope of them, and though I do not mean for obvious reasons—[An HON. MEMBER: "What are they?"]—to deal in this House or to deal in public with this matter, I can assure my hon. friend that he has not understood the policy of the Government. Let me add one more observation. He seemed to lay down the principle, which in his view was an inevitable deduction from the higher political morality, that no effort should ever be made to detach a single enemy from the coalition with whom you were at war. I entirely refuse to subscribe to that doctrine. I am at a loss to understand upon what principle of morality it is founded, and if it were possible to break up the coalition nobody would rejoice more than myself. Leaving what has fallen from my hon. friend upon that subject, and turning to the general course of the previous debate, it seems to me that the course of that debate is entirely founded upon a misunderstanding of what happened at Versailles¹ and a misunderstanding of what was stated in the King's Speech.

Let me take the Versailles case, as I understand it. It is assumed that the object of the Versailles meeting was a general survey of the political conditions of Europe and of the general circumstances and general diplomatic relations subsisting between the nations concerned in the war and not with the immediate problems before the Allies. That is an error. The Supreme War Council met at Versailles to deal primarily with the great military problems with which we are faced, which is its main business. That it did. It is perfectly true it made a

¹ See above, p. 133.

statement, the exact purport of which I will come to in a moment, upon the conclusions to be drawn from the speeches of the German Chancellor and the Austrian Foreign Secretary. It did do that, but it did not attempt either to survey the war aims of which hon. gentlemen on both sides of the House have spoken nor was it in fact fitted to deal in a full or exhaustive manner with those war aims. As the House is aware, the Council consists, besides the military advisers, of the Prime Minister from each of the countries concerned with another Minister—that is, as far as Europe is concerned. America is represented at it only by a military adviser. America therefore, it is quite obvious, could not and did not deal with this question at Versailles in the sense in which hon. gentlemen appear to think it was and ought to have been dealt with. Neither was this country equipped at Versailles to deal with this class of question. If peace terms or questions connected with diplomacy had been the subject of the Conference, necessarily and obviously the Foreign Secretary of each country would have had to be present. I was not there, nor was any member of my office, and the reason was quite obvious. That was not the business for which the Council met. Those were not the problems discussed, and the great issues involved and the resolutions come to had no direct reference to those diplomatic questions. It is perfectly true that, as was most natural, the Council considered the two speeches to which I have referred, and came to the conclusion that out of those speeches there was no glimmer of the light of peace dawning above the horizon, and therefore the military measures which they were there to consider were obviously more important than ever.

SIR TUDOR WALTERS: They did consider peace aims?

MR. BALFOUR: They considered the two speeches, and came to the conclusion that they were unable to find in them any real approximation to the moderate conditions laid down by the Allied Governments. I am bound to say, as far as I can see, that conclusion was a very correct conclusion. We have had four or five speeches to-night, and there were speeches yesterday, which I had not the advantage of hearing, upon this subject, and there has been endless debate in the newspapers. Has anybody been able to extract from what is regarded as the most pacifist of those two speeches anything which can be described as the satisfaction of the declared war aims of President Wilson or of the Prime Minister, or of any of the Allies?

MR. D. MASON: President Wilson himself.

MR. BALFOUR: Has anybody been able to do it? Has

President Wilson made any proposition that satisfaction could be extracted from Count Czernin's speech ?

Mr. MASON : Certainly !

Mr. BALFOUR : I think not, and that nobody else has been able to find it either, and they have not been able to find it because it does not exist. It is perfectly true that President Wilson referred to Count Czernin's speech, and, 'as is most natural, Count Czernin referred to President Wilson ; and it is also true that President Wilson saw, as most readers, I think, will agree that he was right in seeing, a tenderer note, a softer atmosphere, in the statement made by Count Czernin. It is also true that Count Czernin made certain statements which did not appear in the parallel and apparently agreed speech of Count Hertling. That is quite true, and President Wilson was amply justified in dwelling on that difference of tone. But when you leave tone and come to definite and formulated propositions or propositions which can be made definite, you will not find them in Count Czernin's statement, and, so far as I am aware, President Wilson did not profess to find them. Is it not rather unreasonable to make this the basis of any sort of charge, either against the Council at Versailles or against his Majesty's Government ? The Council at Versailles were faced with these two agreed and simultaneous utterances of the Central statesmen, and they were right in refusing to see in them anything which could be described as an effective approach to the position of the Entente Powers. Remember that the Entente Powers, or, at all events, America and this country, had made abundantly clear what are the war aims for which we are striving. The President had made those great pronouncements which have, I think, been the admiration, not only of the English-speaking world, but of all the world. The Prime Minister made a statement to the Trade Union Congress which, I think, received the approbation of almost every speaker, of every speaker, who has addressed the House to-night. I, speaking on behalf of the Foreign Office, made, on the 10th of January I think, a speech on war aims which followed closely in tone and in temper those two great pronouncements. Those were three definite speeches made by authoritative sources early in this year. The Central authorities had those speeches before them when they replied. They did not reply, as my hon. friend below the gangway supposed, to the imaginary story, the imaginative account, of the transaction to which he refers. They had before them the authoritative public pronouncements of America and of England, and they

could have replied. Count Czernin, as we all know, made some effort, I do not know exactly of what character, to get his speech into the hands of President Wilson. Therefore he was thinking of President Wilson and makes an appeal to President Wilson. He had before him President Wilson's precise statement of terms, he had every opportunity of saying what he thought about those terms, but though he referred to President Wilson he never referred to President Wilson's terms. [AN HON. MEMBER: "He did!"] I think the interruption is well founded and that I stated it inaccurately, and I apologize to the House. Let me put it this way: What is quite evident in Count Czernin's speech is that he was not prepared to accept any of President Wilson's important war aims.

AN HON. MEMBER: He accepted most of them.

MR. BALFOUR: Which of them?

MR. MASON ROSE— [HON. MEMBERS: "Order, order!"]

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member has no right to interrupt the right hon. gentleman.

MR. BALFOUR: I am afraid I must remain in darkness as to the precise meaning of my hon. friend, but, at all events—I may be wrong—I understand the interruption as signifying that Count Czernin made some announcement of acceptance of President Wilson's war aims. If that is so there is no doubt that the Versailles Council were profoundly wrong, and there is no doubt this Government at this moment is also profoundly wrong. We were not able to read into Count Czernin's speech any such statement. I am not aware that any newspaper, not even any newspaper representing the views of hon. Members below the gangway who are cheering, tells us in what respect the Austrian terms resemble President Wilson's terms, and that being so, it seems to me utterly absurd either to criticize the King's Speech or the Council at Versailles for having said that the immediate duty before us was the duty of fighting. A great deal has been made of one word in the King's Speech. I think it was really the pivot on which the speech of the Mover of the Amendment almost entirely turned. I am afraid I did not take it down as I ought to have done when the hon. Member who moved this Amendment spoke, but he dwelt upon the word "only," I think, which he declared indicated that his Majesty's Government actually were of opinion that we had nothing whatever to think of but war; that our only effort must be war. Diplomacy was ruled out, all the great moral objects on which we have dwelt at other times were ruled out—all were to be ignored, and war, and war alone was to be our object. [The

right hon. gentleman referred to a copy of the King's Speech] I understand that the word "only," on which the hon Member's whole speech turned, was his own invention.

Mr. HOLT: That is obviously not so. I will read the passage again: "In the circumstances the Supreme War Council decided that the only immediate task before them lay in the prosecution," etc. That is in the official report of the Versailles Conference.

MR. BALFOUR: It is in the Versailles report, not in the King's Speech.

MR. HOLT: I said so.

MR. BALFOUR: Is not this dwelling upon the word "only" one of the most unreasonable perversions of a public document? You say the task before us is war. Does that mean that the task of reconstruction is not also before us? Of course that is before us. Of course the tasks before us are not only concerned with war: they are concerned with diplomacy, with reconstruction after the war, with all the vast problems which the world will have to attempt to solve, and which, I think, will prove themselves almost as difficult of solution as the problems presented by the war itself. The word "only," so far as it is my business to deal with this sentence of the Versailles Conference, is not capable of bearing the weight the hon. gentleman puts upon it. He goes the length of suggesting that because the word "only" appears in the Versailles Resolution, therefore diplomacy has nothing more to do with the situation—no efforts shall be made by any of the belligerent countries to come to terms. That is not the view of the Government. The view of the Government is that at present the attitude of the Central Governments shows that diplomacy at the present moment is entirely out of court so far as they are concerned. It is they who have banged the door; it is they who have shut it; it is they who have laid down clearly by the mouth of their Chancellor, and, if that be more authoritative, by the mouth of their Kaiser, that they are as far removed as they were three years ago from accepting those ideals to which President Wilson has given classic expression, but which represent the common view of America, of England, and the Allies by whose side America and England are fighting.

If that is true, what is the use of criticising the Government for not using the methods of diplomacy? The methods of diplomacy are only of use when you deal with people who are prepared to come to terms. The Central Powers have openly shown that they do not mean to come to terms. At all events, Germany

has shown this. The difference of tone, not of substance, between Count Hertling's speech and Count Czernin's may show that Austria is more nearly in a reasonable frame of mind than her all-powerful ally, but to suggest that even Count Czernin's speech indicates that Germany is prepared to come to terms appears to me to be extravagant in the highest degree. After all, this war is not coming to an end until Germany and the Allies are prepared to go into Council together over the terms of peace. Has Germany, who knows our terms, shown the slightest desire at any moment to make that approach which would render a Council of the Nations of value? There are some gentlemen who talk—I do not know whether they think in the same way—as if the mere summoning of people round a table were a method of arriving at peace. It is only a method of arriving at peace if before they meet round the table there is a certain community of ideas and aims which enables discussion between them to settle the outstanding details. But if they meet round that table with differences fundamental and irreconcilable, then the meeting round the table only makes matters worse, and not better. It accentuates differences; it does not emphasize agreements, and peace, and the interests bound up with peace, are farther off than ever.

When some of my hon. friends criticized, in a kindly spirit, but who criticized the Government this evening for their diplomatic procedure, they took occasion to emphasize their view that one of the objects of this war was the destruction of militarism. That is a phrase with which we are all very familiar, and it has been used to-night, I think, by my hon. friend who spoke earlier in the evening, and I think by others. Is there anything in Count Hertling's speech which suggests that the end of militarism is near in Germany? The most microscopic examination, the friendliest investigation has not shown any symptoms of that character. On the contrary, their successes—I will not call them their military successes; fighting had very little to do with it—but their successes on the Eastern Front have at once shown what has been throughout the true German military spirit: "Add to our territory; secure our commercial expansion by acquiring a controlling influence over this or that great area; make our borders secure by getting this or that alien population under our control." That was German policy three years ago. That is the German policy, so far as I understand the Kaiser and Count Hertling, at the hour at which I speak. How much that policy has behind it the true spirit of the German nation I cannot say, but, so far

as outward marks go, so far as the declarations of responsible statesmen go, I see not a hair's-breadth of variation from their old ambition of getting what they call a German peace, and all of us know that a German peace has one meaning, and one meaning alone : it is a peace which will make every other nation subservient to Germany.

XLVII

**MR. LLOYD GEORGE'S SPEECH OF FEBRUARY 12,
1918.**

The Government stand by the declaration—the considered declaration—which I made on behalf of my colleagues and myself to the trade union representatives early this year. I read with profound disappointment the replies given to President Wilson's speech and the one which I delivered on behalf of the Government by the German Chancellor and Count Czernin. It is perfectly true that, so far as tone is concerned, there was a good deal of difference between the Austrian speech and the German speech, but I wish I could believe that there was a difference in substance. I cannot altogether, and I regret it, accept that interpretation of Count Czernin's speech. It was extraordinarily civil in tone and friendly ; but when you came to the real substance of the demands put forward by the Allies it was adamant. It put Mesopotamia, Palestine, and Arabia in exactly the same category as Belgium. They were to be restored to the Turks on the same conditions presumably as those on which Germany was to restore Belgium. When it came to the demands of Italy, Count Czernin simply said that certain offers had been made before the war and that they were now withdrawn. As far as the Slavonic population of Austria was concerned, it was purely a polite statement to President Wilson and the others that it was none of our business to inquire. There was not a single definite question dealt with where Count Czernin did not present the most definite refusal to discuss any terms which might be regarded as possible terms of peace.

And when you come to the German reply it is very difficult for any one who reads the answer to believe that Count Hertling could be even serious in some of the demands which he put forward. What was his answer to the very moderate terms which had been put forward by the Allies ? His answer was

that Britain was to give up her coaling stations throughout the world. He named half a dozen. For the first time that demand was put forward. I confess I think that was the last demand that Germany ought decently to have put forward. These coaling stations had been as accessible to German as to British ships in the past. The German fleet always received the most hospitable treatment at all these coaling stations. In 1913 the various visits paid by German men-of-war and transports to these ports came to something like fifty or sixty. These vessels received exactly the same facilities as a British man-of-war. The same thing applied to ordinary German merchant ships. There were German coaling firms there, conducting their trade under exactly the same conditions as the British firms. I confess that, to put forward a demand of that kind for the first time in the fourth year of the war, is the best possible proof that the German Empire, or those, at any rate, at the present moment controlling it, are not in a mood to discuss reasonable terms of peace with the Allies. I regret it profoundly. But there is no use crying peace when there is no peace.

These terms were examined carefully, examined with a real desire to find something in them which indicated that the Central Powers were prepared to come somewhere near a basis of agreement, and I confess that an examination of these two speeches proves profoundly disappointing to those who are sincerely anxious to find any real and genuine desire for peace in them. The action of the German Empire in reference to Russia proves that all the declarations about annexations or about indemnities and contributions have no real meaning. No answer has been given with regard to Belgium which any one can regard as satisfactory. No answer has been given with regard to Poland, or with regard to the legitimate claims of France for the restoration of her lost provinces. Not a word was said about the men of Italian race and tongue who are now under the Austrian yoke, and when you came to Turkey, as I have already indicated, so far from either Count Hertling or Count Czernin indicating that they were prepared to recognize the rights of the Arabs in Mesopotamia and in Arabia, it was a pure denial of those rights, an indication that they were determined to maintain what they called the integrity of Turkey. I should like any hon. gentleman in this House to point out anything in these speeches which he could possibly regard as a proof that the Central Powers are prepared to make peace on terms which he would regard as just and reasonable. I fail to find anything of the kind, and it is

with the profoundest regret that I say so. But the Government do not recede in the least from the statement of war aims which they have made. They still consider those as being the aims and ideals for which we are fighting, and there is every indication that the nation as a whole accepted those as a fair, just, and moderate statement, and until there is some better proof than is supplied in any of these speeches that the Central Powers are prepared to consider them it will be our regrettable duty to go on and make all the preparations necessary, in order to establish international right in the world.

XLVIII

**FROM THE SPEECH OF SIGNOR ORLANDO,
ITALIAN PREMIER, FEBRUARY 13, 1918.**

At the latest Inter-Allied Conferences the latest declarations of the German Chancellor and the Austro-Hungarian Minister of Foreign Affairs were attentively examined. There is certainly a difference in colour and tone between them, but when looked at together, apart from the form, which is sometimes hard and decided and sometimes equivocal and evasive, they in substance maintain in their integrity all their claims and utterly reject all the just demands of the other side; in other words, they demand everything and consent to nothing.

Above all, the enemy Governments do not leave to the Entente Powers any concrete possibility except to submit to the peace which they will be pleased to impose. And then it has also appeared that it is useless and even impossible to decide to discuss purely abstract possibilities, while the attitude of the enemy plainly shows us that the only way of arriving at a real peace is to continue the war with all our energies. Moreover, as regards Italy, those reasons of legitimate and absolute necessity which are affirmed in our war aims still exist, just as they were at the moment when, deliberately, and of our own free will, we undertook our gigantic task. Now, as then, Italy wishes for no more war, but that does not mean that she desires any less the accomplishment of her national unity and the security of her land and sea frontiers. These two aims are well justified, and are the complements of each other. Only the full realization of one and the other will assure to Italy her existence as a really free and independent State. If any doubt could still exist on

this point before the war it must by now have been completely dissipated.

Our war aim is a holy one if any ever was. It is a question of whether Italy is to exist or not. Nothing could cause us greater grief than the suspicion, unjust to us and harmful both to us and others, that our war aims are determined not merely by the inevitable reason of our very existence, but also by ideas of imperialistic supremacy and the oppression of other races. On the contrary, I proclaim here before the Italian Parliament that no one in the world can regard with more sympathy than we the aspirations of different nationalities still groaning under the oppression of dominating races. Here in Italy, besides our sentiments of justice, we still have bitter memories of what we ourselves have suffered and of what our brothers are still suffering, and we do not confine ourselves merely to following with verbal and platonic sympathy the efforts of oppressed nationalities which are aspiring to freedom, since for three years, with unheard-of sacrifices and by the blood of thousands and thousands of our brothers and children, we have been carrying on a war not only for the defence of our rights and our existence, but also a war against a common enemy. And it is our common and perhaps decisive interest to dissipate the inexplicable and deplorable ambiguity which has arisen regarding our war aims. We have once more, for ourselves and all the world, affirmed them clearly and loyally here, declaring that our aims are exclusively to ensure our national integrity against the menace which has existed for so long, leaving to the enemy Governments, before history and before their own peoples, the responsibility for the continuation of the war as well as for having loosed it on the world.

XLIX

FROM THE SPEECH OF BARON SONNINO, ITALIAN MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, FEBRUARY 23, 1918.

[He began by reminding the Chamber that at the recent meeting at Versailles the Supreme War Council had declared that it was unable to find in the recent declarations by Counts Hertling and Czernin anything which approached the moderate conditions formulated by all the Allied Governments, and that consequently it considered its sole and immediate duty was to

continue the war. The Minister then proceeded to analyse the speeches of Counts Hertling and Czernin on January 24th, and showed that they avoided any precise and positive declaration regarding territorial questions in the future peace, and that their statements only dealt with concessions which affected the integrity of the two Empires or their Allies. They made numerous and elastic professions of agreement with President Wilson in the most general and generic points of his peace aims, such as those concerning secret treaties, the freedom of the seas, the elimination of economic and commercial restrictions, the limitation of armaments, and a League of Nations. Sonnino referred to Count Hertling's statement regarding Alsace-Lorraine, Belgium, the German colonies, Russia, Poland, and Turkey, and to those of Count Czernin on Italy, Serbia, Rumania, Montenegro, Belgium, and Turkey, and remarked that nothing was to be expected from any side as long as it was a question of ceding something which one or the other of the Entente Powers already possessed before the war. Sonnino pointed out that the Brest-Litovsk negotiations, whether dealing with Lithuania, Esthonia, Courland, Finland, or in arbitrarily disposing of the Polish population in the peace treaty with the Ukraine, furnished a striking proof of the practical interpretation given by the Central Empires to their generic adherence to the principles of President Wilson as regards the union of peoples and the renunciation of all annexation. Turning to Count Czernin's assertion that he was ready to agree to the eventual reduction of armaments to the extent demanded by the internal safety of the State, Sonnino remarked that that would be equivalent to conceding to Austria an exceptional advantage compared to other States in the matter of forces of all arms. The Minister continued :—]

“ We are always ready with our Allies to discuss any serious and sincere peace proposal, but we cannot nonchalantly begin peace negotiations without having any assurance as to the conditions to be proposed and accepted by our enemies. Since 1916 Germany has played her game on the assumption that disagreements will arise between her enemies and on her action to provoke an internal upheaval in the enemy States. She has succeeded in Russia, and now she is looking at Italy, relying upon the fact that if peace negotiations were begun it would not be possible to resume hostilities owing to the weakening effect which the illusion of an early peace would have on the people.” [Sonnino then proceeded to read an extract from a letter by the German writer Rosenmeier, who reveals that the

plan of Count Hertling and of German Imperialism is to bring about revolutions everywhere, so that Germany may subsequently appear in the defenceless country as the saviour and obtain payment from the terrorized bourgeoisie by the cession of territories. The Minister cited as proof of these designs the events in Russia, and added that unfortunately many people did not take into account the fact that it is necessary by victory of arms to prevent the realization of the Teutonic dreams of invasion and domination, and thus they unconsciously aided within the Entente itself the treacherous action of the enemy. Sonnino refuted the cunning campaign which insinuates that Italian aspirations are inspired by Imperialistic and anti-democratic conceptions.]

“There is not a word of truth in this,” he declared. “Our demands as regards Austria-Hungary correspond to ethical conceptions and to legitimate safety on land and sea. The ethnical reasons are evident in themselves, and have been consecrated by the indomitable Italian soul of the Irredentist territories. The legitimate reasons for safety on land and on sea are just as evident. At those places where the populations are of a mixed character an equitable delimitation can only be obtained by means of mutual concessions and reciprocal sacrifices under penalty of creating a state of affairs leading to future conflicts. In this conception are inspired the Italian claims which, in our opinion, are such as to assure in the future a complete collaboration in the political and economic domain. We aspire solely to a minimum of security on the military borders, which is an imprescriptable condition of liberty and political independence, and renders possible at the same time a normal disarmament and a peaceable development of our resources and activities without the continual and harassing anxiety about invasions and surprises from the other side. We demand no privileged situation for an offensive against any one whatsoever, but simply conditions which are indispensable for our reasonable security. As to the Eastern Mediterranean, I repeat that we are not pursuing Imperialist aims. We desire, in view of eventual aggrandizement by others as a result of the war, that an equilibrium of strength should be maintained. A certain equilibrium of strength is an essential condition for the sincere constitution and the practical efficacy of the League of Nations. If one or two States should have a great preponderance everywhere, there would be no guarantee that they would not arbitrarily impose their will on the entire world.”

L

SPEECH OF COUNT HERTLING IN REPLY TO PRESIDENT WILSON'S ADDRESS OF FEBRUARY 11th. FEBRUARY 25, 1918.

The Reichstag has the right to receive an explanatory statement on the foreign situation and the attitude of the Imperial Government towards it. I will meet the obligation arising from it, even though, on the other hand, I entertain certain doubts as to the utility and success of dialogues carried on in public by the Ministers and statesmen of belligerent States. A Liberal Member of the English House of Commons, the ex-Minister Mr. Runciman, recently expressed the opinion † that we should get much nearer to peace if, instead of this, the proper responsible representatives of the belligerent Powers were to come together in an intimate meeting for discussion. I can only agree with him that it would be a way to remove all the numerous intentional and unintentional misunderstandings and to compel our enemies to take our words as they are meant and on their part also to show their colours. At any rate, I cannot find that the words which I spoke here on two occasions were appreciated in hostile countries objectively and without prejudice. Moreover, a discussion in an intimate gathering could alone lead to an understanding on the many individual questions which come into consideration at a compromise on the existing contradictions, and which can really be settled only by a compromise.

In this connection I am thinking very especially of our attitude towards Belgium. It has been repeatedly said from this place that we do not think of retaining Belgium or of making the Belgian State a component part of the German Empire, but that we must, as was also set forth in the Papal Note of January 1, 1917, be safeguarded from the danger that a country with which after the war we desire to live again in peace and friendship should become an object or jumping-off ground of enemy machinations. The means of reaching this end and thus serving the general world peace would be the subject of discussion at such a meeting. If, therefore, a proposal in this direction came from the opposite side, let us say from the Government at Havre, we should not adopt an antagonistic attitude, even though the discussion, as a matter of course, could at first only be unbinding.

† House of Commons, February 13, 1918.

Meanwhile, however, it does not appear as if the afore-mentioned suggestion of the English Member of Parliament had a chance of assuming tangible shape, and I must adhere to the existing method of dialogue across Channel and ocean. Adopting this method, I readily admit that President Wilson's message of February 11th represents perhaps a small step towards a mutual *rapprochement*. I therefore pass over his preliminary and excessively long declarations in order to address myself immediately to the four principles which in President Wilson's opinion must be applied in a mutual exchange of views. The first clause says that each part of the final settlement must be based upon the essential justice of that particular case and upon such adjustments as are most likely to bring a peace that will be permanent. Who would contradict this? The phrase coined by the great Father of the Church, Augustin, fifteen hundred years ago, *Justitia fundamentum regnorum*, is still valid to-day. Certain it is that only a peace based in all its parts on the principles of justice has a prospect of endurance. The second clause desires that peoples and provinces shall not be bartered about from sovereignty to sovereignty as if they were mere chattels and pawns in a game, even the great game, now for ever discredited, of the Balance of Power. This clause, too, can be unconditionally assented to. Indeed, one wonders that the President of the United States considered it necessary to emphasize it anew. The clause contains a polemic against conditions long vanished, views against Cabinet politics and Cabinet wars, against the mixing of State territory and princely private property, all of which belongs to a past that lies far behind us. I do not want to be discourteous, but when one remembers the earlier utterances of President Wilson, one might think he was labouring under an illusion that there exists in Germany an antagonism between autocratic government and the mass of the people without rights.

And yet President Wilson knows (as, at any rate, the German edition of his book on *The State* proves) German political literature, and he knows therefore that with us Princes and Governments are the highest members of the nation as a whole, organized in the form of a State, the highest members with whom the final decision lies; but (seeing that they also, as the supreme organs, belong to the whole) the decision is of such a nature that only the welfare of the whole is the guiding line for the decision to be taken. It may be useful expressly to point this out to President Wilson's countrymen. When finally, at the close of the second clause, the game of the Balance of Power is

declared to be for ever discredited, we too can only gladly applaud. As is well known, it was England who invented the principle of the maintenance of the Balance of Power, in order especially to apply it when one of the States on the European continent threatened to become too powerful for her. It was only another expression for England's domination. The third clause, according to which every territorial settlement involved in this war must be made in the interest and for the benefit of the populations concerned, and not as a part of any mere adjustment or compromise of claims amongst rival States, is only the application of the foregoing in a definite direction, or a deduction from it, and is therefore included in the assent given to that clause.

Now the fourth clause. He demands that all well-defined national aspirations shall be accorded the utmost satisfaction that can be accorded them without introducing new or perpetuating old elements of discord and antagonism that would be likely in time to break the peace of Europe, and consequently the world. Here also I can give assent in principle, and I declare, therefore, with President Wilson that a general peace on such bases is discussable. Only one reservation is to be made.

These principles must not be proposed by the President of the United States alone, but they must also be recognized definitely by all States and nations. President Wilson, who reproaches the German Chancellor with a certain amount of backwardness, seems to me in his flight of ideas to have hurried far in advance of existing realities. Certainly a League of Nations erected upon justice and mutual unselfish appreciation—a condition of humanity wherein war, together with all the remains of earlier barbarism, should have completely disappeared, and wherein there should be no bloody sacrifices, no self-mutilation of peoples, no destruction of laboriously acquired cultural values—that would be an aim devoutly to be desired. But that aim has not yet been reached. There does not yet exist a Court of Arbitration set up by all the nations for the safeguarding of peace in the name of justice. When President Wilson incidentally says that the German Chancellor is speaking to a Court of the entire world, I must, as things stand to-day, in the name of the German Empire and her Allies, decline this Court as prejudiced, joyfully as I would greet it if an impartial Court of Arbitration existed, and gladly as I would co-operate to realize such ideals. Unfortunately, however, there is no trace of a similar state of mind on the part of the leading Powers of the Entente.

England's war aims, as recently expressed in Mr. Lloyd George's speeches, are still thoroughly Imperialistic, and want to impose on the world a peace according to England's good pleasure. When England talks about a peoples' right of self-determination, she does not think of applying the principle to Ireland, Egypt, or India. Our war aim from the first was the defence of the Fatherland, the maintenance of our territorial integrity, the freedom of our economic development in all directions. Our warfare, even where it must be aggressive in action, is defensive in aim. I lay special stress upon that just now, in order to let no misunderstandings arise about our operations in the East. After the breaking off of the peace negotiations by the Russian Delegation on February 10th we had a free hand as against Russia. The sole aim of the advance of our troops, which was begun seven days after the rupture, was to safeguard the fruits of the peace with the Ukraine. Aims of conquest were in no way a determining factor. We were strengthened in this by the Ukrainians' appeal for support in the ordering of their young State against the disturbances carried out by the Bolsheviks. If further military operations in other regions have taken place in connection with this, the same applies to them. They in no way aim at conquests. They are solely taking place at the urgent appeals and representations of the populations for protection against atrocities and devastations by the Red Guard and other bands. They are therefore undertaken in the name of humanity. They are measures of assistance, and shall have no other character.

It is a question of creating peace and order in the interest of the peaceable population. We do not think of establishing ourselves, for instance, in Esthonia or Livonia, but we only desire after the war to live in good friendly relationship with the States arising there. Regarding Courland and Lithuania, I need say nothing to-day. It is a question of providing the populations of those countries with organs of self-determination and self-government or of strengthening those already in course of construction. We look forward to further developments with equanimity.

Our military action in the East has, however, produced a success which goes far beyond the aim originally set up and just designated by me. You already know from the announcement made by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs that M. Trotsky had by a wireless message, which was speedily followed by a written confirmation, declared his readiness to resume the peace negotiations which had been broken off. We

replied immediately by transmitting our peace conditions in the form of an ultimatum. Yesterday—and this is a very gratifying communication which I have to make to you—news arrived that the Petrograd Government accepted our peace conditions, and had sent representatives to Brest-Litovsk for further negotiations. German delegates, accordingly, also left yesterday evening for Brest. It is possible that there will still be disputes regarding details, but the main thing has been attained. The will to peace has been expressly manifested on the Russian side, and our conditions have been accepted. The conclusion of peace must very shortly follow. Never yet, perhaps, in history has the Aristotelian dictum that we must resolve on war for the sake of peace been so strikingly confirmed. In order to safeguard the fruits of our peace with the Ukraine, our Army Command drew the sword, and peace with Russia will be the happy result. We will not let our joy at this event be troubled by the foolish provocatory wireless messages which are being repeatedly sent out into the world.

The peace negotiations with Rumania began yesterday in Bucharest in the presence of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. It appeared necessary that he should be present there during the first days when the foundations will be laid. Now, however, he will presumably soon go to Brest-Litovsk. It is to be remembered regarding the negotiations with Rumania that we are not taking part in them alone, and are under an obligation to champion the just interests of our faithful Allies, Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria, and Turkey, and to see that a compromise is arranged there regarding any divergent desires. That will possibly give rise to difficulties, but with goodwill all round these difficulties will be overcome.

But in regard to Rumania, too, we must be guided by the principle that we must make and desire to make the States with which, basing ourselves on the success of our arms, we are now concluding peace, our friends in the future.

In this connection I will say a word regarding Poland, on behalf of whom the Entente and President Wilson have recently appeared very specially to interest themselves. I must remark that, as is well known, the country was liberated from the oppressive dependence on Czarist Russia by the united forces of Germany and Austria-Hungary for the purpose of establishing an independent State which, in the unrestricted development of its national Kultur, shall at the same time become a pillar of the peace of Europe. The constitutional problem (in a narrower sense, the question what Constitution the new State shall receive)

could not, as is easily understood, be immediately decided, and is still in the stage of exhaustive discussions between the three countries concerned. A fresh difficulty has been added to the many difficulties which have in this connection to be overcome (difficulties especially in the economic domain) in consequence of the collapse of old Russia. This difficulty results from the delimitation of the frontier between the new State and the adjacent Russian territories. For this reason the news of peace with the Ukraine at first evoked great uneasiness in Poland.

I hope, however, that with goodwill and with a proper regard for ethnographical conditions a compromise between claims will be reached. The announced intention to make a serious attempt in this direction has, too, even now, greatly calmed Polish circles, a fact which I record with satisfaction. In the regulation of the frontier question, only what is indispensable on military grounds will be demanded on Germany's part. As you will have gathered from the statements made, the prospect of peace on the entire Eastern Front from the Baltic to the Black Sea has come within reach, and the world, especially in neutral countries, surfeited with war, is asking itself in feverish tension whether the door to a general peace is not also thereby opened.

But the leaders of the Entente—England, France, and Italy—still appear to be wholly disinclined to lend an ear to the voice of reason and humanity. In contradistinction to the Central Powers, the Entente has from the first pursued aims of conquest, and is fighting for the return of Alsace-Lorraine to France. I have nothing to add to what I have already said on this subject. There is no Alsace-Lorraine question in an international sense. If there is such a question it is purely a German question.

The Entente is fighting for the acquisition of portions of Austro-Hungarian territory by Italy. When in Italy fine words about sacred aspirations and sacred egoism are invented, the desire for annexations is not thereby removed. The Entente is fighting for the severance of Palestine, Syria, and Arabia from the Turkish Empire. England has particularly cast an eye on portions of Turkish territory. She has suddenly discovered an affection for the Arabians, and she hopes by utilizing the Arabians to annex fresh territories to the British Empire, perhaps by the creation of a protectorate dependent on British domination. That the colonial war aims of England are directed at increasing and rounding off the enormous British possessions, particularly in Africa, has been repeatedly stated by British statesmen. In face of this policy, which is out-and-

out aggressive, and aims at the appropriation of foreign territories, the Entente statesmen still dare to represent a militarist, Imperialist, and autocratic Germany as the disturber of the peace, who in the interest of world-peace must be confined within the narrowest bounds, if not destroyed. By a system of lies and calumny they are continually endeavouring to incite both their own peoples and neutral States against the Central Powers and to frighten neutrals especially with the spectre of a violation of neutrality by Germany.

In view of the intrigues recently carried on again in Switzerland I take the opportunity to declare before the entire world that we have never for a moment thought or will think of infringing Swiss neutrality. We know that we are under much obligation to Switzerland, not only by the principles of International Law, but by century-old friendly relations. We owe the greatest esteem and gratitude to Switzerland and to the other neutral States, Holland, the Scandinavian countries, and Spain, who, by her geographical situation, is exposed to special difficulties, no less than to the extra-European countries which have not yet entered the war, for the manly attitude with which, in spite of all temptation and oppression, they preserve neutrality. The world yearns for peace, and desires nothing more than that the sufferings of war under which it groans should come to an end; but the Governments of the enemy States contrive ever anew to stir up war fury among their peoples. The continuation of the war to the utmost was, so far as has transpired, the most recent watchword issued by the Conference at Versailles, and in the English Premier's speeches it again and again finds a loud echo.

At the same time it is true that other voices have been making themselves heard of late in England. Besides Mr. Runciman's speech, which I recalled at the beginning, a speech by Lord Milner¹ of a similar tendency, and perhaps still more conciliatory, but delivered outside Parliament, has recently been published. One can only wish that such voices may multiply and that the peaceful tendencies undoubtedly existing in the Entente countries may materialize.

For the world now stands facing the greatest fateful decision. Either our enemies will decide to make peace (they know under what conditions we should be ready to enter negotiations), or else they will think that they ought to continue the criminal madness of a war of conquest. Then our glorious troops under their brilliant leaders will continue the fight. Our enemies

¹ At Plymouth, February 21.

know that sufficiently well and to what degree we are prepared for it. Our brave and wonderful people will persevere further. But the blood of the fallen, the agony of the mutilated, all the distress and all the suffering of the nations will fall on the heads of those who obstinately refuse to lend an ear to the voices of reason and humanity.

LI

**MR. BALFOUR'S SPEECH IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS,
FEBRUARY 27, 1918.**

My hon. friend [Mr. Holt] has dealt with two speeches, one delivered by myself a fortnight or three weeks ago—already, therefore, fading into the past—and the other delivered by the German Chancellor the day before yesterday in the Reichstag. I only wish that the hon. Member had dealt as kindly and as gently with the speech of his colleague in the House of Common as he did with the speech of the German Chancellor in the Reichstag. So far as my own humble effort of three weeks ago is concerned, the main complaint of the hon. gentleman is that I observed that the Versailles Council was not very well equipped, in my opinion, to deal with these difficult diplomatic questions, and to that opinion I still hold. Let me observe that a great deal of criticism levelled at the Resolution of the Versailles Conference is based upon a survey of the work of the Versailles Conference which is wholly out of perspective. I do not necessarily say that the hon. gentleman or the House itself is wholly to blame for that, because in the very nature of the case the real work performed by the Versailles Council at its last meeting was necessarily private. It has never been wholly communicated. Their real work was concerned with military procedure. A communiqué was made, as is customary, of certain things in which the public might be interested, and which could be safely stated, but from that communiqué it was quite impossible to judge of the work of the Conference. This particular statement to which the hon. Member refers was no doubt the result of some discussion, but it in no sense represents the mature work of a long debate upon the diplomatic situation in the various countries of Europe. If the hon. gentleman thinks that an adequate defence of my speech I shall be happy, but if he thinks it is inadequate I can only deeply regret that it is the best I can offer. To the substance of my observation on that particular utterance of the Versailles Council I entirely adhere.

The hon. Member is very angry because he says I misquoted Count Czernin's speech. If I had had any idea that Count Czernin's speech was to be discussed I would not have laid myself open to the charges which have been made against me of verbal inaccuracies. I do not think that I really did misinterpret the substance of Count Czernin's speech. I do not believe that he meant in the least to separate himself from the statement made by his German colleague at the same time. They had been together in council, and the information that I have received on the subject induces me to believe that these speeches were made after consultation and with consultation, and I do not think that I did any very substantial injustice to Count Czernin. If I did I greatly regret it. I think the hon. Member has misinterpreted one very important statement of Count Czernin's about Poland. That was an ambiguous statement of Count Czernin, and I am not at all sure that President Wilson has not also put a much more favourable interpretation upon that statement than it deserves to receive. The hon. gentleman talks as if it was the desire of Count Czernin to establish the ancient kingdom of Poland so far as that really was a Polish nationality upon an independent basis. I think the words he used might cover that interpretation, but I do not think it was his meaning, and the reason that I do not think it was his meaning is this: You cannot confidently, completely, or adequately carry out any policy of that kind without restoring to Poland those provinces ravished from her by Germany at the time of the Partition or since, and which are to a very great extent at the present time inhabited by Poles. I do not know whether the hon. Member thinks that that is Count Czernin's policy.

MR HOLT: I was speaking of President Wilson's.

MR. BALFOUR: I thought it was Count Czernin's which he questioned. Apparently it is not. That being so, I will leave the point. I really think that in substance I have answered it. If any hon. Member thinks not, there may be an opportunity of explaining whether in his opinion Count Czernin really did intend to indicate that he desired to restore the ancient kingdom of Poland. The hon. gentleman's last criticism upon my now rather ancient speech was directed against my statement that for the moment diplomacy was out of court. It is quite evident that diplomacy is out of court in so far as negotiations between belligerents are concerned—and that is the only point with which we are dealing at this moment—unless there is that measure of potential agreement between them which would

make diplomatic conversations fruitful of good results. I am afraid, and I say it with the profoundest regret, that all the indications show that we have not as yet reached that happy stage. It is that conviction which makes me feel that the clouds of war are still lowering heavily over the whole civilized world, and that there is no clear and obvious direction in which the sunlight of approaching peace can make itself felt. May that time come soon! But I think that we should be deceiving ourselves in face of the statement to which I shall come now, the statement to which the hon. gentleman referred—in face of Count Hertling's speech I am afraid that we should be sanguine if we took that view.

I am aware that in saying this I separate myself widely from the hon. gentleman. He is of opinion that Count Hertling's speech is a thoroughly satisfactory basis of negotiations, and he has formed that opinion apparently on the ground that Count Hertling has accepted the four propositions of President Wilson. He turned to me with an air of challenge and asked whether his Majesty's Government were prepared to go as far. I think that President Wilson was most well advised to lay down those broad propositions of international equity, but President Wilson would be himself the first to say that though it was necessary to lay them down there was nothing in them novel or paradoxical, and it never occurred to me that I should have to get up in this House and say that with the spirit of all those four propositions I was in thorough agreement. Perhaps it might be as well, indeed I think that it is absolutely necessary, that I should examine the precise value which we are to attach to Count Hertling's assent to President Wilson's propositions. Before I come to that, I think it right to say something about what fell from the hon. gentleman with regard to Belgium. He, and he alone, so far as I know, in the world, outside the precincts of Germany, would regard Count Hertling's statement about Belgium as satisfactory. There are a great many questions besides Belgium which have to be settled at a peace conference and which now divide the nations of Europe. Though Belgium is very far from being the only one, though there are perhaps other questions of equal importance, there is no question which is a better touchstone of the honesty of purpose of Central European diplomacy, and especially German diplomacy.

The hon. gentleman knows well enough that these are things which we are all weary of saying, which are horrible to think of, but he knows, as everybody in the House knows, that the German attack on Belgium was unprovoked. He knows as well

as everybody knows that it was not merely an unprovoked attack upon a small and unoffending nation, but that it was an attack carried out by one of the nations which had guaranteed the security of that small and unoffending nation. Those are the commonplaces of the situation. Those are historical propositions which everybody knows by heart. Well, there is only one course for the offending nation to pursue in those circumstances, which is to say, as they have said, "I have sinned." That they have said through the mouth of the former Chancellor. The next thing to do is to say, "Having sinned, I make reparation, I restore again what I never should have taken, and I restore it necessarily without condition." What does the statesman who now meets with the unqualified approval apparently of my hon. friend say on this subject? He says: "By all means restore Belgium. We do not want to stay there. But we must take care that it shall not become a jumping-off ground for enemy machinations." When was Belgium a jumping-off ground for enemy machinations? Why should Germany suppose that it is going to be a jumping-off ground for enemy machinations? Belgium has been the victim, not the author, of these crimes. Why is it to be punished because Germany was guilty? What sort of conditions is it that Count Hertling contemplates when he says that Belgium must no longer be the jumping-off ground for enemy machinations? The hon. gentleman appears to think that Count Hertling is a master of explicit statement. It is a pity that he did not state explicitly what he meant by that.

MR. HOLT: He meant nothing.

AN HON. MEMBER: Go to Hexham!

MR. BALFOUR: The hon. gentleman can be a harsh critic of Count Hertling as well as an unkind critic of myself. In some cases he does more than justice, but in this case he does something less than justice to that distinguished statesman. We know the sort of thing that Count Hertling has in mind. We know what a German always does mean when he talks of economic freedom and frontier security. He always means imposing some commercial trammels upon a weaker neighbour, or appropriating some of his territory in order to strengthen his own frontier. I am perfectly certain that if the hon. gentleman will take the trouble to look back through the various speculations on the question of Belgium, of which the German papers have been full ever since the beginning of the war, he will see, and he will always see, that by the phrase used by Count Hertling, as to making use of Belgium as a jumping-off

ground for enemy machinations, when they deal with those sorts of problems they always have in their minds the restoring of a Belgium which shall be subject to Germany by various new conditions, either territorial or commercial or military, which will prevent her having an independent place among the nations of Europe, of which Germany has tried to deprive her, but which Germany and ourselves are pledged to preserve for her.

I now turn from this particular example of the method in which Count Hertling carries out the general policy which the hon. gentleman admires to the four principles on which he asks my specific opinion. What we have got to consider is how far the lip service which Count Hertling does to these four principles is really exemplified by German practice. The first one deals with the principle of essential justice. Count Hertling gives warm approval to that doctrine and quotes St. Augustine in its favour. Does the hon. gentleman think that essential justice is the leading policy of German foreign or military policy? Just consider the frame of mind which Count Hertling shows about Alsace-Lorraine. I want to be perfectly fair. It is imaginable that a German would take a different view from that which is taken by the French, the British, the Italians, and the Americans on the subject of Alsace-Lorraine, but I cannot imagine a man who is discussing these principles of essential justice saying: "There is no question of Alsace-Lorraine. Alsace-Lorraine is so obviously, so plainly out of court that we refuse even to consider it when the Council of Peace comes." That is the declaration made by this advocate of peace whose recommendations the hon. gentleman is pressing upon the benevolent attention of the Committee. Take the second great principle: "Peoples and provinces shall not be bartered about from sovereignty to sovereignty as if they were mere chattels." We have got quite recently within the last few weeks an exact specimen of how Count Hertling interprets in action the principle of which he approves so glibly in theory. Without going into the other conquests or territorial arrangements which Germany has made or is in process of making in Russia, the hon. gentleman knows perfectly well that when they settled the boundaries of the Ukraine they handed over a portion of undoubted Polish territory¹ to the new Republic. It is perfectly true that the result of that was a burst of Polish indignation, which, however they might neglect it in that part of Poland which is subject to Germany, made itself felt in that part of Poland which is subject to

¹ The district of Cholm.

Austria, and the result of that indignation was that a concession has been made, and the frontier settled under German inspiration is apparently going to be modified. When they settled that frontier I presume they had President Wilson's principle in mind, and I presume they gave it that whole-hearted adhesion to which the hon. Member referred. How came they, then, to make this gross violation of their own principles, and that within a few weeks of the moment of which I speak? You cannot have a better example.

MR. MOLTENO: Was not that area largely in the occupation of Ruthenians, and was it not to meet the wishes of the Ruthenians, who were in the majority?

MR. BALFOUR: I am talking of the Polish part. Then we come to the third principle, and here Count Hertling, I observe, makes an historical excursion, or a semi-historical excursion, into history, and says, with, I think, a great measure of truth and justice, that the Balance of Power is more or less an antiquated doctrine. He goes farther when he observes that England has been the great upholder of the doctrine of the Balance of Power, and that England has always used it for the purpose of aggrandizement. These are the exact words: "It is only another expression for England's domination." That is a profoundly un-historical method of looking at the question. This country has fought once, twice, thrice for the Balance of Power, and it has fought for the Balance of Power because it was only by so fighting that Europe could be saved from the domination of one overbearing nation. It is because we fought for the Balance of Power that we saved Frederick the Great from destruction and the Prussian State of that date; it is because we fought for the Balance of Power that we enabled Prussia to recover that independence which had been squeezed out of her by the triumphant armies of Napoleon; and it ill becomes German statesmen, looking back on the past, either to deride England's efforts for the Balance of Power or the gratitude which Germany owes to England for the efforts she has made in that connection. I go farther. I say that until German militarism is a thing of the past, until that ideal is reached for which we all long, in which there shall be an International Court, armed with executive power, so that the weak may be as safe as the strong—until that time comes it will never be possible to ignore the principle of action which underlies the struggle for the Balance of Power in which our forefathers engaged. If Count Hertling really wants to render the Balance of Power an antiquated ideal of international

statesmen, he must induce his countrymen to give up that policy of ambitious domination which overshadows the world at this moment, which is the real enemy, and without which alone, if it were destroyed, peace would come upon us now and for ever. This was a parenthesis apparently of Count Hertling, and I answer it as a parenthesis. I return to the third and fourth principles laid down by President Wilson: "What ought to be regarded in all peace arrangements are the interests and benefit of the populations concerned." I wish the House to consider how Count Hertling desired to see that principle carried into effect—translated from a paragraph in his speech, and embodied in the policy of the world. Consider for a moment. He mentioned three countries which he desires to see restored to the Turk—Armenia, Palestine, and Mesopotamia. Does the hon. gentleman [Mr. Holt] consider that the interests and benefit of the populations in these areas are going to be consulted by transferring them back to their Turkish masters? Count Hertling accuses us of being animated by purely ambitious designs when we invaded Mesopotamia, when we captured Jerusalem, and I suppose he conceived that former Russia was animated by purely ambitious designs when she occupied Armenia. But Turkey went to war and picked a quarrel with us for purely ambitious purposes. She was promised by Germany the possession of Egypt. It was in order to get Egypt, and animated largely by that bribe, that she joined her forces with those of the Central Powers. What happiness, benefit, and interests of the populations concerned would have been consulted by the Turkish conquest of Egypt? The Germans, in their search for the greatest happiness of these populations, would have restored Egypt to the worst rule that the world has ever known; they would, if they could, have destroyed Arab independence; they would, if they could, have put the country which is the centre of so reverential an interest—Palestine—back under those who rendered it sterile for all these centuries, as they have rendered every place sterile on which they have imposed their domination. How can hon. gentlemen treat seriously a profession of faith about the interests of populations when, in the very speech in which that profession of faith is made, we have this evidence of the manner in which Count Hertling would like to see it carried out? I do not know whether the Reichstag is an assembly with much sense of humour, but, if it had any sense of humour, it surely must have smiled when it heard its Chancellor dealing in that spirit with the Realpolitik, which has been the true and domina-

ting doctrine of every important German statesman, German soldier, and German thinker for two generations at least. So much for the four principles which the hon. gentleman says Count Hertling accepts, and which he thinks his Majesty's Government are backward in not accepting. I hope the result of the short analysis I have made may be to convince him that there are two sides to that question.

I cannot, however, leave Count Hertling without making some observations upon his Russian policy, which he defends. For that, also, is not an infelicitous illustration of German methods, or the exact degree of importance which we are to attach to Count Hertling's verbal agreement with President Wilson. He tells us that the recent invasion of Russia was solely taking place on urgent appeals from the populations for protection against the atrocities and devastations by the Red Guards and other bands. They are, therefore, undertaken in the name of humanity. Of course, we all know—the poet has told us so—"East is East, and West is West." But I cannot, even with that aphorism ringing in my ear, quite follow the distinction between German policy on the East and German policy on the West. German policy on the East, it appears, has been recently entirely directed towards preventing atrocities and devastations, and carrying out military operations in the name of humanity. German policy on the West is entirely occupied in performing atrocities and devastations and in trampling underfoot not only the letter and spirit of treaties, but the very spirit of humanity itself. Why is there this difference of treatment of Belgium on the one side and of the Baltic provinces on the other? Why does humanity appeal with such an overmastering force to Count Hertling when he talks about Russia, and why is it brushed aside as a negligible quantity by him and his associates when he is talking of Belgium? I know of no explanation except one, which is, that Germany pursues her method with remorseless insistency. All that varies is the excuse that she gives for her policy. If she wishes to invade Belgium, it is a military necessity; if she wishes to invade Courland, it is the dictates of humanity and the desire to prevent outrages and devastations.

It is impossible in the light of facts like those to rate very high the professions of humanity, international righteousness, equity, and regard for populations which figure so largely in speeches like that which the hon. gentleman has required me to consider, and which show themselves in so strange, in so inconsistent a guise in the actual practice of those who have

been making those interesting professions. I confess myself frankly unable to follow what is called the German mentality in these cases. I am quite unable to understand how any man can get up and say in the Reichstag, as Count Hertling said, that the war Germany has been waging is a defensive war. It was provoked by Germany, it was carried out in accordance with doctrines perfectly well known before war broke out and universally approved in Germany. It was no sudden outburst of passion that made them drench the world in blood; it was no doubt a miscalculation, because they thought their ends could be obtained without the sacrifices which they have forced upon themselves, and, unhappily, on the rest of mankind. But the plan itself, as we all know now, was an old plan. Nobody can even at this stage make themselves acquainted with the tenor and speculations in German newspapers and German reviews without seeing that the old doctrines remain unaffected, dominating the intellectual life of a very large and by no means the least able portion of their population. It is not merely the doctrine of a few ambitious soldiers. It is a profound mistake to suppose that German militarism means simply the domination of a military caste in isolation. On the contrary, it is the deliberate intention of a large and important section of intellectual Germany to use all weapons, military and economic, to give to their country that dominating position which they think is its right, and they cannot understand why the rest of the world does not agree with them. They are quite ready in that great cause not merely to spend their blood, treasure, life, not merely to undergo great sacrifices, but to decorate the idol of their ambitions with every sort of fine phrase about a defensive war and economic independence, and all the rest of it. When you get to the bottom of those phrases you always find a defensive war means a war which is going to extend your territory, and economic security is an economic policy which is going to put some other nation in economic fetters for your advantage. It is a most deplorable and most unhappy condition of things.

I have spoken quite openly and frankly about an eminent contemporary statesman and about a great nation. I have the less remorse in doing it as Count Hertling did not hesitate to use very strong language about the British Empire and the nation of which we are citizens. There is nothing in the world I am more certain of than this, that the impartial historian, looking back critically at German theories and German practice, and comparing them with British theories and British practice, will say that while both created great Empires, it has not been

the object and it has not been the result of the British Empire to squeeze out the individual life of the nations concerned. Where the British Empire has gone, liberty and local interests and the cultivation of local culture have not been neglected. We have not tried, I think we are incapable of doing it, to force our own culture upon India or upon Egypt, or upon any nation or group of nations—India is not a nation, not as yet a nation—upon any group of nations which have come under our protection. Germany has pursued, and is pursuing, and always has pursued, a different path. Her policy has been more deliberately ambitious than that of any nation. Leaving out certain episodes in the history of France, she has been more ambitious of domination than any nation since Louis XIV. However that may be, it really is absurd to compare the results of German expansion and those results which have made the British Empire what it is. We therefore can listen to those criticisms of Count Hertling with perfect equanimity. We are ready to stand our trial at the bar of history. To say that we never made mistakes, to say that we never have committed errors, and injustices it may be, against those with whom we are connected is, of course, what no wise man would think of saying. I am talking of the broad facts of history, and, looking at the broad facts of history, what I say I am confident will stand the test of examination.

Everything that I read with regard to German expansion gives me the impression that a German can only conceive expansion as being carried out at the cost of somebody else, and it always is carried out at the cost of somebody else. It is that combination of passion for universal expansion and domination, combined with the deliberate intention of Germany not merely to be a great and growing Empire, but to have the rest of civilization creeping at its feet—it is that determination which makes it so difficult to carry out those diplomatic conversations which must be the prelude to peace, and which nobody longs for more than I do, or than is done by my colleagues in the Government. Those conversations must take place, but how can they take place at this moment if Count Hertling's speech represents the extreme high-water mark of German concession? Does the hon. gentleman, if he has done me the honour to listen to what I have said, really think if Count Hertling were able to carry out that conversation of which he spoke in the earlier part of his address, if he could meet round a table my right hon. friend whom he quotes as desiring that conversation, does he really

at this moment think, with the doctrines contained in this speech, that the conversation could end in anything like agreement? Does he not think a conversation which is begun and which ends in discord is worse than no conversation at all? [HON. MEMBERS: "No, no!"] Well, that is my deliberate opinion. I am convinced, and I beg the House to weigh my words, that to begin negotiations unless you see your way to carrying them through successfully would be to commit the greatest crime against the future peace of the world. Therefore it is that I have to differ from my hon. friend who spoke last. Therefore it is that while I long for the day when negotiations may really take place—negotiations which must be a preparation in bringing ideas closer together—much as I long for that day, I believe I should be doing an injury to the cause of peace, which is the cause I have at heart, the great cause I have at heart—I should be doing an injury to that great cause if I were either to practise myself or to encourage others to practise, or to hope myself or to encourage others to hope, that there was any use in beginning those verbal personal communications until something like a general agreement was apparent in the distance, and until statesmen of all countries concerned saw their way to the broad outlines of that great settlement which it is my most earnest hope will bring permanent peace to this sorely troubled world.

LII

**LORD LANSDOWNE'S LETTER IN REPLY TO COUNT
HERTLING, MARCH 5, 1918.**

SIR,

Count Hertling's speech, unsatisfactory as it is at many points, seems to me to mark a perceptible advance in the discussion. This is the more remarkable because the speech may be regarded as a kind of rejoinder to the depressing announcement recently made (some of us think rather gratuitously) by the Versailles Conference.

Let us note, in the first place, that Count Hertling ends with a cordial reference to the speech delivered on February 21st by Lord Milner at Plymouth, a speech which he regards as "still more conciliatory" than that made by Mr. Runciman in the House of Commons. Lord Milner is a member of the War Cabinet; he is under no suspicion of desiring a German peace. His speech is instinct with courage and determination, but he recognizes that, in the torrent of oratory with which the

country has lately been flooded, "we have seemed sometimes to get into rather a tangle, to be putting forward too many propositions, to be putting our total claims perhaps rather too high. Simple people in this country have sometimes been rather confused by talk about readjustment of territory in distant parts of the world, about future trade arrangements, and so forth. All these are details, very important details, which will have to be settled when we reach the stage of negotiations. But they are all subsidiary to the main object, which is the securing of human freedom and just and enduring peace."

Let me proceed with my examination of Count Hertling's speech. It contains:—

1. The distinct expression of a wish that, in order to remove misunderstandings, and in the hope of reaching "a compromise of the existing contradictions," responsible representatives of the belligerent Powers should come together "in an intimate meeting" for discussion.

2. An admission that "a general peace is discussable," on the basis of the four principles laid down in President Wilson's Message of February 11th, if recognized definitely by all States and nations.

3. An assurance that the Chancellor would "joyfully greet" an impartial Court of International Arbitration, and "gladly co-operate to realize such ideals."

4. An intimation that Germany does not think of retaining Belgium or making the Belgian State a component part of the German Empire.

I make the following comments:—

1. By an "intimate meeting" I understand Count Hertling to mean a small and informal meeting not of Plenipotentiaries, but of persons authorized to discuss confidentially and without prejudice the possibility of a more formal conference.

It is true, as Mr. Balfour has pointed out, that it is unwise to begin negotiations unless there is a certain amount of potential and preliminary agreement. But how is such preliminary agreement to be reached unless there are preliminary conversations?

As matters now stand, the spokesmen of the Allies recite in language of stern reprobation the crimes which Germany has committed, and put forward a series of demands which are not likely to be conceded until she has been beaten to her knees.

The German spokesmen, on the other hand, put forward inadmissible demands, which Mr. Balfour regards as probably representing the extreme high-water mark of German concession, and impute selfish and aggressive ends to the Allies.

In these circumstances there seems, at first sight, nothing for it but what Count Hertling calls "adherence to the existing method of dialogue across Channel and ocean," dialogues which may prove after all to be not without their use.

2. Count Hertling's acceptance of the four principles is satisfactory so far as it goes. Mr. Balfour is in thorough agreement with the spirit of all those four propositions, but rightly points out that we are entitled to scrutinize the manner in which the principles thus laid down have been applied by Germany.

3. Count Hertling's assurance that he will co-operate to realize the ideal of an impartial Court of International Arbitration may be welcomed. Mr. Balfour also (House of Commons, February 27, 1918) speaks of "the ideal for which we all long, in which there shall be an International Court, armed with executive power, so that the weak may be as safe as the strong."

4. Belgium is properly regarded as a test case, and the language in which Count Hertling deals with the Belgian case has consequently been closely scrutinized.

"We do not," he says, "think of retaining Belgium or making the Belgian State a component part of the German Empire; but we must, as was also said in the Papal Note of August 1, 1917, be safeguarded from the danger that the country with which, after the war, we desire to live again in peace and friendship should become an object or jumping-off ground of enemy machinations."

The language has been adversely commented upon, and certainly suggests, particularly when read by the light of other German utterances on the same subject, the inference that what Count Hertling has in his mind is the imposition of terms which, by subjecting Belgium to onerous conditions, territorial, commercial, or military, will prevent her from having an independent place among the nations of Europe.

It is therefore worth while to examine the text of the Papal Note of August 1, 1917, on which, apparently, Count Hertling relies for a description of the steps which would have to be taken in order to prevent Belgium from being used as a "jumping-off" place.

The material passage runs as follows:—

"Plainly there must be, on the part of Germany, a complete evacuation of Belgium, *with a guarantee of her full political, military, and economic independence towards all Powers whatsoever.*"

If such a guarantee is really all that Count Hertling requires in order to prevent Belgium from becoming an object or jumping-ground of enemy machinations, it ought surely not

to be difficult to satisfy him. Let us hope that in the course of the "dialogue" which will, no doubt, be continued, he will tell us whether that is his meaning, or whether wholly different designs, unhinted at in the Papal Note, were in his mind when he penned his somewhat unfortunate phrase.

The point requires clearing up, because, if Count Hertling's overture has been "turned down," this has been in great measure due to the interpretation which has been placed upon his reference to Belgium.

It may be here observed that, with an International Court in operation, there would not be much likelihood of such an abuse of the neutrality of Belgium as Count Hertling apprehends.

Up to this point I am unable to see why the "dialogue" should not be usefully continued or even be allowed to lapse into an "intimate discussion." There is basic agreement as to the four principles as to the need of an International Tribunal with executive powers, and, I believe, as to Belgium, with regard to which gallant and long-suffering country we are, as Mr. Ramsay MacDonald said in the House of Commons, "certainly going to have no humbug."

The restoration of Belgium is, of course, as the President puts it, "the healing act," without which "the whole structure and validity of International Law is for ever impaired"; but it will be necessary to make sure that similar treatment will be extended to other areas now occupied by the Central Powers in France and elsewhere. One German statesman after another has disclaimed a policy of conquest and annexation.

When however, we come to claims that, for the sake of future peace, territory now forming part of the dominions of one Power shall be transferred to another, the difficulties to be surmounted become much more formidable. Such difficulties arise in regard to the French claim to Alsace-Lorraine, to the Italian claim to certain districts in Austria, and to the British claim to parts of the Turkish Empire. I am far from suggesting that all these are on the same plane, but they all differ in kind from cases in which the question is merely one of restoration.

If we are, as the Prime Minister has told us, to have a great international Peace Congress at the close of the war, is it not inevitable that there must be remitted to it questions belonging to the latter class?

Mr. Lloyd George added the special suggestion, in which President Wilson apparently concurs, that the question of the German colonies, one of extreme difficulty and delicacy, should be reserved for such a Congress. Does any one suppose that

these questions could be settled, and in a reasonable time, while war is still raging ?

Can we do more now than lay down in advance the principles upon which the Peace Congress would deal with them, and can we improve upon those which the President has proposed, and which both sides are apparently not indisposed to accept ?

LIII

THE CZERNIN CONTROVERSY : CZERNIN'S SPEECH TO THE VIENNA MUNICIPAL COUNCIL, APRIL 2, 1918.

YOUR EXCELLENCY, GENTLEMEN,

I am ready with extreme pleasure to reply to the questions put to me by his Excellency the Burgomaster, and thereby to give both you and the wider public an accurate glimpse into political conditions as I see them at the moment. I would willingly have spoken before the competent Tribunal, the Delegations.¹ Technical reasons, the fact that all the members are on Easter leave and that the meeting of one of the two committees is at present impossible, prevent this, and so I gladly seize the opportunity to unfold to you a brief review of the present international situation.

With the conclusion of peace with Rumania the war in the East is ended. Three peaces were concluded : with Petrograd, with the Ukraine, and with Rumania. One chapter of the war is therefore finished.

Before, however, turning to the individual peace treaties and discussing these in detail, I should like to revert to those declarations of the President of the United States in which he replied to the speech delivered by me on January 24th in the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Austrian Delegation. In many parts of the world President Wilson's speech was interpreted as an attempt to drive a wedge between Vienna and Berlin. I do not believe that. I do not believe it because I have much too high an opinion of the President of the United States and of his outlook as a statesman to believe him capable of such a way of thinking. President Wilson is no more able to ascribe dishonourable action to us than we to him. President Wilson does not desire to separate Vienna from Berlin. He does not desire it and he knows too that that is impossible. Perhaps President Wilson says to himself, however, that Vienna is a more favourable soil for sowing the seed for a general peace.

¹ The Delegations representing, for foreign affairs, the Parliaments of Austria and Hungary.

Perhaps he says to himself that the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy has the good fortune to possess a ruler who sincerely and honestly desires a general peace, but who will never commit a breach of faith or conclude a dishonourable peace, and that behind the Emperor-King there are fifty-five millions of people. President Wilson says also perhaps to himself that this united mass represents a force which is not to be under-estimated, and that this honest and strong desire for peace, which binds the Monarchs, the Governments, and the peoples of both States, is capable of being the bearer of that great idea in whose service he had placed himself.

Before I discuss President Wilson's last utterances I would like to clear up one misunderstanding. In my last speech, which I made before the Austrian Delegation Committee, I replied to an inquiry in this connection that probably Wilson was already in possession of my utterances. Later Wilson corrected this, and pointed out that there must be some mistake, for direct contact between us did not exist. Wilson is perfectly right. It is a question of a misunderstanding.

Before I spoke I made arrangements to have the text telegraphed to Washington from a neutral country through an unofficial medium, so as to avoid such eventual misunderstandings or distortion. I supposed that this text at the moment I made my speech would already have reached Washington. Apparently, however, it only arrived there some days later. This does not affect that matter itself. My object was to secure that the President of the United States should get the exact text of my speech, and this object was attained, and the trifling delay of a few days was purely a matter of indifference.

In reply to the President I can only say I esteem it highly that the German Chancellor, in his excellent speech of February 25th, took the words out of my mouth by declaring that the four principles developed in President Wilson's speech of February 11th formed a basis upon which a general peace could be discussed. I am in entire agreement therewith. The four points laid down by the President are a suitable basis to begin a discussion for a general peace. Whether, however, the President will succeed in his endeavours to rally his allies on this basis or not is the question. God is my witness that we have tried everything possible to avoid the fresh offensive, but the Entente would not have it thus.

Some time before the beginning of the Western offensive M. Clemenceau inquired of me whether, and upon what basis,

I was ready to negotiate. In agreement with Berlin I at once replied that I was ready, and that as regards France I could see no obstacle to peace save France's desire for Alsace-Lorraine. Paris replied that negotiations were impossible on this basis. No choice then remained.¹

The gigantic struggle in the West has already begun. Austro-Hungarian and German troops are now fighting side by side as they fought together in Russia, Serbia, Rumania, and Italy. We are fighting unitedly for the defence of Austria-Hungary and Germany. Our armies will show the Entente that French and Italian aspirations after our territory are Utopias, which will revenge themselves terribly. The explanation, however, of this action of the Entente Powers, which borders on madness, is largely to be found in certain happenings in our own country, to which I shall revert later. Whatever happens, we shall never abandon Germany's interests, just as Germany will never leave us in the lurch. Faithfulness on the Danube is not less than German faithfulness. We are not fighting for Imperialistic annexationist aims, either of ourselves or Germany, but we shall go forward together to the last for our defence, for our existence as a State, and for our future.

The first breach in the war-will of our enemies was made by the peace negotiations with Russia. It was a break-through of the peace-idea. It was an evidence of childish diletantism to overlook the close inner connection between the various conclusions of peace.

The constellation of enemy Powers in the East resembled a net. On one mesh being severed the others gave way of themselves. We first of all recognized internationally the separation accomplished inwardly of the Ukraine from Russia and utilized for our purposes the favourable situation which arose therefrom by concluding with the Ukraine the peace which it was striving for. This led to the peace with Petrograd, as a result of which Rumania became so isolated that she likewise was obliged to conclude peace. Thus one peace brought others with it, and brought as the result desired the termination of the war in the East.

We had to begin with the Ukraine both on technical and material grounds. The blockade had to be broken, and the future will show that the conclusion of peace with the Ukraine was a blow at the heart of the rest of our enemies.

¹ This is the passage which led to the retort of M. Clemenceau, "Czernin has lied!" and to the publication of the Emperor Carl's letter of March 31, 1917. See above, No. XII.

A peace has been concluded with Rumania calculated to be the starting-point of friendly relations. The slight frontier rectifications which we receive are not annexations. Almost uninhabited regions as they are, they solely serve for military security. To those, however, who insist that these rectifications fall under the category of annexations and accuse me of inconsistency, I can only reply that times out of number and in both Delegations I have publicly protested against holding out a licence to our enemies, which would assure them against the dangers of further military adventures. It is not my fault that Rumania did not sit at the peace table simultaneously with Russia. From Russia I did not demand a single square metre, and Rumania neglected the favourable moment.

The protection and promotion of the eminently important mercantile shipping on the Lower Danube, as well as the safeguarding of the Iron Gate, are guaranteed by the extension of the frontier to the heights of Turn Severin, by the leasing for thirty years of the valuable wharf near this town, together with the strip of land along the river bank between the wharf and the new frontier, at an annual rent of one thousand lei [equivalent to Fr. 1], and finally by obtaining a leasing right on the islands of Ostrovu Mare, Corbu, and Simeanu. By the transfer of the frontier several kilometres southward in the region of the Petroseny coal-mines, which brings into our possession the dominating point of Lainic on the Szurdok Pass, the coal basin appears to be better safeguarded. Nagyszeben and Fogaras receive a new security frontier of an average width of from fifteen to eighteen kilometres. At all the passes of importance, as, for instance, Predeal, Bodza, Gyimes, Bekas, Toelgyes, the new frontier has been so far removed to Rumanian ground as military reasons require. The *Dreiländerecke* [where Russia, Rumania, and Galicia meet] falls entirely to us, so that the possibility of an assured connection between Hungary and the Bukovina is provided. The pushing back of the frontier east of Czernowitz is intended to protect effectively the capital of the Bukovina hitherto exposed to hostile attacks.

At a moment when we are successfully endeavouring to renew friendly relations with Rumania I do not desire to open up old wounds; but every one of you knows the history of Rumania's entrance into the war and will therefore admit my duty was to protect the peoples of the Monarchy against future surprises of a similar kind.

I have repeatedly said that I see the safest guarantee in future international agreements preventing war. In any such

agreements, if they were framed in a binding form, I should have seen much stronger guarantees against surprise attacks by neighbours than in frontier rectifications; but I have so far, except in the case of President Wilson, been unable to discover amongst any of our enemies a serious inclination to accept this idea. However, despite the small degree of approval which this idea at present receives, I consider that it will nevertheless be realized. I take up my pencil and calculate the fearful burdens with which the States of the world will emerge from this war, and I vainly ask myself how they will cover the military expenditure if the competition in armaments remains unrestricted. I do not believe that it will be possible for any State after this war to expend several milliards annually to meet the considerably increased military requirements due to the war. I rather think that the financial *vis major* will compel all States to enter into an international compromise regarding the limitation of their armaments. This calculation of mine is neither idealistic nor fantastic, but is based upon reality in politics in the most literal sense of the word. I, for my part, would consider it a great disaster if, in the end, there should be a failure to achieve a general settlement regarding a diminution of military armaments.

It is obvious that, in the peace with Rumania, we shall take precautions to have our interests in the questions of grain and food supply and raw petroleum fully respected. We shall further take precautions that the Catholic Church and our schools receive such State protection as they need, and we shall also solve the Jewish question. The Jews will henceforth be citizens with equal rights in Rumania. The Irredentist propaganda, which has produced so much evil in Hungary, will be restrained, and, finally, precautions will be taken to obtain indemnification for the injustice innocently suffered by many of our countrymen owing to the war. Finally, we shall strive by means of a new Commercial Treaty and the appropriate settlement of railway and shipping questions to duly protect our economic interests in Rumania. All the Peace Treaties, when finally concluded, will be published.

Rumania's future lies in the East. Large portions of Bessarabia are inhabited by a Rumanian population, and there are many indications that this Rumanian population desires close union with Rumania. If, therefore, Rumania will only adopt a frank, honourable, and friendly attitude towards us, we shall have no objection to meeting those tendencies in Bessarabia. Rumania can gain in Bessarabia much more than

she lost in this war. I was most anxious in the Rumanian frontier rectifications to take nothing which would leave behind it any permanent feeling of embitterment in the Rumanian soul. I desire that the wounds inflicted on Rumania by this war shall be healed. I believe that Rumania, in her own well-comprehended interest, must turn to the Central Powers, and my policy aims at re-creating in the future relations of friendly neighbourship. The present Rumanian Ministry, which has always favoured attachment to the Central Powers, has not altered its views. Rumania's lot will solely depend upon her future policy.

Both in the conclusion of peace with the Ukraine and with Rumania, it has ever been my first thought to furnish the Monarchy with the most necessary foodstuffs and other raw materials, and to guarantee this. Russia did not come into consideration in this connection, as, owing to her widespread disorganization, she is unable to procure and to distribute in her own territory the necessary raw materials. You know that the Ukraine has promised us to deliver its entire surplus of agricultural products. The Commission which was appointed to organize the exchange of commodities with the Ukraine has already met at Kiev, and is now busily at work. As soon as the negotiations with the Ukrainian Government on this point are finished—and I hope this will speedily be the case—imports from the Ukraine can begin on a considerable scale. We have agreed with the Ukrainian Government that the quantities of grain which, according to the Peace Treaty, are to be delivered to the Quadruplice Powers shall amount to at least a million tons, and we hope that the organization to be established will render it possible to collect these supplies and have them transported within the appropriate period.

At the moment supplies from the Ukraine are naturally only small, and according as the improvization hitherto arranged has permitted. Up to the present it is true that only thirty wagons of grain, peas, and beans have reached Austria from the Ukraine. Further consignments are en route. Six hundred wagons of various kinds of foodstuffs are ready in the Ukraine to be transported into the interior of Austria-Hungary, and these consignments will be continued until the imports are properly organized and can begin regularly on a larger scale. These larger transports will now be made possible by the peace with Rumania, which opens the Danube and permits transport from Odessa to the Danube ports.

We thus hope to be able to carry out in course of time larger

and regular further consignments from the Ukraine, for the largest part by this route and to a smaller extent by rail. It should not, however, be forgotten that our numerous troops now in the Ukraine draw supplies from that country itself, a circumstance which indirectly is naturally very advantageous to our country. While I admit that the imports from the Ukraine are still small, and must be increased, nevertheless, the logical conclusion is that our food situation would have been considerably worse had this agreement not been concluded. This doubly proves the necessity for peace with the Ukraine.

From Rumania herself we obtain over 70,000 tons of maize from the past year's harvest. The forthcoming harvest in Rumania, the surplus of which will be equally divided between us and Germany, should bring the Monarchy a supply of, roundly, 400,000 tons of grain, pease, and beans (*Hülsenfrüchte*), and fodder, which will likewise have to be transported by the Danube route. Moreover, Rumania gives us a supply of 300,000 sheep, 100,000 pigs, to be provided immediately, which will produce a slight improvement in our present meat supply. As you see, everything has been and will continue to be done to obtain by exploitation of the regions which the peace treaties have opened up to us in the East whatever is obtainable. The difficulties connected with the procuring of these supplies from the Ukraine are, of course, still considerable, as must happen in a State not yet consolidated, and just emerging from a more than three years' war, and from a revolution which has shaken all the foundations of State order. Assuming the goodwill of the Ukrainian Government, which we do not doubt, to fulfil its treaty obligations, we shall, with the help of our own organization, succeed in overcoming these difficulties. In this connection I must here add that an immediate general peace, or such a peace within a measurable period of time, would not give us any other advantages than those which I have sketched.

All Europe is to-day suffering from lack of foodstuffs. Universal scarcity is the most terrible consequence of this war. After the conclusion of a general peace, the other States which are now still at war with us will have themselves to take measures to improve their own food supply.

In consequence, however, of diminished cargo-space imports by sea will not be able to make good the shortage of foodstuffs in Europe. The European granaries of the Ukraine and Rumania remain ever as the most important areas for the food supply of Europe, and these have been assured to our group of Powers alone for the immediate future.

We have thus already acquired, by the peace in the East, all that it is possible for peace to bring us in this respect.

To those who are constantly urging me to adopt a policy of annexations, and are therefore discontented with the peaces already concluded, I can only say that I regard their efforts as entirely wrong. In the first place the forcible annexation of foreign peoples will place difficulties in the way of a general peace, and in the second place such extensions of territory are not an unconditional strengthening of the Empire. On the contrary, considering the grouping of the Monarchy, they would rather mean a weakening. What we require is not territorial annexations, but economic safeguards for the future. For that we must work. We wish to do everything possible to try to create in the Balkans a situation of lasting calm. We must not, however, forget that with Russia's collapse that factor ceased to exist which hitherto had made it impossible for us to bring about a definite state of peace in the Balkans.

And now as to Serbia. We know that the desire for peace is very great in Serbia, but Serbia is prevented by the Entente Powers from concluding it. Bulgaria must receive from Serbia certain districts inhabited by Bulgarians. We, however, have no desire to annihilate, to destroy Serbia. We will enable Serbia to develop, and would only welcome closer economic relations with her. We do not desire to influence future relations between the Monarchy and Serbia and Montenegro by motives conflicting with friendly and neighbourly relations. The best State egoism is to come to terms with a beaten neighbour which will lead to lasting friendship. This is my egoism as regards Austria-Hungary. After being conquered militarily, our enemies must be conquered morally. Only then is victory complete, and in this respect diplomacy must complete the work of armies. Since I came to office I have striven only after one aim, namely, to secure an honourable peace to the Monarchy and to create a situation which will secure to Austria-Hungary future free development, and, moreover, do everything possible to ensure that this terrible war will be the last one for time out of mind. I have never spoken differently.

But I do not attempt to gain this peace by begging or to obtain it by entreaties and lamentation, but to enforce it by our moral right and physical strength. Any other tactics, I consider, will contribute to the prolongation of the war, and I must say to my regret that during the last few weeks and months much has been spoken and done in Austria that undoubtedly prolongs this terrible war. The prolongers of the

war are divided into various groups, according to their motives and tactics. There are, firstly, those who continuously beg for peace. They are despicable and foolish. In France they are termed *Defaitistes*, but there they meet with less gentleness than with us. To endeavour to conclude peace at any price is despicable, for it is unmanly and foolish, because it continuously feeds the already dying aggressive spirit of the enemy and artificially attains the very reverse of its intentions.

The desire for peace of the great masses is natural as well as comprehensible. It is no Austro-Hungarian speciality but a universal manifestation. But the leaders of the people must consider that certain utterances produce abroad just the opposite effect to what they desire.

I should like to set before these men the example of our Monarch, who certainly desires peace, but will never conclude any but an honourable peace, and I should like to remind you of Goethe's beautiful words:—

Woman fears,
Anxious tears,
Ban not trouble,
Set not free.
'Gainst defiance
Self-reliance,
Never to bow you,
Mighty to show you,
Summon to aid you
Heaven's chivalry.

Firmly relying, therefore, on our strength and the justice of our cause, I have already concluded three moderate, but honourable, peace treaties. The rest of our enemies are now also beginning to understand that we have no other desire but to secure the future of the Monarchy and that of our Allies, but also that we intend to enforce this, and can and shall enforce it. I shall prosecute this course regardless of consequences, and join issue with any one who opposes me.

The second group of war-prolongers are the annexationists. The annexationists are just as much the enemies of peace as the *Defaitistes*: both prolong the war. It is a distortion of fact to assert that Germany has made conquests in the East. The Lenin anarchy drove the border peoples into the arms of Germany, and caused them to seek refuge from the terrible conditions that rage in Great Russia in the support of Germany. Is Germany to refuse this voluntary choice of foreign border States? The German Government as little desires oppressions

as we, and I am firmly convinced that neither the annexationists who fill the world with their shouts for conquests and inspire it with fears of world-dominating plans suppressing all the rest of the world, nor the weaklings who persistently beg for peace, and assure the enemy that we are at the end of our strength, will be able to prevent for ever a moderate but honourable peace. They may delay it, but they cannot prevent it. We have in the last few weeks performed a good part of the journey towards the general peace. The last chapter of the great world drama is opening. We shall win through, and perhaps the time is no longer distant when we shall look back upon the last years as upon a long and evil dream.

The defeatists, like the annexationists, can show the same results, in spite of their opposite tactics ; they ever lash up our enemies to new resistance. However, I am readily prepared to admit the *bona fides* of both these groups. Probably both believe that their tactics bring about the peace desired. Unfortunately, there is a third group of these war prolongers to whom I cannot attribute this goodwill. It consists of individual political leaders of Austria, and here I revert to what I earlier touched upon with reference to the Paris inquiry. The hopes of our enemies of final victory are no longer based merely upon military expectations and the blockade. Our armies have proved that they are invincible, and the blockade was burst at Brest-Litovsk. The hope of our enemies which prolongs the war is based rather to a great extent on our internal political conditions, and (what cruel mockery !) on certain political leaders, not least in the Czech camp.

We know that to be the case very well from the numerous corroborative reports from abroad. Recently, as I have already mentioned, we were almost on the point of entering negotiations with the Western Powers, when the wind suddenly veered round, and, as we now know with certainty, the Entente decided that it was better to wait as the parliamentary and political events in our country justified the hope that the Monarchy would soon be defenceless.

What terrible irony ! While our brothers and sons are fighting like lions on the battlefield, and millions of men and women at home are heroically bearing their hard lot and are sending up urgent prayers to the Almighty for the speedy termination of the war, certain leaders of the people, people's representatives, agitate against the German Alliance, which has so splendidly stood the test ; pass resolutions, which no longer have the slightest connection with the State idea ; find no

word of blame for the Czech troops which criminally fight against their own country and their brothers-in-arms; would tear parts out of the Hungarian State; under the protection of their parliamentary immunity make speeches which cannot be construed otherwise than as a call to enemy countries to continue the struggle, in order to support their own political efforts; and anew kindle the expiring war-spirit in London, Rome, and Paris. The wretched and miserable Masaryk is not the only one of his kind. There are also Masaryks within the borders of the Monarchy. I would much rather have spoken on these sad cases in the Delegations, but, as I have already mentioned, the convoking of the Committees has at present proved to be impossible, and I cannot wait. I have to return to Rumania within the next few days to finish the peace negotiations there, and, in view of the slow course which the peace negotiations have hitherto taken, I do not know how long my enforced absence will last. The public, however, which wishes for an honourable end to the war, shall know what, above all, prolongs this war.

I raise no general accusation. I know that the Czech people, as a whole, are loyal and Austrian in mind. I know there are Czech leaders whose Austrian patriotism is pure and clear; but I do raise an accusation against those leaders who desire to terminate the war and to attain their aim by the victory of the Entente. We shall also triumph over these difficulties, but those who so act load themselves with a terrible responsibility. They are the cause of the further loss of thousands of our sons, of the continuance of the present misery, and of the war dragging on. Do they not shudder at this responsibility? What will German and what will Hungarian mothers one day say when, after peace has returned, the war-prolonging activity of these men is clearly displayed before all the world?

Nay, more. I have no need whatever to refer to the Germans and the Hungarians. As I have already said, the very peoples whom these gentlemen represent do not think like them. I know Bohemia thoroughly, I know how to distinguish between the Czech people and certain of their leaders. The Czech people, the Czech mother, does not think like these men. The mother, who fears for her son, the wife, who fears for her husband, is international. She is also the same among all the races of the Monarchy. The misery of war binds all races together. All desire that the war shall end, but they are deceived and led astray. They do not perceive that it is certain of their own representatives who are systematically prolong-

ing the war and their sufferings. I regret that the conditions so seldom make it possible for me to address the chosen representatives of the people. It is bad for a Foreign Minister when his official business compels him in the present times to live for months abroad, but I must be there where peace is being concluded. Perhaps, if I could live more at home, I might, with the help of the parties who are loyal to the State—and God be thanked that we have such!—combat more successfully these strivings, but I appeal to all those who desire a speedy and honourable end to the war to unite and together carry on the struggle against high treason. No one asserts that the Austrian Constitution would not be capable of improvement, and the Austrian Government is quite ready, in conjunction with other competent elements, to proceed to revise the same, but those who hope for the victory of the Entente, in order thus to realize their political aims, commit high treason, and this high treason is a poison in the veins of the State and constitutes the last war-prolonging hope of our enemies. If we expel this poison, then a general and honourable peace is nearer than the public at large imagines. I appeal to all. I appeal, above all, to the Germans and Hungarians, who in this war have accomplished superhuman things; but I appeal also to the millions of the citizens of all the other races of the Monarchy, who are loyal to the State to the backbone, and who do not think like some of their leaders. Every single Austrian, every single Hungarian, must step into the breach. No one has the right to remain aside. It is a question of the last decisive struggle. All hands on deck, then we shall be victorious.

LIV

**PRESIDENT WILSON'S BALTIMORE SPEECH,
APRIL 6, 1918.**

This is the anniversary of our acceptance of Germany's challenge to fight for our right to live and be free and for the sacred rights of free men everywhere. The nation is awake. There is no need to call to it. We know what the war must cost: our utmost sacrifice, the lives of our fittest men, and if need be all that we possess. The loan we are met to discuss is one of the least parts of what we are called upon to give and to do, though in itself imperative. The people of the whole country are alive to the necessity of it and are ready to lend to the

utmost even where it involves a sharp skimping and daily sacrifice to lend out of meagre earnings. They will look with reprobation and contempt upon those who can and will not, upon those who demand a higher rate of interest, upon those who think of it as a mere commercial transaction. I have come only to give you if I can a more vivid conception of what it is for.

The reasons for this great war, the reason why it had to come, the need to fight it through and the issues that hang upon its outcome are more clearly disclosed now than ever before. It is easy to see just what this particular loan means, because the cause we are fighting for stands more sharply revealed than at any previous crisis of the momentous struggle. The man who knows least can now see plainly how the cause of justice stands and what the imperishable thing is he is asked to invest in. Men in America may be more sure than they ever were before that the cause is their own, and that if it should be lost their own great nation's place and mission in the world would be lost with it.

I call you to witness, my fellow-countrymen, that at no stage of this terrible business have I judged the purposes of Germany intemperately. I should be ashamed, in the presence of affairs so grave, so fraught with the destinies of mankind throughout all the world, to speak with truculence, to use the weak language of hatred or vindictive purpose. We must judge as we would be judged. I have sought to learn the objects Germany has in this war from the mouths of her own spokesmen and to deal as frankly with them as I wished them to deal with me. I have laid bare our own ideals, our own purposes without reserve or doubtful phrase, and have asked them to say as plainly what it is that they seek.

We have ourselves proposed no injustice, no aggression. We are ready whenever the final reckoning is made to be just to the German people, to deal fairly with the German Power as with all others. There can be no difference between peoples in the final judgment if it is indeed to be a righteous judgment. To propose anything but justice, evenhanded and dispassionate justice, to Germany at any time, whatever the outcome of the war, would be to renounce and dishonour our own cause. For we ask nothing that we are not willing to accord.

It has been with this thought that I have sought to learn from those who spoke for Germany whether it was justice or dominion and the execution of their own will upon the other nations of the world that the German leaders were seeking.

They have answered, answered in unmistakable terms. They have avowed that it was not justice but dominion and the unhindered execution of their own will.

The avowal has not come from Germany's statesmen. It has come from her military leaders, who are her real rulers. Her statesmen have said that they wished peace and were ready to discuss its terms whenever their opponents were willing to sit down at the conference table with them. Her present Chancellor has said—in indefinite and uncertain terms indeed and in phrases that often seem to deny their own meaning, but with as much plainness as he thought prudent—that he believed that peace should be based upon the principles which we had declared would be our own in the final settlement. At Brest-Litovsk her civilian delegates spoke in similar terms ; professed their desire to conclude a fair peace and accord to the peoples with whose fortunes they were dealing the right to choose their own allegiances. The action accompanied and followed the profession. Their military masters, the men who act for Germany and exhibit her purpose in execution, proclaimed a very different conclusion. We cannot mistake what they have done—in Russia, in Finland, in the Ukraine, in Rumania. The real test of their justice and fair play has come. From this we may judge the rest. They are enjoying in Russia a cheap triumph in which no brave or gallant nation can long take pride. A great people, helpless by their own act, lies for the time at their mercy. Their fair professions are forgotten. They nowhere set up justice, but everywhere impose their power and exploit everything for their own use and aggrandizement ; and the peoples of conquered provinces are invited to be free under their dominion.

Are we not justified in believing that they would do the same things at their Western front if they were not there face to face with the armies whom even their countless divisions cannot overcome ? If, when they have felt their check to be final, they should propose favourable and equitable terms with regard to Belgium and France and Italy, could they blame us if we concluded that they did so only to assure themselves of a free hand in Russia and the East ? Their purpose is undoubtedly to make all the Slavic peoples, all the free and ambitious nations of the Balkan Peninsula, all the lands that Turkey has dominated and misruled, subject to their will and ambition and build upon that dominion an Empire of force upon which they fancy that they can then erect an Empire of gain and commercial supremacy—an Empire as hostile to the Americas as to the Europe

which it will overawe—an Empire which will ultimately master Persia, India, and the peoples of the Far East. In such a programme our ideals, the ideals of justice and humanity and liberty, the principle of the free self-determination of nations upon which all the modern world insists, can play no part. They are rejected for the ideals of power, for the principle that the strong must rule the weak, that trade must follow the flag whether those to whom it is taken welcome it or not, that the peoples of the world are to be made subjects to the patronage and overlordship of those who have the power to enforce it.

That programme once carried out, America and all who care or dare to stand with her must arm and prepare themselves to contest the mastery of the world, a mastery in which the rights of common men, the rights of women, and of all who are weak, must for the time being be trodden under foot and disregarded, and the old, age-long struggle for freedom and right begin again at its beginning. Everything that America has lived for and loved and grown great to vindicate and bring to a glorious realization will have fallen in utter ruin, and the gates of mercy once more will be pitilessly shut upon mankind. The thing is preposterous and impossible; and yet is not that what the whole course and action of the German armies has meant wherever they have moved? I do not wish even in this moment of utter disillusionment to judge harshly or unrighteously. I judge only what the German arms have accomplished with unpytting thoroughness throughout every fair region they have touched.

What, then, are we to do? For myself I am ready, ready still, ready even now, to discuss a fair and just and honest peace at any time that it is sincerely proposed—a peace in which the strong and the weak should fare alike. But the answer when I proposed such a peace came from the German commanders in Russia, and I cannot mistake the meaning of the answer. I accept the challenge. I know that you accept it. All the world shall know that you accept it. It shall appear in the utter sacrifice and self-forgetfulness with which we shall give all that we love and all that we have to redeem the world and make it fit for free men like ourselves to live in. This now is the meaning of all that we do. Let everything that we say, my fellow-countrymen, everything that we henceforth plan and accomplish, ring true to this response till the majesty and might of our concerted power shall fill the thought and utterly defeat the force of those who flout and misprize what we honour and hold dear. Germany has once more said that force, and

force alone, shall decide whether justice and peace shall reign in the affairs of men, whether right as America conceives it, or dominion as she conceives it, shall determine the destinies of mankind. There is therefore but one response possible from us: force, force to the utmost, force without stint or limit, the righteous and triumphant force which shall make right the law of the world and cast every selfish dominion down in the dust.

LV

LORD MILNER'S SPEECH, JUNE 14, 1918.

We have never out of our thoughts the men in the field, and we must be all grateful for any agency which enables us to give practical effect to the constant and vivid sympathy which we feel with them in the Titanic struggle which they carry on with such courage and endurance. Times of great stress like the present have their compensations, and during this, the fiercest trial through which our country has ever passed, we are a more united nation than we have ever been before within living memory. It is the sign of a great uplifting that all party warfare, class differences, and industrial disputes are now submerged, for we are ashamed to pursue them while the very existence of our country and the future of humanity are at stake. I have just come from an important meeting with representatives of our great Dominions and India, which bore most impressive testimony to the spirit of unity that is drawing us all together. So also it is with the unity of the great nations which are fighting side by side with us in the cause of freedom. The issue for which we are fighting was never clearer. Some people have been asking for statements as to our war aims and objects. They wondered whether we were not really fighting for some territorial or commercial advantage for which they did not care to go on shedding blood; but the War Lords of Germany have removed all perplexity from our minds.

The military party has Germany under its heel and all her Allies in its grip. Germany has safeguarded herself in the East by a ring of dependent States, and she is now turning with all her might to the West, in order, by a supreme and desperate effort, to crush the remaining free nations, so as to dominate the world and form a central European *bloc* of irresistible military strength, supported by giant industries, drawing their raw material from all the rest of the world on Germany's own

terms, and leaving the supplying nations to enjoy just as much prosperity, freedom, and self-determination as Germany chooses to permit—a world of peaceful, servile States working for the profit of a great paramount Empire. That is the German peace as we see it illustrated to-day in the case of Russia and Rumania. That is the vision of the future of mankind which possesses the soul of the rulers of Germany to-day, for the attainment of which they are prepared to wade through further seas of blood. It is as certain as anything can be certain that that is an unattainable object, and that it will fail as every attempt to subjugate the world to a single will has failed from the time of the Roman Empire to the time of Napoleon. The liberty-loving nations of the world will fight on indefinitely for their ideal of a world commonwealth of free nations as opposed to the ideal of a new Roman Empire. So every fresh German success means not the fulfilment of German ambition, which is absolutely intolerable and unthinkable, but a further prolongation of the war. This is the day and the hour of the climax of Germany's power; therefore we have to fight as we never fought before in all our history, as our great noble French Allies are fighting, with every ounce of their strength, until the great reserves which the cause of freedom still possesses have been fully mobilized. The German War Minister has been sneering at the reserves of the Allies. But he laughs best who laughs last. If I could tell you the number of men that we have put into the field since this great battle began, the number that we are putting in now, and that we are going to put in, I should astonish you. But not even these numbers are enough. No effort can be too great when everything in the world is at stake. Those numbers would show that if we feel absolute confidence in our gallant Allies they are justified in the confidence they place in us.

LVI

STATEMENT BY COUNT BURIAN¹ IN REPLY TO LORD MILNER'S SPEECH OF JUNE 14th, IN AN INTERVIEW, JUNE 18, 1918.

[The speech made by Lord Milner in London on the 14th inst. was noticeably sharp in tone against the Powers of the Quadruple Alliance. It is true that Lord Milner spoke almost exclu-

¹ Successor to Count Czernin, who resigned office in April. See p. 41.

sively of Germany and her war aims, whilst he either passed over the other Powers in silence, or represented them as States in bondage to Germany, without either the power or the will to form an independent decision. Even though it is perfectly clear that Lord Milner's utterances were made from propagandist motives, we thought it necessary to learn the opinion of the Minister for Foreign Affairs with regard to these utterances, which differ perceptibly from the recent statements of English official circles. Count Burian, to whom our chief editor had applied with this object, made the following statement:—]

Lord Milner's speech gives us once more an insight into the psychology of our enemies. This speech clearly expresses the necessity our enemies are under of representing that the war aims of the Central Powers emanate from Germany's supposed intention of reducing not only Germany's enemies, but also her own Allies to slavery (*Knechtshaft*). Our peace treaties with Russia and Rumania have recently been spoken of as illustrating this desire for domination. Have Russians come under foreign domination through the conclusion of peace with the Soviet Republic? Or would a victorious England have dealt more leniently with the felony of an ally than we did with Rumania? But our opponent does not see that, and by painting the dreadful consequences of the intention of enslaving the world, of which we are accused, the Entente peoples are to be shown the necessity of a war of desperation to the point of exhaustion. That it is almost always a question of Germany alone is sufficiently explained by the above theses.

The complete unanimity of our group in the war, and in the war aims, is our strength which the enemy will not desist from trying to shake, in spite of all the efforts which have, so far, been in vain. When Lord Milner speaks of Germany, and thinks of us at the same time as her victim, he does the very thing he complains of himself, when he says that efforts are made—on the part of the Central Powers—"to set one allied nation against the other." Well, as far as we are concerned, he will not succeed in this.

For Austria-Hungary the "German yoke" is the yoke of mutual friendship, and full consideration for the interests of both parties. Otherwise the position between Austria-Hungary and Germany would not be tenable for a moment. Must one perpetually quote the well-known saying, "Only the most foolish of calves chooses his own butcher." Fortunately, we have for long had that which Lord Milner extols in the Entente,

the valuable possession of the moral unanimity of allies devoted to a common cause. We intend to endure jointly, and to consider one another until the victorious end.

As to the Central Powers' alleged aims of world domination, and the necessity they are under of "wading through yet further seas of blood," let Lord Milner for once make an honest attempt to acquaint himself more fully with the facts. He will be astonished to find how far removed our aims are from those which our adversaries are for ever trying to impose on the world as ours, and which they represent as a terrible bogey.

I entirely agree with Lord Milner that the aims imputed to us are unattainable. But I can assure him that there is not a man of sane mind in the Central Powers—and here Austria-Hungary may speak also in the name of Germany, in spite of Lord Milner—who would have set himself such an aim, even in his wildest dreams.

LVII

DECLARATION BY THE ALLIED GOVERNMENTS RECOGNIZING THE CZECHO-SLOVAKS, JUNE 3, 1918.

At the meeting held at Versailles on June 3, 1918, the Prime Ministers of the three Allied countries, Great Britain, France, and Italy, agreed to the following declarations:—

1. The creation of a united and independent Polish State, with free access to the sea, constitutes one of the conditions of a solid and just peace and of the rule of right in Europe.

2. The Allied Governments have noted with pleasure the declaration made by the Secretary of State of the United States Government, and desire to associate themselves in an expression of earnest sympathy for the nationalistic aspirations towards freedom of the Czechs-Slovak and Yugo-Slav peoples.

LVIII

DECLARATION BY THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA RECOGNIZING THE CZECHO-SLOVAKS, JUNE 1918.

The Secretary of State wishes to announce that the Congress of Oppressed Nationalities of Austria-Hungary, which took place in Rome in April, was followed with great interest by the Government of the United States, and that the national

aspirations of Czecho-Slovaks and Jugo-Slavs for liberty have the lively sympathy of this Government.¹

LIX

FROM BARON KUHLMANN'S² SPEECH, JUNE 25, 1918.

[After describing at length the position of affairs in the East, the speaker proceeded :—]

The longest day of the fourth year of the war is over, and it is precisely when one surveys events from a wide point of view that one feels bound to ask : Will the war, according to human calculation, last over the summer and winter, over next year? There is a common idea amongst the public that the length of the war is something absolutely new, as if authoritative quarters had in recent times never reckoned on a very long war. This idea is incorrect. As a witness for the Crown on this point I can call none less than Field-Marshal Count von Moltke, who on May 14, 1890, said in this House :—

“Gentlemen, if the war, which now for ten years past has been hanging like a sword of Damocles over our heads—if this war should break out, its length cannot be foreseen. It is the greatest Powers in Europe, armed as never before, which will enter into conflict with one another. Not one of them can in one or two campaigns be so completely beaten that it will declare itself vanquished, and be compelled to conclude peace on hard terms and that it would not raise itself up again to renew the battle even if only after a year. It can become a seven years', a thirty years' war, and woe to him who sets Europe afire, who first throws the match into the barrel of powder.”

Since the old master of German strategy made this statement the conditions have altered only in the sense that the Powers taking part in the war have further enormously increased their armaments, and that not only, as then appeared probable, the Powers of Europe, but also the great oversea Powers, like Japan and America, have joined in the conflict.

To fix one's eye with any certainty on any moment at which one can say with certainty, “The war must end at this time,” is therefore in my opinion impossible. The eye must therefore seek for political motives which might eventually open possi-

¹ A later statement of September 1918 recognizes the Czecho-Slovak National Council as a belligerent government.

² German Foreign Secretary.

bilities of peace, and in this connection I may say that despite the brilliant successes of our arms there has been nowhere clearly recognizable a desire for peace among our enemies or readiness for peace in authoritative quarters. The German Government has repeatedly laid down its standpoint in declarations intended for the widest publicity. Our enemies have nothing to show that can in any degree compare with the German peace offer, with the resolution of this House, or with the reply to the Papal Note,¹ and the declarations of our enemies, especially of English statesmen, who seize every opportunity of working for their views and ideas in public, allow as yet no peaceful ray of light to fall on the darkness of this war drama. Some days ago,² Mr. Balfour delivered a speech which was also noticed by the German public and to which I should like to devote some words, although it has thus far been available only in telegraphic extract. In this speech the old legend is repeated that Germany unchained this war to achieve world domination. This legend does not become truer through constant repetition. I do not believe that any intelligent man in Germany ever entertained before this war the hope or the wish that Germany should attain world domination; I do not believe that any responsible man in Germany (not to speak of the Kaiser or the Imperial Government) ever even for a moment thought they could win world domination in Europe by unchaining war. The idea of world domination in Europe is Utopian. Napoleon's example showed that. A nation which tried to achieve it would, as happened to France at the opening of the last century, bleed to death in useless battle and would be most grievously injured and lowered in her development.

This war—one may apply Moltke's phrase "woe to him who sets Europe afire"—shows itself more and more clearly as the work of Russia, of the conscienceless Russian policy, of the fear of the governing classes of the revolution which the insufferable conditions of the country brought nearer and nearer. I believe one can say, without fear of being contradicted by the result of further revelations and investigations, that the deeper we penetrate into the antecedents of the war the clearer it becomes that the Power which planned and desired the war was Russia; of the other Powers, that France played the worst rôle as the instigator of the war, that British policy has very dark pages to show in this respect, and that especially the attitude of the British Government in the days

¹ See Nos. I, XV, XX.

² House of Commons, June 20th. See Hansard, vol 107, No. 64.

before the outbreak of war was bound to strengthen and unchain the Russian desire for war. For that there are proofs enough in the documents already published.

So much as regards guilt for the war. Germany did not for a moment think of unchaining this war, and above all things did not for a moment think that this war could lead to domination over Europe, not to speak of world domination. On the contrary, German policy was then in the situation of having a good prospect of being able satisfactorily to realize its essential aims, the settlement of affairs in the East and the settlement of colonial affairs by the way of peaceful negotiation. Thus in no moment of our later history was there less occasion for us to start such a conflagration or to contribute to starting it than at the moment when it in fact occurred.

I consider it, however, useful and necessary not only to persist in the negation, not only to say that Mr. Balfour's declaration is a chimera, if not a calumny, but I consider it necessary to say quite simply and in a way easy for all to understand what our positive desires are. We wish in the world for the German people, and the same applies, *mutatis mutandis*, to our Allies, a secure, free, strong, and independent life; we wish beyond the seas to have the possessions which correspond to our greatness, wealth, and proved colonial capacities; we wish to have the possibility and the freedom to carry on a free sea our trade and our commerce to all quarters of the world. These are, in a few brief and generally intelligible words, quite roughly sketched, the aims whose achievement is an unconditional vital necessity for Germany.

In a former debate in this House I had the honour to point out that the absolute integrity of the territory of the German Empire and its allies formed a necessary prerequisite condition—I say expressly prerequisite condition—for accepting any peace discussion or peace negotiations whatever. I declared at that time that, outside that, all questions might be subject to discussion and agreement. I believe things are still so to-day.

From England the reproach is constantly made that we are not prepared, on a hint from England, to state our attitude publicly on the Belgian question. On this point the fundamental views of the Imperial Government differ from those ascribed to us by English statesmen. We regard Belgium as one of the questions in the entire complex. We must, however, decline to make, as it were, a prior concession by giving a statement on the Belgian question which would bind us without in the least tying the enemy.

Mr. Balfour, moreover, by way of precaution, has added that we must in no way imagine that an agreement on the Belgian question exhausts the stock of English or Entente wishes. He has prudently abstained from describing those points in which he intends to announce more far-reaching claims or desires. The supposition is not unjustified after our previous experiences that these words were, on the one hand, addressed to Paris, and that, on the other hand, covetous desires floated across the Mediterranean to parts of Palestine and Mesopotamia at present occupied by British troops. I hear already the justification which will be duly given for such wishes—namely, that England could not possibly make such sacrifices of blood and treasure without preserving for herself a modest gain.

As regards the probable course of events, the Chancellor and I have previously declared that in the present stage of development far-going advances on the road to peace are hardly any longer to be expected from the public statements which we shout to each other from the speaker's tribune. We can also quite adopt the words spoken on May 16th by Mr. Asquith, if we substitute "Imperial Government" for "British Government":—

"The Imperial Government has not shut the door to a step in the direction of an honourable peace, and if a proposal is made to us, from whatever side it may come, if it is not couched in uncertain terms, but rests on a firm foundation, then, I am sure, such a proposal will not, in the case of our Government, fall on deaf ears. This I hope may be clear."

We can for our part make the same declaration, aware as we are that it fully and entirely covers our policy. Once the moment has come (when it will come I should not care to prophesy) when the nations which at present are battling enter upon an exchange of views, a necessary prior condition will especially be that there should be a certain degree of mutual confidence in each other's probity and chivalry.

So long as every overture is regarded by the others as a peace offensive, as a trap, as something false for the purpose of sowing dissension between allies, so long as every attempt at *rapprochement* is immediately most violently denounced by the enemies of *rapprochement* in the various countries, so long is it impossible to see how any exchange of ideas can be started leading to peace. Without such an exchange of ideas, in view of the enormous magnitude of this coalition war, in view of the number of Powers, including those from overseas, involved in it,

an absolute end can hardly be expected through purely military decisions alone, without any diplomatic negotiations. Our position on the battlefields, our enormous reserves in military resources, our situation and determination at home, permit us to use such language. We hope that our enemies perceive that against the resources at our disposal the idea of a victory for the Entente is a dream and an illusion. They will in due course, as Mr. Asquith expected from us, find a way to approach us with peace offers which correspond to the situation and satisfy German vital needs.

LX

PRESIDENT WILSON'S SPEECH, JULY 4, 1918.

GENTLEMEN OF THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS AND MY FELLOW-CITIZENS,

I am happy to draw apart with you to this quiet place¹ of old counsel in order to speak a little of the meaning of this day of our nation's independence. The place seems very still and remote. It is as serene and untouched by the hurry of the world as it was in those great days long ago when General Washington was here and held leisurely conference with the men who were to be associated with him in the creation of a nation. From those gentle slopes they looked out upon the world and saw it whole, saw it with the light of the future upon it, saw it with modern eyes that turned away from a past which men of liberated spirits could no longer endure. It is for that reason that we cannot feel even here, in the immediate presence of this sacred tomb, that this is a place of death. It was a place of achievement. A great promise that was meant for all mankind was here given plan and reality. The associations by which we are here surrounded are the inspiring associations of that noble death which is only a glorious consummation. From this green hillside we also ought to be able to see with comprehending eyes that world which lies about us, and should conceive anew the purposes that must set men free. It is significant—significant of their own character and purpose and of the influences they were setting afoot—that Washington and his associates, like the Barons at Runnymede, spoke and acted not for a class but a people. It has been left for us to see to it that it shall be understood that they spoke and acted not for a single people only but for all mankind. They were

¹ Mount Vernon.

thinking not of themselves and of the material interests which centred in the little groups of landowners and merchants and men of affairs with whom they were accustomed to act in Virginia and the colonies to the north and south of her, but of a people which wished to be done with classes and special interests and the authority of men whom they had not themselves chosen to rule over them. They entertained no private purpose, desired no peculiar privilege. They were consciously planning that men of every class should be free and America a place to which men out of every nation might resort who wished to share with them the rights and privileges of free men. And we take our cue from them, do we not? We intend what they intended. We here in America believe our participation in this present war to be only the fruitage of what they planted. Our case differs from theirs only in this, that it is our inestimable privilege to concert with men out of every nation what shall make not only the liberties of America secure, but the liberties of every other people as well. We are happy in the thought that we are permitted to do what they would have done had they been in our place. There must now be settled once for all what was settled for America in the great age upon whose inspiration we draw to-day. This is surely a fitting place from which calmly to look out upon our task that we may fortify our spirits for its accomplishment. And this is the appropriate place from which to avow, alike to the friends who look on and to the friends with whom we have the happiness to be associated in action, the faith and purpose with which we act. This, then, is our conception of the great struggle in which we are engaged. The plot is written plainly upon every scene and every act of the supreme tragedy. On the one hand stand the peoples of the world—not only the peoples actually engaged, but many others also who suffer under mastery but cannot act; peoples of many races and in every part of the world—the people of stricken Russia still among the rest, though they are for the moment unorganized and helpless. Opposed to them, masters of many armies, stands an isolated friendless group of Governments who speak no common purpose, but only selfish ambitions of their own, by which none can profit but themselves, and whose people are fuel in their hands—Governments which fear their people and yet are for the time their sovereign lords, making every choice for them and disposing of their lives and fortunes as they will, as well as of the lives and fortunes of every people who fall under their power—Governments clothed with the strange

trappings and primitive authority of an age that is altogether alien and hostile to our own. The past and the present are in deadly grapple, and the peoples of the world are being done to death between them. There can be but one issue. The settlement must be final. There can be no compromise. No halfway decision would be tolerable. No halfway decision is conceivable. These are the ends for which the associated peoples of the world are fighting and which must be conceded them before there can be peace: first, the destruction of every arbitrary power anywhere that can separately, secretly, and of its single choice disturb the peace of the world, or, if it cannot be presently destroyed, at the least its reduction to virtual impotence. Second, the settlement of every question, whether of territory, of sovereignty, of economic arrangement, or of political relationship, upon the basis of the free acceptance of that settlement by the people immediately concerned, and not upon the basis of the material interest or advantage of any other nation or people which may desire a different settlement for the sake of its own exterior influence or mastery. Third, the consent of all nations to be governed in their conduct towards each other by the same principles of honour and of respect for the common law of civilized society that govern the individual citizens of all modern States in their relations with one another, to the end that all promises and covenants may be sacredly observed, no private plots or conspiracies hatched, no selfish injuries wrought with impunity, and a mutual trust established upon the handsome foundation of a mutual respect for right. Fourth, the establishment of an organization of peace which shall make it certain that the combined power of free nations will check every invasion of right and serve to make peace and justice the more secure by affording a definite tribunal of opinion to which all must submit and by which every international readjustment that cannot be amicably agreed upon by the peoples directly concerned shall be sanctioned. These great objects can be put into a single sentence. What we seek is the reign of law, based upon the consent of the governed and sustained by the organized opinion of mankind. These great ends cannot be achieved by debating and seeking to reconcile and accommodate what statesmen may wish, with their projects for balances of power and of national opportunity. They can be realized only by the determination of what the thinking peoples of the world desire, with their longing hope for justice and for social freedom and opportunity. I can fancy that the air of this place carries the

accents of such principles with a peculiar kindness. Here were started forces which the great nation against which they were primarily directed at first regarded as a revolt against its rightful authority, but which it has long since seen to have been a step in the liberation of its own people as well as of the people of the United States. And I stand here now to speak—speak proudly and with confident hope—of the spread of this revolt, this liberation, to the great stage of the world itself. The blinded rulers of Prussia have aroused forces they knew little of, forces which once roused can never be crushed to earth again, for they have at their heart an inspiration and a purpose which are deathless and of the very stuff of triumph.

LXI

**COUNT HERTLING'S REFERENCE TO BELGIUM,
JULY 15, 1918.**

Regarding the West, the Belgian question is still in the foreground. From the beginning of the war our view was that we had no intention of retaining Belgium for ever. As far as we are concerned, the war, as I said on November 29th last, was from the beginning a defensive war, and not a war of conquest. That we marched into Belgium was a necessity forced upon us by the circumstances of war. The occupation of Belgium was also in the same way a necessity forced on us by the war. It fully corresponds to The Hague regulations regarding warfare on land that we established a Civil Administration in Belgium. Accordingly, we introduced a German Administration there, in all domains, and I believe this was not to the disadvantage of the Belgian population. Belgium, in our hands, is a pawn for future negotiations. A pledge means a guarantee against certain dangers which are warded off by the retention in our hands of this pawn. This pawn is, therefore, only surrendered when these dangers are removed. Belgium, as a pawn, means, therefore, for us, that we must secure ourselves by the peace conditions, as I have already said, against Belgium ever becoming a jumping-off ground for our enemies, and not only in a military, but also in an economic sense. We must protect ourselves against being strangled economically after the war. Owing to its conditions and its development, Belgium is completely dependent on Germany. If we enter into close relations with Belgium in the economic domain it will

be also entirely to the interest of Belgium. If we succeed in getting into close relations with Belgium, and if we succeed in coming to an understanding with Belgium also with regard to political questions which touch Germany's vital interests, then we shall have a definite prospect that therewith we shall have the best security against future dangers which might menace us from Belgium, that is, through Belgium from England and France.

LXII

**COUNT BURIAN'S EXPOSÉ OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
JULY 16, 1918.**

In the midst of the terrible, yet in every theatre successful, struggle that the Central Powers are waging for their defence they are aiming at nothing save to force the enemy to a will for peace. If we collect all statements in regard to war aims that emanate from the camp of our adversaries we perceive three groups of objects with which it is sought to justify the continuance of the outpouring of blood. Ideals of humanity are to be realized. Freedom is to be established for all peoples, which are to form a world-alliance, and for the future settle their differences, not by arms, but arbitration. All domination of one by the other must be eliminated. Various territorial alterations are to be made at the expense of the Central Powers. These intentions of annexation have been for the most part well known, though with variations. But beyond this there is the design, particularly in regard to Austria-Hungary, to undertake internal dismemberment in order to form new State entities. Finally, our enemies wish to exact atonement and to punish us for our misdeeds. They desire our humiliation and repentance for having dared to defend ourselves, above all, effectively, against their attacks. Our capacity for defence is termed militarism, and must consequently be destroyed.

Nevertheless, the sole objects that really divide the belligerent parties are those of a territorial character. We ourselves wish to stand for the great interests of humanity, for justice, freedom, honour, international peace and equality of rights—for all these demands of political opinion consonant with the times, in regard to which we do not need to be instructed. Further, there is scarcely any difference between the general principles declared by the statesmen on both sides. Nor will Mr. Wilson's

four new points of July 4th, apart from some exaggerations, provoke opposition on our part; on the contrary, we can thoroughly and warmly approve them. No one refuses this homage to the spirit of humanity, or to furnish his co-operation. However, it is not a question of that, but of what is understood by these "goods of humanity."

And what these are both parties should honourably endeavour to establish clearly by mutual agreement. But not according to the method whereby, for example, our conclusions of peace in the East have been judged. Our adversaries were all invited to take part in them, and they could have taken steps to see that the results were different. But now, after the event, their criticism is on weak ground, for they have no legal justification in condemning peace terms which were acceptable to or unavoidable by the parties concerned. Our other adversaries, according to the note of confidence in their declarations, appear to have no fear of being defeated.

If, nevertheless, they represent these conclusions of peace as a discouraging example of how we treat conquered foes, we recognize no real justification in the implied reproach, but must recall that none of the belligerent States need ever reach the predicament of Russia or Rumania, as we are always ready to engage in peace negotiations with all enemies opposed to us in arms. If our adversaries keep on demanding expiation for wrongs committed, and "restorations," that is a claim which we can make against them with far more justification. For we are the attacked, and the losses caused us are the first that ought to be made good. On the other hand, the obstinacy with which the territorial demands for Alsace-Lorraine, the Trentino, Trieste, the German colonies, and so on, are put forward appears insuperable. This is the limit of our readiness for peace, which can permit everything to be discussed save our own inalienable possessions.

From Austria-Hungary the enemy not only desires to sever what he covets for himself, but the internal structure of the Monarchy is to be attacked, and so far as possible it is to be dissolved into its constituent parts. When it was recognized that the other instruments of war no longer sufficed for our overthrow, there was a sudden immense increase of interest in our internal affairs. The Entente has disclosed its concern in these matters so late in the war that many an enemy statesman voices as war aims nationality questions of the Monarchy of whose existence he had at the beginning of the war no idea. This is easily recognized from the dilettante and superficial

manner in which these complicated problems are discussed and "solved" on the enemy side. But the weapon seemed useful : our enemies organized it, as they organized the blockade, and England now has a Minister for Propaganda. We desire to mention this attack without unprofitable indignation or complaint. The choice of this means of fighting betrays no great confidence in the success of all their former efforts. We are certain that it will not achieve its purpose. Our enemies want to cripple and render us powerless internally by their agitation-offensive (*Verhetzungsoffensive*), and they would destroy our powerful organization in order to make the weak portions subservient to certain of their own objects. One-half of the population of Austria-Hungary may be ruined, and in order to make the other half happy in accordance with their uninvited prescriptions the senseless war must be continued. As has always happened in the course of centuries, the States and peoples of the Monarchy will be equal to their own internal problems in agreement with their ruler. The Monarchy resolutely declines foreign interference of any kind, in the same way as it does not busy itself with the affairs of others. We have never prescribed programmes for our enemies as to how they should regulate their internal questions. The enemy agitation activity is not satisfied with attempting to exasperate our peoples against each other ; it does not even shrink from sowing distrust between the peoples of the Monarchy and their hereditary dynasty by spreading vile and monstrous calumnies. In this they will never succeed. It is unnecessary to deal further with this method of fighting ; our peoples reject it with indignation. May it be branded for all time !

The resolute defensive struggle must now be continued until a satisfactory conclusion, and until it brings us the security requisite for our future undisturbed existence. This armed defence forced on us must, however, not be regarded as conflicting with a ceaseless political activity, for the purpose of promoting the aims of our self-defence, where possible, and without pause carrying on the war with the utmost vigour. The words "peace offensive" should be avoided, for in them is frequently implied the reproach that it is to a certain extent a question here of an underhand method of creating a substitute for successes in the war. It is difficult to understand, when in public discussion the work of diplomacy and the work of war are frequently regarded as two foreign ideas in conflict, as two operations that follow on one another, and condition one another, but do not proceed together, and can be applied alter-

nately. Prosecution of the war and diplomacy during war serve the same purpose; they cannot exclude one another. Diplomatic activity will at every step pay proper regard to the conduct of the war. The campaign results will be decisive for its work, but, on the other hand, it is the duty of diplomacy to be continually on the lookout and to note the possibilities of effective action. In this and no other light is to be regarded the readiness for peace of the Central Powers. It will not for a moment weaken the insurmountable defence of the Allies, but it will, after victorious battle, as during the pauses in the fight, even without fresh offers of peace, be always mindful to recall that we consider this war to have become a senseless and purposeless outpouring of blood, to which an end could be put at any moment by the return of humane feelings to our enemies. They, so far as they are not out for territorial aggrandisement, are tilting against windmills. They are exhausting their and our strength in order to raise on the ruins of civilization fresh arrangements of the world, the practical ideas of which, fully approved by us, they could really much more easily and completely bring to effective realization by the peaceful co-operation of all peoples. In spite of all we turn our glances ever more hopefully towards the peoples at present opposed to us to see whether at last the blindness is leaving them which, after the fearful visitations of the four years of war, is driving the world still further towards the disaster that, if they desire, can be avoided. Certainly we are suffering greatly in this war, but harder than our lot is our resolution to strive for our good right, until the enemy abandons his seductive, because wrongly applied, ideas and his arrogant desire for destruction.

In such trying and fateful hours the bulwark of our confidence is formed, as before, by our war alliances, which uniformly pursue the same aims of defence, especially our old alliance with the German Empire, which has proved itself beneficent in peace as in war, and which, in accordance with the undivided will of the peoples protected by it, should provide in the future also the assured means for us to extricate ourselves with united energy from the world-crisis, and then with powerful reciprocal support enable us to set out upon reconstruction and the glad and hopeful return to peaceful and secure national and economic life. Just as in the year 1879 the conclusion of the alliance created nothing new, but was only the solemn establishment of relations that had been formed as the result of deep political discernment on the part of the two neighbouring Powers and their rulers, as well as of the requirements of their peoples,

so it is with the experiences borne into the common consciousness over a long period of alliance, in united work and necessity, which induced Austria-Hungary and Germany to seek the way to an extension of the alliance corresponding to all requirements of the new age. Imbued with the spirit of the old treaty to mould the relations between Austria-Hungary and Germany more closely and intimately, that is the meaning of the endeavour of the allied rulers and their Governments, in which they know themselves to be in harmony with the desires of the overwhelming masses of their peoples. The alliance will in the future, as before, retain its exclusively defensive character. It will rest firmly on the satisfactory solution of all questions and requirements arising from the war and affecting us in common. The new treaty of alliance, therefore, will not only embrace the political relations of the two Powers, but also give occasion to adapt to altered conditions and experience gained the manifold economic, military, and other relations which are to be drawn still closer in the future, as well as to solve in accordance with the wishes of the population the questions connected with the rebirth of Poland. Thus arises a whole complex of highly important groups of interests, which, altogether and according to the general desire, should find a solution fully and completely satisfactory to both parties at the same time, even if in separate documents. Over the negotiations which are being carried on between the allied Governments for the accomplishment of this far-reaching aim reigns the supreme principle that, with due regard for form and substance, the sovereignty, complete equality, and independence of the contracting Powers should be maintained. The alliance will in the future imply no threat or unfriendly attitude towards anyone. Nothing will be incorporated in it calculated to compel or induce the formation of opposing groups.

All that may be realized in the future of the noble idea of a general League of Nations will find in our alliance no obstacle, but a receptive nucleus, a prepared group, that can easily and suitably combine with any general combination of States based on kindred principles. After what has been already said it is scarcely necessary to assert that we confidently hope and expect to remain in the closest relationship after the war also with our allies, Bulgaria and Turkey.

What we declared on December 12, 1916, is to-day still expressive of our views. Even if fearful events have since then made enormous alterations in the face of the world, we still pursue, as we did then, our defensive struggle, hallowed by

countless sacrifices, but always ready for an understanding that assures the honour, existence, and freedom for development of our peoples. The continuance of this war rests exclusively on the united will for destruction of the enemy rulers. They keep their peoples bound by catchwords, which may be honestly conceived, but are wrongly directed and propagated by recommendation of the most purposeless methods of carrying them into practice. Our enemies continue their bloodstained path towards objects which can be achieved only on the wreckage of the world. The strong defence of ourselves and our allies is guarantee that this will be prevented. Finally may be recalled the words of our noble ruler in his answer to the Peace Note of the Holy Father of August 1st last year: "We strive for a peace freeing the future life of the nations from hatred and lust for revenge, and assuring them for generations to come against the employment of armed strength."

LXIII

LORD LANSDOWNE'S THIRD LETTER, JULY 31, 1918.

We are about to commence the fifth year of the great struggle for liberty, and next week we shall reaffirm a solemn resolve not to desist from the effort until peace with honour is in sight. Meanwhile, with every month that passes, the toll which the war is claiming becomes heavier and heavier. The civilized world is being drained of its resources, and is spending its energies in purely destructive efforts, each of which involves a further diminution of its reserves of power and a further mutilation of the machinery of production. I have seen estimates which put the casualties sustained by the belligerent nations at 30,000,000, of which no fewer than 7,000,000 have been killed, while 6,000,000 are prisoners or missing. I will not dwell here upon the sacrifices which our own country is making, upon the exhaustion of our national wealth, upon our losses in tonnage and our infinitely more lamentable losses in human lives. A few weeks ago the Registrar-General, in a striking paper read at the Royal Institute of Public Health, dwelt upon the enormous decline in the birth-rate. He believes that the present war is costing the belligerent countries of Europe not fewer than 12,500,000 "potential lives." Up to the present we had lost in England and in Wales in potential lives, on the standard of 1913, 650,000. Every day that the war continues means,

he says, a loss of 7,000 " potential lives " to the United Kingdom, France, Italy, and the Central Empires—" while the war has filled the graves it has emptied the cradles."

Sooner than accept a dishonourable peace, we are all of us ready to fight on to the bitter end ; but there is not a man or woman in this country who does not realize the tragedy of these figures, and, indeed, there is probably not a Minister who has not, at one time or another, said that it would be criminal to continue the war a day after an honourable peace had come within our reach. The desire for peace is, so far as it is possible to judge, widespread among the enemy nations. How can it be otherwise? Upon no other assumption is it possible to explain the language of those Germans and Austrians who are in a position to speak their minds freely, or the constant " feelers " which are launched by the Governments of the Central Powers.

But we are, apparently, as far as ever from the end. The tide of carnage and destruction continues to flow, and carries all before it. From time to time a ray of reasonableness illuminates the gloom, only to be followed by a relapse into recriminations and controversies in which each side, instead of searching for points of agreement, is apparently content with dialectic successes. What is it that stands in the way? It is with no desire to embarrass his Majesty's Government that I ask the question. But many of us are sorely perplexed, and feel it our duty to give them a chance of affording us some measure of reassurance and enlightenment. There is, in the first place, I am convinced, a deep-seated desire for further explanation as to the conditions upon which we are prepared, not to make peace, but to open a discussion which might lead to peace. It is assumed that such a discussion cannot be commenced without some measure of preliminary agreement, and our leading statesmen constantly bid us congratulate ourselves because, although our enemies have refused to define their terms, we are supposed to have defined ours in unmistakable language. Has it been really unmistakable? No one will, of course, suggest that discussion is impossible until each side had obtained the assent of the other to an exhaustive catalogue of its requirements, but there are evidently certain cardinal points which neither side will treat as open to question.

Is it really the case that we have done all that can be expected of us in the way of the definition of such points? It may be frankly admitted that the difficulties of formulating such a list are serious. Diverse and possibly conflicting interests

have to be reconciled. We must make sure that we are in line, not only with our Allies, but with our great Dominions overseas. We have to face problems, political, racial, and geographical, of surpassing intricacy. There is a temptation to use vague language and broad generalities, and to slide over awkward questions, but what has been the use of our inter-Ally Conferences, and of the meetings of the Imperial Cabinet, if there has been no co-ordination of our aims? Pending a revised statement of our desiderata, we have, at any rate, a right to ask where we are, to look for an account of them as they now stand. Some of the earlier versions are obsolete, and may safely be set aside. For a long time the Allies' Note of January 10, 1917, was the governing document. Since then Russia has fallen out of the war, and, if for no other reason than this, the Note has become out of date. The secret treaties, the disclosure of which so seriously exercised the public mind in this country, may also, I assume, be regarded at any rate as liable to revision in many important particulars. Anyone who has read Mr. Balfour's speech in the House of Commons on June 20th will be assured by his frank announcement that, although the treaties were made in obedience to motives which would have moved any Government in power at the time to make the same or similar arrangement," they are "no obstacle to peace," nor would the fact that the Allies took a different view three years ago prevent them from listening to "reasonable suggestions" now.

The Prime Minister's memorable speech of January 7th last is, I understand, regarded as the most authoritative recital of the war aims of the Allies. Though lengthy and elaborate, it is at some points, perhaps inevitably, wanting in precision. People are asking whether it still holds the field, whether all the demands comprised in it are in the same plane, whether no "conversations" can be commenced until the Central Powers have signified their acceptance of the whole of them. It is noteworthy that a few days ago, when addressing the Canadian editors, the Prime Minister, referring to previous discussions of war aims, and the conditions under which we are prepared to make peace, announced that "We shall reconsider the whole of these problems in the light of events which have occurred since."

But since the January pronouncement there have been others not less striking. The most remarkable of these is President Wilson's Fourth of July speech, remarkable both for what it contains and what it omits. It derives additional importance

from the fact that our own Prime Minister, immediately after its delivery, wholeheartedly adopted it, and announced that "the Central Powers can have peace to-morrow" on the conditions specified by the President.

Owing to the dignity of its language and the high ideals by which it is inspired, no State paper has probably attracted more attention than President Wilson's speech. It is a picture, drawn by a great master, of the golden age to which we are bidden to look forward. It does not, however, seem to provide those who are in search of a basis for preliminary negotiations with the kind of groundwork after which they are striving. If Germany would intimate her readiness to conform to President Wilson's standards, a long advance would no doubt have been made in the right direction. The speech is, however, not an outline of peace terms, but a very nobly worded description of "the things for which the associated peoples of the world are fighting." Even if we could suppose that Germany, in pursuance of the policy laid down by the President, were ready to combine with other free nations in setting up a tribunal to secure peace and justice, even if we could assume that, as the result of her adhesion, "her power of disturbing the peace of the world would be reduced to virtual impotence," even if we had reason to hope that "all international controversies would, for the future, be settled upon the basis of free acceptance by the peoples immediately concerned," and that "all nations must hereafter be governed in their conduct towards each other by the same principles of honour and respect for the common law of civilized society that governs the individual citizen of all modern States," we should still find ourselves at the beginning and not at the end of an extremely complicated negotiation. We should still be without what Mr. Balfour (Edinburgh speech, January 11, 1918) insisted upon as a preliminary, viz., reasonable adjustment of the main territorial difficulties by which the Great Powers are divided, and adjustment under which, as he put it, "the international system would be in a condition of natural stability to begin with."

When, therefore, the Prime Minister announces that the Kaiser "can have peace to-morrow" if he will accept President Wilson's conditions, he surely overstates his case, nor, it seems to me, does he greatly advance it by intimating, for the benefit of those Germans who are continually warned that we are bent upon their utter destruction, that "the god of brute force must this time and for ever be broken and burnt in his own furnace."

We shall then certainly be again challenged both by friends and foes to state plainly, not the full terms of an ultimate world settlement, but the terms upon which we are willing to give diplomacy a chance. I do not know whether we shall still be told that no discussion is possible until the power of Germany has been once and for all broken by an overwhelming defeat in the field. If that is the obstacle, I recommend a careful study of the language used by General Smuts in the speech which he delivered at Glasgow on May 17th. Let me quote (from a Glasgow newspaper) his words, which were incompletely reported in several of the London journals:—

“When we talk of victory we don't mean marching to the Rhine, we don't mean marching to Berlin, we don't mean going on with this war until we have smashed Germany and the German Empire, and are able to dictate peace to the enemy in his capital. We shall continue the war until the objects for which we set out are achieved, and we will continue on a defensive basis to the very end. I don't think that an out-and-out victory is possible any more for any group of nations in this war, because it will mean an interminable campaign. It will mean that decimated nations will be called upon to wage war for many years to come, and what would the result be? The result may be that the civilization we are out to save and to safeguard may be jeopardized itself. . . . But if you are not going to fight the war out to a smash-up, then surely it is necessary sometimes to find out how things are going and what your opponent is thinking, and what advantage you may take of the situation as it is looked at by him. . . . We will not have a peace secured merely by the unaided efforts of armies in this war.”

(Compare with this Herr von Kuhlmann: “An absolute end can hardly be expected through military decision alone.”)

“We will have to use all our diplomacy and all the forces at our disposal in order to bring it to a victorious end. Now, how are you going to bring it there? I can conceive that you have fought up to a stage when the enemy is prepared to concede your principal terms, the terms you consider essential. But if there is no informal conference how are you to know that he is going to concede them? . . .

“The people are entitled to look to their Government and say: ‘We are bleeding away. We are doing our best for the cause, but we expect you as our leaders to do your part of the work.’ It is the duty of Governments to talk. There is no other way that you can achieve the results you are after.

They must talk to find whether a point has been reached at any time where there is concord and agreement on fundamentals, because, as soon as there is that concord, we should not continue to fight a day longer for non-essentials or things that don't matter."

Humbler persons have been held up to execration for using language of this kind. When it is used by a member of the War Cabinet, and by one so justly respected throughout the Empire as General Smuts, it cannot be treated as negligible. General Smuts's speech has given the *coup de grâce* to the theory of the "knock-out blow," and points the way to a true conception of that victory which all of us regard as indispensable, a victory aiming not merely at a momentary superiority in the field, but a permanent security under which President Wilson's ideals can eventually be realized, and the law-abiding communities relieved from the menace of German militarism. The test of its completeness will be found in the enemy's readiness to throw aside the doctrines of the extreme militarists and to accept terms which he would not have been allowed to look at when he set out upon his desperate enterprize. The German people has, as Lord Grey truly says, to be convinced that "force does not pay, and that the aims and policy of their military rulers inflict intolerable and also unnecessary suffering upon their country." Have we, then, reached the stage when there is a prospect of preliminary agreement upon essential points, and of profitable conversations? I am certainly not prepared to affirm positively that we have. Many people are of opinion that there have been occasions when such an agreement might have been reached, when, at any rate, it was worth while trying to reach it. They may be right, or they may be wrong. It is of no use to dispute over the past, but there are abundant indications that such occasions may present themselves in the near future. Let us be prepared to meet them, and in a reasonable spirit. Let us, at any rate, give our adversaries a chance of showing whether their overtures are sincere or not. Let us, if we can, clear our minds as to the question of preliminary conditions, as distinguished from war aims, and do not let us make believe that we have defined the former when we have in reality done nothing of the kind.

One word more. We shall be told that the moment when the Allied armies are achieving glorious successes in the field is not the moment for even hinting at the possibility of peace. If the hint had been thrown out at a moment when the fortunes

of war were turning against us we should have been told still more emphatically that that moment, too, was inopportune, and that we must meet our reverses with a bolder front. But surely, in the face of the world-wide calamities which this war has brought with it, no moment can be inopportune for the consideration of reasonable proposals put forward in good faith, and, if one moment is more opportune than another, it is the moment when events have shown that, whatever be the feeling which inspires us, it is not one of doubt as to our ability to hold our own in this deadly struggle, if we are forced to continue it.

LXIV

**SPEECH OF SOLF, GERMAN COLONIAL SECRETARY,
AUGUST 20, 1918.**

I daresay to-day that the safeguarding of our colonial future is not only the aim of our Government and of certain groups of interests, but that it has become an aim of the German people. A lively consciousness is now spreading extensively among the working classes that the retention of our colonial possessions is a vital question of honour for Germany as a Great Power, and that our colonial war-aim is second to no other war-aim in national importance. This unanimity is especially gratifying in view of the plans of our enemies which have been clearly revealed to us in the last few days as never before. We have before us to-day one of the most important utterances of British policy in Mr. Balfour's speech in the House of Commons.¹ The British Foreign Secretary formally announces Great Britain's claim to the annexation of our colonies, and does not hesitate to advance moral grounds for this claim. That is necessary in Great Britain. To this end he does not only concern himself with our colonial methods, but proceeds, with all sail set, right into high politics, undertakes a moralizing world walk, and announces in conclusion the British creed, which amounts to representing Britain's right to world domination as something self-evident, but morally annihilating Germany's claim to be a great Power. Mr. Balfour's accusation against Germany demands a reply. To keep silence concerning it would amount to being an accessory to his calumny of the Fatherland. I will, therefore, deal with the individual points of Mr. Balfour's speech so far as they are given in the telegraphic extract before

¹ August 8, 1918.

me. Mr. Balfour asserts that intellectual Germany is dominated by a moral "mailed fist" doctrine. Here and there are chauvinists and Jingoists, here and there are people who worship the eternal yesterday and await with anxiety and lack of understanding the approaching to-morrow of a new time. Before the war these people formed in this country a small group without influence in politics and without influence on the Government, which constantly combated them.

During the war their number has indeed increased, not because the struggle for German supremacy in the world has taken deeper root amongst us, but because their ranks are swelled by numerous sober and solicitous patriots. Amongst them are many who before the war held high ideals about an understanding of peoples, goodwill and fairplay in international relations, but whose political creed has broken down under the experiences of the war. Where does the blame lie? Nowhere but in the spirit which animates our enemies, that spirit which dishonours and has turned to scorn the grand ideal of a League of Nations by its simultaneous demand for a commercial war against Germany.

If I believed that that spirit which at present seems to prevail in England, which speaks clearly in Mr. Balfour's speech, or which was manifested against us in the Pemberton-Billing case—if I had to believe that this spirit would always have the upper hand in England, then I also would advocate that the war should be fought out to the death. I am, however, firmly convinced that before the end of the war comes, an intellectual revulsion must and will supervene against this knock-out spirit.

For, otherwise, the realization of the League of Nations remains a Utopian war-aim. I now turn to the points of Mr. Balfour's speech in detail.

Mr. Balfour first mentions Belgium. The Chancellor declared last month in the Reichstag,¹ to all who wished to hear, that we do not intend to retain Belgium in any form whatsoever. Belgium shall arise again after the war as an independent State, vassal to no one. Gentlemen, nothing stands in the way of the restoration of Belgium but the enemy's will to war. How small a part regard for Belgium plays in the plans of the Entente is most clearly shown by an extract from the American Press, which England's Minister of Propaganda, Lord Northcliffe, printed with enthusiastic approval in one of his papers. The *New York Times* wrote: "Germany's assurance that she does not intend to retain Belgium is neither of interest nor of value. The Allies will drive the Germans out of Belgium and France."

¹ See No. LXI.

Referring to this, Lord Northcliffe says in the *Evening News* of July 16th: "We rejoice to hear such a clear resounding voice from America. That is the way to speak. Germany must be destroyed in the sense of the *New York Times*—we mean, destroyed by bloody and absolutely irreparable defeats on the battlefield, so that nothing remains of Germany but the bones of her dead soldiers in France and Belgium. There is no other way."

Thus speak the protectors who for the sake of Belgium have drawn the sword.

Mr. Balfour's second charge is directed against our Eastern policy. To this I reply that the Brest-Litovsk peace came about by agreement between the Russian and German Governments that the frontier peoples of Russia, after centuries of oppression, should be permitted to live their own national life, for which object they have been striving. This agreement on the fate of the border peoples is a fact of world importance which can never be erased from history. Not about the aim, but about the ways and means leading to the conferring of their own national life upon these peoples, did the Russian and German conceptions differ. Our conception was, and is, that the path to freedom shall not lead through anarchy to wholesale murder. Between the first bursting of the bonds and full capability for self-determination of the border peoples, there lies a natural transitory period. Until the regulating forces should co-operate in various countries, Germany felt herself called upon to protect these communities in their own as well as the general interest, as, indeed, she has been called upon to do by both the national majorities and minorities.

The Brest-Litovsk peace is the framework, and the picture which is to appear within is only sketched in the rough lines. The German Government is firmly resolved not to misuse the protection which it has been asked for and which it has granted, for forcible annexations would bar the way now open to oppressed peoples, the road to freedom, order and mutual tolerance.

Gentlemen, England has forfeited the right to act as the moral champion of the Russian border States. In their unparalleled time of suffering during the war, they repeatedly appealed to England for help. It was always denied them. There was a time when England combated Tsaristic Russia more bitterly than any other nation. But when, in the course of the war, Russia in its own country suppressed the people, plundered and murdered, England remained mute, and, more

than that, before all the world excused and falsified facts about conditions in Russia. Thus, thanks to England's moral support, Russia committed murders on an unparalleled scale without interference from the conscience of the world. The receiver of stolen goods cannot be the judge. The problem of foreign races, even the entire Russian problem, is regarded by England entirely from the point of view of assisting British warfare. England is satisfied with any kind of constitution which maintains Russia as a serviceable piece of war machinery, and were Ivan the Terrible to rise again to weld Russia together to renewed fighting, he would be a welcome ally to England in the crusade for freedom and right. But, if Russia is unable to continue the war against Germany, then there must be at least civil war in order to prevent law and order from being established on Germany's Eastern borders. The recognition of the Czecho-Slovaks,¹ those landless robber bands, as an Allied Power is the logical keystone of the singular structure of Anglo-Russian friendship. The economic distress in the territories occupied by us is undoubtedly great, but it is cynicism when England laments this, because England's hunger blockade was directed against the occupied territories just as it was directed against the neutrals and against the whole world. Mr. Balfour discusses our relations to everyone of these border States. He begins by asserting that German intervention in Finland aimed at reducing Finland to a subject State to Germany—in other words, at creating a German Portugal.

What an unheard-of debasement of the Finnish fight for Independence, which for decades has filled all the sincere friends of small nations with enthusiasm. It appears, however, that Finland meets with no sympathy from England, because it feels itself menaced by English measures in North Russia, and because it objects to being cut off from its communication with the ice-free Murman coast.

With reference to our relations with the Baltic provinces, Poland, and the Ukraine, Mr. Balfour makes monstrous accusations. Briefly, we are accused of having treated these countries as England treated Greece, meaning that we pressed these peoples into active military service against Germany's enemies. Not a single soldier in these countries has been forced to fight for Germany's cause.

Next come Mr. Balfour's accusations against German-Rumanian policy. Here England plays the rôle of a man shouting "Stop Thief!" but the world's memory is not quite such a

¹ See Nos. LVII and LVIII.

short one. Who induced Rumania to leave its sound traditions? Does not Mr. Balfour think that Rumania's future would have been much better if its Government had loyally adhered to neutrality? Moreover, gentlemen, may I remind you of the fact that the Rumanian Press itself—and this only recently—emphasized as against the assertions of M. Bratianu and his followers that the elections to Parliament, on a majority of which the Government relied, took place in accordance with law and popular feeling without influence from the German Government?

I now come to what Mr. Balfour said about colonies, and I quote verbally: "We have expanded our territory. We have taken Germany's colonies, and I do not believe that anyone who has really studied Germany's methods of colonization will be surprised when we say that the improvement is great."

Then Mr. Balfour continues: "Shall we return these colonies to Germany, thereby placing at Germany's disposal U-boat bases on all the great trading routes of the world and also of world commerce? German rule in the colonies would mean tyrannical rule over the natives and the establishment of a large black army in Central Africa."

Gentlemen, this means that England conquers land and asserts that she could govern it better than its lawful owner, and from this derives a claim to annex it. By such arguments could the British world Monroe Doctrine be explained. I should like to put the following questions: Does the British State Secretary know nothing of the decimation of the coloured populations of various African colonies by the Entente's actions, nothing of enforced recruiting in British East Africa, as admitted in the House of Commons, nothing of gigantic armies of warriors and workers from British and French colonies?

Did he consult his colleagues of the English Colonial Office as to what it meant to wage war with natives against natives? Has he any idea of the immeasurable damage to the colonial mission of all civilized races which must result from the use of black armies in battle against white races and the bringing of the former to Europe? Does Mr. Balfour seriously doubt that the fate of all Africa would have been better if England had not disregarded the Congo agreement? Has he forgotten that Germany is the only Power waging war which has definitely adopted the demilitarization of Africa as one of her war aims? Is Mr. Balfour ready to promise the same on behalf of England and to break with French methods and Churchillian plans?

Gentlemen, I do not expect any answer to these questions.

Mr. Balfour's speech was not intended as a statesmanlike declaration. A khaki election casts its shadow before.

The short history of our colonies shows that neither in Africa nor in the Pacific Ocean did we wish to pursue, nor have we pursued, an aggressive policy. We strive for no supremacy and no preponderance of power. We wish for a compromise between the Colonial Powers, and we desire a settlement of colonial questions on the principle that colonial possessions shall correspond to the economic strength of the European nations, and to the merits which they have shown in history in the protection of the coloured races entrusted to their care.

Economic energy alone is not a sufficient claim. Colonization means mission work. Those States which endeavoured to act before the war on the principle of respecting humanity also in the coloured races, have won a moral right to be colonial Powers. This right was won by Germany before the war. The *beau geste* of the liberator with which the annexation of the German colonies as God's work is made plausible is blasphemy. Mr. Balfour appears to think that justification for the instinct for robbery of the English Imperialistic spirit is something obvious. Is it so obvious to him, that he does not notice how ridiculous it is in one and the same breath to brand Germany's striving for general mastery and to put forth for his own country an open claim to an undisguised policy of annexation in Africa and Asia? At the end of the speech of the Foreign Secretary stands a sentence saying that the abyss between the Central Powers and the Allies is so deep that it cannot be bridged. Mr. Balfour can go on and claim for himself that he has made this abyss deeper.

Permit me to cite words from Kant's "Eternal Peace," which weigh like a serious reproach on the world. "There must, amidst war, still remain some confidence in the way of thinking of an enemy, because otherwise no peace could ensue, and hostilities would deteriorate into a war of extermination."

You see, gentlemen, to maintain the idea of a war of extermination is precisely the purpose of a speech like Mr. Balfour's. The time must come when between people and people something like an impulse of confidence (*Regung des Vertrauens*) shall germinate. The time must come when oppressed human nature shall revolt against the false doctrines of hatred threatening to suffocate the innermost human affinities. Mr. Balfour feared such reaction, and this was precisely why he directed his accusations not solely against the German Government, but against the German people itself, and its peculiar character.

Gentlemen, the psychological situation on which the British statesman's actions are based is clear, namely, that our enemies do not want peace by negotiation. Once again a wave of arrogance is overwhelming peoples, just as was the case when Italy and Rumania joined in the war, and as has happened after every passing political or military success, and once again the old war aims come to the forefront, which are so clearly laid down in secret treaties which are still valid. To-day the Entente is again waging war for plunder and glory. These facts clearly permit the conclusion that we must regard Mr. Balfour's speech as an appeal to the German people to gather anew in the fifth year of war all its energy to suffer, to fight, and to be victorious as in the great days of mobilization in August, 1914.

Shall we respond as we feel, shall we also take our stand on the will to annihilation, on the knock-out policy, and abandon all those aims behind which lies the idea of the reconciliation of peoples? Gentlemen, I decline such a policy. It would be the greatest encouragement (*Erleichterung*) possible to the enemy in his war. We should allow the enemy to dictate to us our laws and our political actions. Let us not allow ourselves to be deceived by Mr. Balfour. He fights with a keen eye against the threatening possibility of peace. If the enemy statesmen had fought so vigilantly against the threatening war as they do to-day against the threatening peace, then there would never have been a world war.

Gentlemen, in all lands there are to-day groups and men which can be regarded as centres of European conscience. Do not think of isolated names either at home or in enemy countries. In these centres there stirs something like a recognition of the fact that a way into the open can only be found if the war-waging nations awaken to a knowledge of their common tasks. How can we avoid future wars; how can we assure the efficacy of international agreements in case of fresh wars; how can we assure the safety of non-combatants; how can we spare neutral States in future; how can we protect national minorities; how can we regulate our common duties of honour towards the minor races of the world?

Gentlemen, these are burning questions for humanity. Behind them stands the opinion of millions, behind them stands the unspeakable suffering of unparalleled experiences. And it is just among the fighters, among those who have fallen in all lands, among those who have lost strength, health, or the joy of life, that there have been thousands, thousands to whom the

sacrifice was a light thing because they believed they were losing nothing, that out of the mountain of sorrow, out of all the want and pain, a better world would arise which would ensure a peace of safety to their children and children's children, and mutual goodwill between peoples. Gentlemen, the victorious march of the common aims is certain. Mr. Balfour can postpone that victory, but he cannot prevent it.

LXV

**LORD ROBERT CECIL'S REPLY TO SOLF,
AUGUST 23, 1918.**

[The speech] is a great improvement, from one point of view, for there is a different tone from anything that has yet come from the Germans. If it be genuine—with a very large “if”—it is a first step to a return to sanity.

Dr. Solf makes some astonishing statements about the Pan-Germans not influencing the Government, and this follows on the morrow of the dismissal of Herr von Kühlmann because he quarrelled with the Pan-Germans.

The phrase employed by Dr. Solf with regard to Belgium is very much in advance of anything previously said about that country. The words “We do not intend to retain Belgium in any form whatsoever,” and so on, are far more satisfactory, as far as they go, than anything that has gone before, except for the fact that Dr. Solf says in connection with them that “the Chancellor declared last month,” etc. The Chancellor did make a statement of a very general kind, which he was forced to alter afterwards. If, therefore, Dr. Solf's statements are merely a paraphrase of the earlier remarks of the Chancellor they amount to very little indeed. Besides, there is no promise of reparation or security for the future. If, however, Dr. Solf's statement is to be regarded as apart from that made by the Chancellor it seems to me that it constitutes an advance.

The Colonial Minister's utterances concerning the Brest-Litovsk Treaty are the most ingenious part of his speech. In effect he said that the treaty is a temporary measure, designed to build up independent States on the basis of nationality. There is not really any ground for that assertion. This is the first time that we have heard that the Brest-Litovsk Treaty was temporary. It has always been treated as the first-fruit of the war.

In the second place, there is no ground to suggest that it was part of Germany's policy to set up really independent States. On the contrary, when a deputation—composed chiefly of Germans—went to the Emperor from Esthonia and elsewhere to ask for annexation the reply was that the request would be benevolently considered. The policy of Germany is not actually to annex these States, but to get them completely within her orbit and under her control. These States have been territorially constituted for this purpose. They have no homogeneous population, and so always constitute a condition of unstable equilibrium. Weak States have been set up which can hardly fail to be under the control of Germany. This is just the kind of half-clever thing that German statesmen delight in. I recognize the ingenuity of Dr. Solf's defence of the Brest Treaty, but on examination it is utterly insincere.

We now come to the German colonies. Dr. Solf is very indignant at the suggestion that German rule is inhumane. I do not believe that anyone knowing the facts will accept his opinion. The British Government has collected information on that subject, and in a short time there will be a Blue-book about German rule in the colonies. Some of the evidence is a fearful record of brutality.

I cannot accept Dr. Solf's doctrine that the Germans wanted a peaceful African empire. On the contrary, we know at any rate one important section of German thought advocated a German African empire to dominate Africa militarily, and furnish a great store for the military purposes of the German Empire. That is quite apart from the fact that the possession of coastal ports would be the greatest danger to the British Empire and of importance to Germany.

When Dr. Solf says that Mr. Balfour, or any British statesman, has definitely proposed the annexation of the African colonies to the British Empire that is inaccurate. No such proposal has ever been made. Mr. Balfour and others have said that it is impossible for Germany to resume control of her colonies. Beyond that neither Mr. Balfour nor Mr. Lloyd George has gone. The Prime Minister said that the future of the German colonies would be decided at the Peace Conference. Clearly a great world issue cannot be settled by this country alone. It has to be settled in concert with her Allies.

Dr. Solf's peroration comprises remarks about common sense, the horrors of war, and so on. These are general propositions with which everyone in this country has always agreed. Their force is entirely destroyed by the fact that, until the tide of war

appeared to change, we heard nothing about such doctrines. We all remember the stuff about the glories of war, its educative effect, and such diabolical trash. But just after the beginning of the German offensive we remember the outbreak all over Germany of the old demand for world domination. There is ample evidence of this in the German press.

All this sudden talk of anxiety for peace, if sincere, shows that Dr. Solf is either the subject of sudden conversion or almost alone among his fellow-countrymen. I am a vehement advocate of peace, but I am profoundly convinced that it is not obtainable without victory and the acknowledgment by Germany of her defeat.

LXVI

THE AUSTRIAN PEACE NOTE OF SEPTEMBER 15, 1918.

The peace offer which the Powers of the Quadruple Alliance addressed to their opponents on December 12, 1916, and whose conciliatory and basic ideas they have never given up, signifies, despite the rejection which it experienced, an important stage in the history of this war. In contrast to the first two and a half years of the war the question of peace has from that moment stood in the centre of European and, indeed, of world discussion, and has since occupied and dominated it in ever-increasing measure. Almost all the belligerent States have in turn again and again expressed themselves on the question of peace and its prerequisites and conditions. The line of development of these discussions, however, has not been uniform and steady. The basic standpoint has changed under the influence of the military and political position, and hitherto, at any rate, it has not led to a tangible and practicably utilisable general result. It is true that, independent of all these oscillations, it can be stated that the distance between the conceptions of the two sides has on the whole grown somewhat less, that despite the indisputable continuance of decided and hitherto unbridged differences a partial turning from many of the extremest concrete war aims is visible, and a certain agreement relative to the general basic principles of a world-peace manifests itself.

In both camps there is undoubtedly observable in broad classes of the population a growth of the will to peace and understanding. Moreover, a comparison of the reception of the peace proposal of the Powers of the Quadruple Alliance

by their opponents with later utterances of responsible statesmen of the latter, as well as of non-responsible but in a politic respect by no means uninfluential personalities, confirms this impression. Whilst, for example, the Allies' reply to President Wilson made demands which amounted to the dismemberment of Austria-Hungary, a diminution and profound internal transformation of the German Empire, and the destruction of Turkey's European ownership, these demands, whose realization was based on the supposition of overwhelming victory, were later modified in many declarations of official Entente quarters, or in part dropped.

Thus, in a declaration made in the British House of Commons about a year ago,¹ Mr Balfour expressly recognized that Austria-Hungary must itself solve its internal problems, and that no one could impose a constitution upon Germany from outside. Mr. Lloyd George declared at the beginning of this year² that it was not one of the Allies' war aims to partition Austria-Hungary, to rob the Ottoman Empire of its Turkish provinces, and to reform Germany internally. It may also be considered symptomatic that in December, 1917,³ Mr. Balfour categorically repudiated the assumption that British policy had ever engaged itself for the creation of an independent State out of territories on the left bank of the Rhine.

The declarations of the Central Powers leave no doubt that they are only waging a war of defence for the integrity and security of their territories. Far more outspoken than in the domain of concrete war aims there has proceeded a *rapprochement* of conceptions regarding those guiding lines upon the basis of which peace shall be concluded and the future order of Europe and the world be built up. In this direction President Wilson, in his speeches of February 12th and July 4th this year, has formulated principles which did not encounter contradiction on the part of his Allies, and whose far-going application is likely to meet with no objection also on the part of the Powers of the Quadruple Alliance, presupposing that this application is general and reconcilable with the vital interests of the States concerned.

It is true, it must be remembered, that an agreement on general principles does not suffice, but that it is, further, a matter of reaching an accord on their interpretation and their application to individual concrete war and peace questions.

For an unprejudiced observer there can be no doubt that in

¹ House of Commons, July 30, 1917.

² See No. XXXIX.

³ House of Commons, December 19, 1917.

all belligerent States, without exception, the desire for a peace of understanding has been enormously strengthened, and that the conviction is increasingly spreading that a further continuance of the bloody struggle must transform Europe into ruins and a state of exhaustion that will lame its development for decades to come—and this without any guarantee of at the same time bringing about that decision by arms which has been vainly striven after by both sides in four years full of enormous sacrifices, sufferings, and exertions.

In what way and in what manner, however, can the way be paved for an understanding, and an understanding be finally attained? Is there any serious prospect whatever of reaching this aim by continuing discussion of the peace problem in the way hitherto followed? We have not the courage to answer the latter question in the affirmative. Discussion from one public tribune to another as it has hitherto taken place between the statesmen of the various countries was really only a series of monologues. It lacked, above all, directness. Speech and counter-speech did not fit into each other. The speakers spoke over one another's heads.

On the other hand, it was the publicity and ground of these discussions which robbed them of the possibility of fruitful progress. In all public statements of this nature a form of eloquence is used which reckons with effect at great distance, and effect on the masses. Consciously or unconsciously, however, one thereby increases the distance of the opponent's conception and produces misunderstandings which take root and are not removed, and makes a frank and simple exchange of ideas more difficult. Every pronouncement of leading statesmen directly after its delivery, and before authoritative quarters of the opposite side can reply to it, is made the subject of passionate or exaggerated discussion on the subject on the part of irresponsible elements. But anxiety lest they should endanger the interests of their prosecution of the war by unfavourably influencing feeling at home and prematurely betray their own ultimate intentions, causes also responsible statesmen themselves to strike a higher tone and stubbornly adhere to extreme standpoints.

If, therefore, an attempt is to be made to see whether a basis exists for an understanding calculated to avert from Europe the catastrophe of a suicidal continuation of the struggle, then, in any case, another method should be chosen which renders possible direct verbal discussion between the representatives of the Governments, and only between them. The opposing

conceptions of individual belligerent States would likewise have to form the subject of such a discussion and mutual enlightenment, as well as the general principles that shall serve as a basis for peace and the future relations of States to one another, and regarding which, in the first place, agreement can be sought with a prospect of success.

As soon as an agreement was reached on fundamental principles an attempt would have to be made in the course of the discussions concretely to apply them to individual peace questions, and thereby to bring about their solution.

We venture to hope that there will be no objection on the part of any of the belligerents to such an exchange of views. War actions would experience no interruption. The discussions, too, would only go so far as they were considered by the participants to offer prospects of success. No disadvantages could arise therefrom for the States represented. Far from being harmful, such an exchange of views could only be useful for the cause of peace. What the first time does not succeed can be repeated, and what has already been done has perhaps at least contributed to the clarification of views. Mountains of old misunderstandings might be removed and many new things perceived. Streams of pent-up human kindness would be released in whose warmth everything essential would remain, and, on the other hand, much that is antagonistic and to which excessive importance is still attributed would disappear.

According to our conviction all the belligerents owe it to humanity jointly to examine whether now, after so many years of a costly but undecided struggle whose entire course points to an understanding, it is possible to make an end to the terrible struggle.

The Royal and Imperial Government would like, therefore, to propose to the Governments of all belligerent States to send delegates to a confidential and non-binding discussion on basic principles for the conclusion of peace in a place in a neutral country and at a near date which would have to be agreed on, the delegates who are appointed to make known to one another the conception of their Governments regarding those principles, to receive analogous communications, and to request and give frank and candid explanations on all those points which need to be precisely defined.

The Royal and Imperial Government has the honour to request the Government of —, through the kind mediation of your Excellency, to bring this communication to the knowledge of the Government of —.

LXVII

**PRESIDENT WILSON'S REPLY TO THE AUSTRIAN
PEACE NOTE OF SEPTEMBER 15, 1918.**

The Government of the United States feels that there is only one reply which it can make to the suggestion of the Imperial Austro-Hungarian Government.

It has repeatedly and with entire candour stated the terms upon which the United States would consider peace, and can and will entertain no proposal for conference upon a matter concerning which it has made its position and purpose so plain.

LXVIII

**STATEMENT OF THE BELGIAN GOVERNMENT ON
THE REPORTED INTENTIONS OF GERMANY
TOWARDS BELGIUM, SEPTEMBER, 1918.**

The Belgian Government has received through an indirect channel communications which have thrown light on the intentions of Germany towards Belgium. Those communications were transmitted from Berne to the Belgian Ministry for Foreign Affairs, who immediately brought them to the knowledge of the Allied Governments. The Belgian Government has received no formal proposition coming directly from the Imperial Government.

According to the communications received the intention of Germany would be to demand of Belgium that she should bind herself to effect a solution of the languages question in conformity with German Imperial policy, thus requiring Belgium to abdicate the right inherent to sovereignty to solve one of the problems of her internal political organization in accordance with the freely expressed will, and in the interests, of the Belgian people.

Germany would also claim full amnesty for Belgian citizens who have been guilty of helping the plans of the enemy, and would in that way impose on the Belgian Government an act of submission.

Germany would insist on the maintenance after the war of commercial treaties previously in force, and this, following

upon the destruction of Belgian industry by the invader, would ensure Germany's grip on the country.

Moreover, the pawn theory is not abandoned. Germany would insist upon binding up the fate of Belgium with the solution of the colonial question.

Finally, the obligation which rests on Germany completely to repair the damage unjustly inflicted on its victim is not even alluded to. Germany would thus be enriched by the pillage of Belgium, whose ruin would be completed.

It should be noted that the statements published in the Press are inaccurate on the two following points: In opposition to what has been said, the communications which have been received by the Belgian Government mention neither an eventual suspension of hostilities between Belgium and Germany nor the evacuation of Belgian territory.

The conditions set forth above overshadow and render sterile all declarations which appear to recognize the independence of Belgium. They cannot be taken as the basis of any serious discussion. The Belgian Government formulated its programme in its Note to the Pope on December 24, 1917, published in January last, and, as all the Allied Governments know, is firmly resolved to maintain it undiminished.

LXIX

FROM PRESIDENT WILSON'S SPEECH AT NEW YORK, SEPTEMBER 27, 1918.

. . . I have come to seek an opportunity to present to you some thoughts which I trust will serve to give you, in perhaps fuller measure than before, a vivid sense of the grave issues involved, in order that you may appreciate and accept with added enthusiasm the grave significance of the duty of supporting the Government by your men and your means to the utmost point of sacrifice and self-denial. No man or woman who has really taken in what this war means can hesitate to give to the very limit of what they have, and it is my mission here to-night to try to make it clear once more what the war really means. You will need no other stimulation or reminder of your duty.

At every turn of the war we gain a fresh consciousness of what we mean to accomplish by it. When our hope and expectation are most excited, we think more definitely than before of the issues that hang upon it, and of the purposes which must be

realized by means of it. For it has positive and well-defined purposes which we did not determine and which we cannot alter. No statesman or assembly created them, no statesman or assembly can alter them. They have arisen out of the very nature and circumstances of the war. The most that statesmen or assemblies can do is to carry them out or be false to them. They were, perhaps, not clear at the outset, but they are clear now.

The war has lasted more than four years, and the whole world has been drawn into it. The common will of mankind has been substituted for the particular purposes of individual States. Individual statesmen may have started the conflict, but neither they nor their opponents can stop it as they please. It has become a peoples' war, and peoples of all sorts and races, of every degree of power and variety of fortune, are involved in its sweeping processes of change and settlement.

We came into it when its character had become fully defined and it was plain that no nation could stand apart or be indifferent to its outcome. Its challenge drove to the heart of everything we cared for and lived for. The voice of the war had become clear, and gripped our hearts. Our brothers from many lands as well as our own murdered dead under the sea were calling to us, and we responded fiercely and of courage. The air was clear about us. We saw things in their full, convincing proportions as they were, and we have seen them with steady eyes and unchanging comprehension ever since. We accepted the issues of the war as facts, not as any group of men either here or elsewhere had defined them, and we can accept no outcome which does not squarely meet and settle them.

The issues are these : Shall the military power of any nation or group of nations be suffered to determine the fortunes of peoples over whom they have no right to rule except the right of force ? Shall strong nations be free to wrong weak nations and make them subject to their purposes and interest ? Shall peoples be ruled and dominated even in their own internal affairs by arbitrary and irresponsible force or by their own will and choice ? Shall there be a common standard of right and privilege for all peoples and nations, or shall the strong do as they will and the weak suffer without redress ? Shall the assertion of right be haphazard and by casual alliance, or shall there be a common concert to oblige the observance of common rights ?

No man, no group of men, chose these to be the issues of the struggle. They are the issues of it, and they must be

settled—by no arrangement or compromise or adjustment of interests, but definitely and once for all, and with a full and unequivocal acceptance of the principle that the interest of the weakest is as sacred as the interest of the strongest. This is what we mean when we speak of a permanent peace, if we speak sincerely, intelligently, and with a real knowledge and comprehension of the matter we deal with.

We are all agreed that there can be no peace obtained by any kind of bargain or compromise with the Governments of the Central Empires, because we have dealt with them already, and have seen them deal with other Governments that were parties to this struggle at Brest-Litovsk and Bucharest.

They have convinced us that they are without honour, and do not intend justice. They observe no covenants, accept no principle but force and their own interest. We cannot come to terms with them. They have made it impossible. The German people must by this time be fully aware that we cannot accept the word of those who forced this war upon us. We do not think the same thoughts or speak the same language of agreement. It is of capital importance that we should also be explicitly agreed that no peace shall be obtained by any kind of compromise or abatement of the principles we have avowed as the principles for which we are fighting. There should exist no doubt about that. I am therefore going to take the liberty of speaking with the utmost frankness about the tacit implications that are involved in it.

If it be indeed and in truth the common object of the Governments associated against Germany and of the nations whom they govern, as I believe it to be, to achieve by the coming settlements a secure and lasting peace, it will be necessary that all who sit down at the peace table shall come ready and willing to pay the price, the only price, that will procure it, and ready and willing also to create in some virile fashion the only instrumentality by which it can be made certain that the agreements of the peace will be honoured and fulfilled.

That price is impartial justice in every form of the settlement, no matter whose interest is crossed, and not only impartial justice, but also the satisfaction of the several peoples whose fortunes are dealt with. That indispensable instrumentality is a League of Nations, formed under covenants that will be efficacious. Without such an instrumentality by which the peace of the world can be guaranteed, peace will rest in part upon the word of outlaws, and only upon that word. For

Germany will have to redeem her character not by what happens at the peace table but by what follows.

As I see it, the constitution of that League of Nations and the clear definition of its objects must be a part, in a sense the most essential part, of the peace settlement itself. It cannot be formed now. If formed now, it would be merely a new alliance confined to the nations associated against a common enemy. It is not likely that it could be formed after the settlement. It is necessary to guarantee the peace, and the peace cannot be guaranteed as an afterthought.

The reason—to speak in plain terms again—why it must be guaranteed is that there will be parties to the peace whose promises have proved untrustworthy, and means must be found in connection with the peace settlement itself to remove that source of insecurity. It would be folly to leave the guarantee to the subsequent voluntary action of the Governments we have seen destroy Russia and deceive Rumania.

But these general terms do not disclose the whole matter. Some details are needed to make them sound less like a thesis and more like a practical programme. These, then, are some of the particulars, and I state them with the greater confidence because I can state them authoritatively as representing this Government's interpretation of its own duty with regard to peace :—

(1) The impartial justice meted out must involve no discrimination between those to whom we wish to be just and those to whom we do not wish to be just. It must be a justice that knows no favourites and knows no standards but the equal rights of the several peoples concerned.

(2) No special or separate interest of any single nation or any group of nations can be made the basis of any part of the settlement which is not consistent with the common interest of all.

(3) There can be no leagues or alliances or special covenants and understandings within the general and common family of the League of Nations.

(4) And, more specifically, there can be no special selfish economic combinations within the League and no employment of any form of economic boycott or exclusion, except as the power of economic penalty by exclusion from the markets of the world may be vested in the League of Nations itself as a means of discipline and control.

(5) All international agreements and treaties of every kind must be made known in their entirety to the rest of the world. Special alliances and economic rivalries and hostilities have been

the prolific source in the modern world of the plans and passions that produce war. It would be an insincere as well as an insecure peace that did not exclude them in definite and binding terms.

The confidence with which I venture to speak for our people in these matters does not spring from our traditions merely and the well-known principles of international action which we have always professed and followed.

In the same sentence in which I say that the United States will enter into no special arrangements or understandings with particular nations, let me say also that the United States is prepared to assume its full share of responsibility for the maintenance of the common covenants and understandings upon which peace must henceforth rest. We still read Washington's immortal warning against "entangling alliances" with full comprehension and an answering purpose. But only special and limited alliances entangle, and we recognize and accept the duty of a new day in which we are permitted to hope for a general alliance which will avoid entanglements and clear the air of the world for common understandings and the maintenance of common rights.

I have made this analysis of the international situation which the war has created not, of course, because I doubted whether the leaders of the great nations and peoples with whom we are associated were of the same mind and entertained a like purpose, but because the air every now and again gets darkened by mists and groundless doubting and mischievous perversions of counsel, and it is necessary once and again to sweep all the irresponsible talk about peace intrigue and weakening morale and doubtful purpose on the part of those in authority utterly and, if need be, unceremoniously aside and say things in the plainest words that can be found, even when it is only to say over again what has been said before quite as plainly, if in less varnished terms.

As I have said, neither I nor any other man in Governmental authority created or gave form to the issues of this war. I have simply responded to them with such vision as I could command. But I have responded gladly and with a resolution that has grown warm and more confident as the issues have grown clearer and clearer. It is now plain that they are issues which no man can pervert, unless it be wilfully. I am bound to fight for them, and fight for them as time and circumstances have revealed them to me as to all the world. Our enthusiasm for them grows more and more irresistible as they stand out in more and more vivid and unmistakable outline. And the forces that

fight for them draw into closer and closer array, organize their millions into more and more unconquerable might, as they become more and more distinct to the thought and purpose of the peoples engaged.

It is the peculiarity of this great war that, while statesmen have seemed to cast about for definitions of their purpose and have sometimes seemed to shift their ground and their point of view, the thought of the mass of men whom statesmen are supposed to instruct and lead has grown more and more unclouded, more and more certain of what it is that they are fighting for. National purposes have fallen more and more into the background, and the common purpose of enlightened mankind has taken their place. The counsels of plain men have become on all hands more simple and straightforward and more unified than the counsels of sophisticated men of affairs, who still retain the impression that they are playing a game of power and playing for high stakes. That is why I have said that this is a peoples' war, not a statesmen's. Statesmen must follow the clarified common thought or be broken. I take that to be the significance of the fact that assemblies and associations of many kinds, made up of plain workaday people, have demanded almost every time that they came together, and are still demanding, that the leaders of their Governments declare to them plainly what it is exactly that they were seeking in this war, and what they think the items of the final settlement should be.

They are not yet satisfied with what they have been told. They still seem to fear that they are getting what they ask for only in statesmen's terms—only in the terms of territorial arrangements and discussions of power, and not in terms of broad-visioned justice and mercy and peace, and the satisfaction of those deep-seated longings of oppressed and distracted men and women and enslaved peoples that seem to them the only things worth fighting a war for that engulfs the world.

Perhaps statesmen have not always recognized this changed aspect of the whole world of policy and action. Perhaps they have not always spoken in direct reply to the questions asked, because they did not know how searching these questions were and what sort of answers they demanded. But I for one am glad to attempt the answer again and again, in the hope that I may make it clearer and clearer that my one thought is to satisfy those who struggle in the ranks, and are perhaps above all others entitled to a reply whose meaning no one can have any excuse for misunderstanding, if he understands the language

in which it is spoken or can get someone to translate it correctly into his own.

And I believe that the leaders of the Governments with which we are associated will speak, as they have occasion, as plainly as I have tried to speak. I hope that they will feel free to say whether they think that I am in any degree mistaken in my interpretation of the issues involved or in my purpose with regard to the means by which a satisfactory settlement of these issues may be obtained. Unity of purpose and of counsel are as imperatively necessary in this war as was unity of command in the battlefield, and with perfect unity of purpose and counsel will come assurance of complete victory. It can be had in no other way. "Peace drives" can be effectively neutralized and silenced only by showing that every victory of the nations associated against Germany brings the nations nearer the sort of peace which will bring security and reassurance to all peoples, and make the recurrence of another such struggle of pitiless force and bloodshed forever impossible, and that nothing else can. Germany is constantly intimating the "terms" she will accept, and always finds that the world does not want terms of peace. It wishes the final triumph of justice and fair dealing.

LXX

MR. BALFOUR'S SPEECH IN REPLY TO PRESIDENT WILSON, SEPTEMBER 30, 1918.

Our brothers across the Atlantic have described their magnificent financial effort as the Liberty Loan. They came into the war at a moment when the full magnitude of all the issues before mankind was thoroughly realized, fully conscious of what those issues were, and they very wisely named the great financial effort on which they were engaged after the cause which they had at heart—for that cause was liberty for the world. But there is yet another cause not embodied in the name, but present to the hearts of the Americans as much as to the hearts and conscience of the British, the French, the Italians, or all our allies—the consciousness, namely, that if we fail in this crisis not merely to win the war but to see that such wars do not recur—if we fail in that our task will be but half accomplished.

I am confident that all of you have read the speech which the President of the United States delivered a few days ago.

It had all those characteristics which make his public utterances unique in State documents. It had the eloquence, the absence of wearisome formalities, the directness and the magnificence of style to which he has accustomed us. And what was the main theme which he developed? It was this. That if the world is not only to have peace but is to be sure that it is going to have peace, it must come to some arrangement by which malefactors are to be kept in order. Justice as between the great nations and the small nations is to be preserved, not merely by pious sentiments, not merely by elaborate treaties, but by some machinery which will be effective for carrying out the objects with which it is created.

That is his first proposition. A League of Nations, or some machinery such as that contemplated in schemes of the League of Nations—some such scheme must be brought into being if we are to be sure that our labours in the present war are to bear their full fruit.

The second proposition, as I understood it, was that if you are to carry out this great ideal, with all its obvious and immense difficulties, the only time to do it effectually is the moment when peace itself is being forged by the labours of the victorious Powers. Allow that moment to pass, do you suppose that the world, weary of its tremendous efforts, absorbed in the domestic problems which will crowd upon us all, neutrals and belligerents alike, when this war is over, will have the patience, the endurance, and the resolution really to contrive the international machinery which shall carry out our objects? The President's opinion is—and personally I am very much of his mind—that to allow this occasion to sink into the past would be to lose one of the great opportunities given to mankind permanently to put international relations upon a sound, lasting, and moral footing.

These are two great pillars of the policy to which he has given eloquent expression, but evidently something yet further is required. Evidently we are bound to see that the work you require your new machinery to do shall not be greater than you can ask any machinery to do—in other words, if you are going to bring into existence international machinery for the securing of peace, you must so arrange the map of Europe, the map of the world, that great occasions for wars will not overwhelm you. If you perpetuate and petrify the state of things which exists now in Central Europe—if all the present evils are not potentially to recur—then you must do something more than merely establish a League of Nations.

You must put these wrongs right before a League of Nations sets to work. You must have a clean slate to work upon. You must not bring that in as a great reforming machinery, for a great reforming on these lines would be impossible. You must bring them in so that, after you have carried out those great reforms, after you have freed Europe from Prussian militarism, after you have restored Asia as well as Europe to a position in which self-development is possible for the various nationalities, then and then only will your League of Nations work.

In order to make a League of Nations possible, victory, complete victory, is absolutely necessary, and the dream of the Germans that by merely subscribing their names to a petition for such a League they can persuade their enemies that their heart is changed—that is a vain delusion. Germany seems to suppose that when the Allies talk of a change of heart and destruction of militarism all that is required is a few constitutional modifications of the Prussian State and a subscription to the admirable propositions which from time to time President Wilson has laid down. These superficial changes are of no value whatever if they stand by themselves.

Germany can only be a member of the League of Nations when the international system has been reformed by a great, a wise, and an all-embracing view, and that can never take place until Germany has not merely been obliged to change her profession of faith, but until Germany finds herself in a position when all her dreams of world-domination are torn to pieces before her eyes, and when she is left, powerful indeed as she will be left—powerful doubtless, prosperous doubtless, wealthy, but no longer the tyrant who can use the nations which she is in a position to influence to subserve her own dreams of world-empire.

I have talked to you about a League of Nations, which some people deride as an illusory project. I have talked to you about the future of international relations in a manner which may perhaps suggest that I am thinking too little of the immediate practical problems before us, too much of the dreams of the theorist. Believe me, if you think that, you are wrong. It is because the whole of the great practical effort we are now making is irradiated and elevated by those great ideals for the future that these efforts will be fruitful, that these efforts will bring us all that we dream of.

Unless we keep steadily before our eyes not merely the magnitude of the military effort, the military drama now being unfolded before us—unless we turn beyond these huge battle-

fields, these great and dramatic incidents of contemporary warfare, and look at them as a means towards this great moral and international end—unless we do that, believe me, we shall not, with all our bravery, with all our self-sacrifice, with all that we have done and are prepared to do, we shall yet not reach the ultimate, the highest goal of which we are capable.

We shall reach it, but we shall reach it because more and more, not this nation only but all the Allied nations of the world, are beginning to realize with a steady conviction that they are fighting now for something far bigger than mere national aims, something even bigger than the mere fortunes of this or that people. They are fighting for civilization itself, and the remotest corners of the world where the rumours of this great war reach but fitfully, even they are concerned in the success of your armies and of your efforts to-day. These are the motives which I hope will animate you as you spread through the country the propaganda recommended to you by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and if I rightly gauge the feelings of my countrymen, if I rightly measure all that they have done and are prepared to do, your appeal will not be made in vain.

LXXI

**THE GERMAN NOTE TO PRESIDENT WILSON,
OCTOBER 5, 1918.**

(Transmitted through the Swiss Government.)

The German Government requests the President of the United States of America to take in hand the restoration of peace, acquaint all belligerent States with this request, and invite them to send plenipotentiaries for the purpose of opening negotiations.

It accepts the programme set forth by the President of the United States in his Message to Congress of January 8th.

LXXII

**THE SPEECH OF PRINCE MAX OF BADEN (THE
NEW GERMAN CHANCELLOR[†]) IN THE REICHSTAG,
OCTOBER, 1918.**

In accordance with the Imperial Decree of September 30th, the German Empire has undergone a basic alteration of its political leadership. As successor to Count Hertling, whose

[†] Prince Max was appointed Chancellor on October 4th.

services to the Fatherland deserve the highest acknowledgment, I have been summoned by his Majesty the Kaiser to the head of the new Government. It is in accord with the nature of the Governmental method now introduced by us that I lay before the Reichstag publicly and without delay the principles by which I purpose conducting my gravely responsible office.

These principles were firmly established in agreement with the Federated Governments and with the leaders of the Majority parties of this honourable House before I decided to assume the duties of Imperial Chancellor; consequently they contain not only my own confession of political faith, but also that of the overwhelming portion of the German peoples, representatives, that is to say, of the German nation, which has constituted the Reichstag on the basis of a general, equal, and secret franchise, and according to their will. Only the fact that I know the conviction and the will of the majority of the people are at the back of me has given me strength to take upon myself the conduct of the Empire's affairs in the hard and earnest time in which we are living.

One man's shoulders would be too weak to carry alone the tremendous responsibility which falls upon the Government at the present time. Only if the people take an active part in the broadest sense of the word in deciding their destinies, in other words, if the responsibility also extends to the majority of the freely elected political leaders, can the leading statesman confidently assume his part of the responsibility in the service of the people and the Fatherland.

My resolve to do this has been especially lightened for me by the fact that the prominent leaders of the labouring class have found their way into the new Government and to the highest offices in the Empire. I see therein a sure guarantee that the new Government is supported by the firm confidence of the broad masses of the people, without whose true support their whole undertaking would be condemned to failure in advance. Hence what I say here to-day I say not only in my own name and in that of my official helpers, but also in the name of the German people.

The programme of the Majority parties, upon which I take my stand, contains first an acceptance of the answer of the former Imperial Government to the Pope's Note of August 1, 1917, and an unconditional acceptance of the Reichstag resolution of July 19th of the same year. It further declares willingness to join in a general League of Nations on the basis of equal rights for all, both the strong and the weak.

It considers the solution of the Belgian question to lie in a complete rehabilitation (*Wiederherstellung*) of Belgium, particularly of her independence and her territorial integrity. An effort should also be made to reach an understanding in regard to the question of an indemnity.

The programme will not permit the peace treaties hitherto concluded to be a hindrance in the way of the conclusion of a general peace. Its particular aim is that popular representative bodies shall be formed immediately on a broad basis in the Baltic Provinces, in Lithuania, and in Poland. We will further the bringing about of the necessary preliminary conditions, therefore, without delay, by the introduction of civilian rule. All these lands shall regulate their Constitution and their relations with neighbouring peoples without outside interference.

In the matter of internal policy I have taken a clear and firm stand through the manner in which the formation of the Government was brought about. At my suggestion the leaders of the Majority parties were summoned for direct advice. It was my conviction, gentlemen, that unity of Imperial leadership should be assured not only through the mere schematic party allegiance of the various members of the Government; I considered the unity of ideas as almost still more important.

I proceeded from this viewpoint, and have in making my selections laid the greatest weight on the fact that the members of the new Imperial Government stand on the basis of a just peace, regardless of the war situation, and that they openly declared this to be their standpoint at the time when we stood at the height of our military successes. Gentlemen, I am convinced that the manner in which Imperial leadership has now been constituted, with the co-operation of the Reichstag, is not something ephemeral, and that when peace comes a Government cannot again be formed which does not find its support in the Reichstag and does not draw its leaders from it.

War has conducted us beyond the old multifariously disrupted party life which made it so difficult to put into execution a uniform decisive political wish. The formation of a Majority Government means the formation of a political will, and an indisputable result of the war has been that in Germany for the first time great parties have joined together in a firm and harmonious programme, and have thus come into a position to determine for themselves the fate of the people.

This thought will never die. This development will never be retracted, and I trust that so long as Germany's fate is so ringed about by dangers those sections of the people outside

the Majority parties, and whose representatives do not belong to the Government, will put aside all that separates us and will give to the Fatherland what is the Fatherland's.

This development necessitated an alteration in our constitutions and revisions along the lines of the Imperial Decree of September 30th, which shall make it possible for those members of the Reichstag who enter the Government to retain their seats in the Reichstag. A bill to this end has been submitted to the Federal States and will immediately be made the object of their consideration and decision.

Gentlemen, let us remember the words spoken by the Kaiser on August 14, 1914, and which I permitted myself in December of last year in Karlsruhe to paraphrase: "There are, in fact, parties, but they are all German parties." Political development in Prussia, the principal German Federal State, must succeed in the spirit of these words of the Kaiser; and the message of the King of Prussia promising a democratic franchise must be fulfilled quickly and completely. I do not doubt, also, that those Federal States which still lag behind in the development of their constitutional conditions will also resolutely follow the Prussian example.

For the present, as the example of all the belligerent States demonstrates, the extraordinary powers which the condition of siege confers cannot be dispensed with, but a close relationship between the military and civilian authorities must be established which will make it possible that in all not purely military questions, and hence especially in regard to the censorship and the right of assemblage, the attitude of the civilian executive authorities shall make itself heard, and that a final decision shall be placed under the Chancellor's responsibility.

To this end an order of the Kaiser will be sent to the military commanders. With the 30th September, 1918, the day of the decree, begins a new epoch in Germany's internal history. The internal policy, the basic principles of which are therein laid down, is of deciding importance for the question of peace and war. The striking force which the Government has in its striving depends on whether it has behind it the united, firm, and unshakeable will of the people. Only if our enemies feel that the German people stand united at the back of their chosen leaders—and only then—can words become deeds.

At the peace negotiations the German Government will use its efforts to the end that the treaties shall contain provisions concerning the protection of labour and the insurance of labourers. Such provisions shall oblige the treaty-making States to institute

in their respective lands within a prescribed time a minimum of similar or at least equally efficient institutions for the security of life and health, as well as for the care of labourers in case of illness, accident, or invalidity.

Of direct importance are the conclusions which the Government in the brief span of its existence has been able to draw from the situation in which it found itself and to apply practically to the situation. More than four years of the bloodiest struggle against a world of numerically superior enemies lie behind us, years full of the hardest battles and the painfulest sacrifices. Nevertheless, we are of a strong heart and full of confident faith in our strength, resolved to bear still heavier sacrifices for our honour and freedom and for the happiness of our posterity, if it cannot be otherwise. We remember with deep and warm gratitude our brave troops, who, under splendid leadership, accomplished almost superhuman deeds throughout the whole of the war, and whose past deeds are a sure guarantee that the fate of us all will also in the future be in good and dependable hands when in their keeping.

For months a continuous, terrible, and murderous battle has been raging in the West. Thanks, however, to the incomparable heroism of our army, which will live as an immortal and glorious page in the history of the German people for all time, the front is unbroken. This proud consciousness permits us to look into the future with confidence, but just because we are inspired by this feeling and conviction it is also our duty to make certain that the bloody struggle shall not be protracted a single day beyond the moment when a termination of the war seems possible to us which does not affect our honour.

I have, therefore, not waited until to-day to take a step to further the idea of peace. Supported by the consent of all duly authorized persons in the Empire, and by the consent of all our allies acting in concert with us, I sent on the night of the 4th-5th of October, through the intermediary of Switzerland, a Note to the President of the United States, in which I requested him to take up the question of bringing about a peace, and to communicate to this end with all belligerent States. The Note will reach Washington to-day or to-morrow.

It is directed to the President of the United States because he, in his Message to Congress on January 8, 1918, and in his later proclamations, particularly in his New York speech of September 27th, proposed a programme for a general peace which we can accept as the basis of negotiations.

I have taken this step not only for the salvation of Germany

and her allies, but also for that of the whole of humanity, which has been suffering for years as a result of the war. I have taken it also because I believe the thoughts regarding the future well-being of the nations which were proclaimed by Mr. Wilson are in accord with the general ideas cherished by the new German Government, and with it by the overwhelming majority of our people.

So far as I am personally concerned, my earlier speeches to other assemblages of hearers testify that the conception which I hold of the future peace has undergone no change since I was entrusted with the leadership of the Empire's affairs. What I want is an honourable and enduring peace for all mankind, and I believe that such a peace would at the same time be the strongest rampart for the future well-being of our Fatherland. I see consequently no distinction between national and international mandates of duty in respect of peace. For me the deciding factor is solely that all the participants shall with equal honesty acknowledge these mandates as binding and respect them, as is the case with me and the other members of our new Government.

And so, with that inner peace which my clear conscience as a man and as a servant of our people gives me, and which rests at the same time upon my firm faith in this great and true people—this people capable of every devotion—and their glorious armed power, I await the outcome of the first action which I have taken as the leading statesman of the Empire. Whatever this outcome may be, I know it will find Germany firmly resolved and united either for an upright peace which rejects every selfish violation of the rights of others, or for a closing struggle for life and death to which our people would be forced not of their own fault if the answer to our Note by the Powers opposed to us should be dictated by the will to destroy us.

I do not despair at the thought that this second alternative may come. I know the greatness of the mighty powers yet possessed by our people, and I know that the incontrovertible conviction that they were only fighting for our life as a nation would double their powers. I hope, however, for the sake of all mankind, that the President of the United States will receive our offer as we mean it. Then the door would be opened to a speedy and honourable peace of justice and reconciliation both for us and our opponents.

LXXIII

**THE AUSTRIAN NOTE TO PRESIDENT WILSON,
OCTOBER 7, 1918.***From the Minister of Sweden to the Secretary of State.*

LEGATION OF SWEDEN, WASHINGTON, D.C.,

October 7, 1918.

EXCELLENCY,

By order of my Government I have the honour confidentially to transmit herewith to you the following communication of the Imperial and Royal Government of Austria-Hungary to the President of the United States of America :—

The Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, which has waged war always and solely as a defensive war and repeatedly given documentary evidence of its readiness to stop the shedding of blood and to arrive at a just and honourable peace, hereby addresses itself to his Lordship the President of the United States of America, and offers to conclude with him and his allies an armistice on every front, on land, at sea, and in the air, and to enter immediately upon negotiations for a peace for which the fourteen points in the Message to President Wilson to Congress of January 8, 1918, and the four points contained in President Wilson's address of February 12, 1916, should serve as a foundation, and in which the view-points declared by President Wilson in his address of September 27, 1918, will also be taken into account. Be pleased to accept, etc.

(Signed) W. A. F. EKENGREN.

LXXIV

**PRESIDENT WILSON'S REPLY TO THE GERMAN NOTE,
OCTOBER 8, 1918.***(Addressed to the Swiss Chargé d'Affaires at Washington.)*

SIR,

I have the honour to acknowledge on behalf of the President your Note of October 6th enclosing a communication from the German Government to the President, and I am instructed by the President to request you to make the following communication to the Imperial German Chancellor :

Before making a reply to the request of the Imperial German Government and in order that the reply shall be as candid and

straightforward as the momentous interests involved require, the President of the United States deems it necessary to assure himself of the exact meaning of the Note of the Imperial Chancellor.

Does the Imperial Chancellor mean that the Imperial German Government accepts the terms laid down by the President in his Address to the Congress of the United States on January 8th last and in subsequent Addresses, and that its object in entering into discussion would be only to agree upon the practical details of their application?

The President feels bound to say with regard to the suggestion of an armistice that he would not feel at liberty to propose a cessation of arms to the Governments with which the Government of the United States is associated against the Central Powers so long as the armies of those Powers are upon their soil.

The good faith of any discussion would manifestly depend upon the consent of the Central Powers immediately to withdraw their forces everywhere from invaded territory.

The President also feels that he is justified in asking whether the Imperial Chancellor is speaking merely for the constituted authorities of the Empire who have so far conducted the war. He deems the answers to these questions vital from every point of view.

Accept, sir, the renewed assurances of my high consideration.

LXXV

VISCOUNT GREY'S SPEECH OF OCTOBER 10, 1918.¹

I would first of all remind you of the objects with which this meeting was originally summoned. It arose out of the very remarkable speech of the President of the United States which he made on September 27th last. It was in many respects a very remarkable speech, and amongst other things it was remarkable for this—that it made a most pointed appeal to the Allies to say whether in any degree President Wilson was mistaken in his expressed interpretation of the issues of the war, or in his purpose with regard to the aims by which a settlement could be arrived at. A little time later Mr. Balfour spoke in the same sense. Mr. Barnes has spoken this afternoon. These are in some degree an answer to President Wilson.

Our object this afternoon is to make it clear that we, too,

¹ Delivered at Westminster to a meeting called by the *League of Nations Union*.

agree with that statement of the issues of this war, that it is our statement too, and that we believe in that method of obtaining a settlement of these issues which President Wilson so earnestly advocated. Of course, the really authoritative answer to the question of such aims, the authoritative answer on behalf of the country, must come in his own time and in his own way from the Prime Minister, and I have no doubt it will so come. Unity of purpose among the Allies was what President Wilson asked for, and that unity of purpose I am sure the other Allied Governments will provide.

But since this meeting was fixed many things have happened, many things most favourable to a successful end of the war.

I would like to say in a word my own feeling as to what the present situation is. It is this: that peace is within sight, but it is not yet within reach, and therefore the moral of it is that the country should put aside now as much as ever all controversial issues and be united in supporting the Government in the conduct of the war until peace is brought not only within sight but within reach.

Any disunion between the Allies, any want of support, anything which at this moment gives hope to Germany of a stalemate, or even of reversing the military situation in Germany's favour, and peace would recede, and we should again be face to face with the prolongation of the war, which I trust the united efforts of the Allies may now be able to avert. That, I think, is the moral of the present situation.

Germany has made her overture to President Wilson, and President Wilson has given a reply which seems to me both firm and wise, and as far as I am concerned, with regard to that particular overture, I am quite prepared to wait till the further developments which I suppose will follow upon President Wilson's reply shall show what they are.

I do agree with what Mr. Barnes said in his speech as to the general feeling of the people of this country with regard to the general lines of peace. I feel at this moment that the country is united, but that if any large section of the country came to feel that a real chance of a really good and secure peace was being missed or neglected, that union would be imperilled. That, I feel, is a danger on one side.

On the other side, I think what a nightmare it would be if, after having got to the Peace Conference, after believing that the end of the war was within reach, we found at this Conference that the military rulers of Germany were still the people of real authority, that the German people had relaxed into docile

subservience to the ends of their military rulers, and that the whole time peace was being discussed at the Conference the ground underneath was being undermined by the men who made the war, and whose policy and views with regard to war will never change.

That must be avoided at all costs. That is why again I say that President Wilson's reply seems to me a firm and wise reply. It is true that the overture from Germany is in advance of anything that has been before offered. We all approve of President Wilson's declarations as regards what the terms of peace should be, and if a sincere acceptance of those terms was forthcoming it was one which could not be turned down. Even that an approach should be made towards one forms an advance.

But we want to know, before we are on firm ground, where really is the seat of power in Germany. German Chancellors have crossed the stage like transient and embarrassed phantoms—to use an old phrase—for the last few months, and we do not know where we are in regard to the particular authority that is behind any particular Chancellor.

And then we have to bear this in mind. There was the Reichstag resolution of July last year, purporting to advocate a peace without any annexations and any indemnity. The military situation changed in Germany's favour, and the result was the Brest-Litovsk and Bucharest treaties, and an open scouting and deriding of the Reichstag resolution all over Germany as something which would not suit their purpose. Now, that is recent. Within the last year that has happened, and as far as I am concerned I feel that the reply which has been made so far to the German overture displays a clearness and a caution which were absolutely necessary.

Now, I would pass from that to the special subject with which we were to deal this evening—a League of Nations. I would like to clear the ground, to begin with, of one or two difficulties which I think are profoundly productive of discussion in this country. There are two suspicions which I think people should get out of their minds.

One is that there are some of those advocating a League of Nations amongst us who desire it, not to be a League of Nations to secure the peace of the world with fair terms, fair chances, and fair play for everybody, but a League of Allies for the purpose of maintaining the power or supremacy of a particular group of nations rather than for a world-peace on equal terms. I believe that suspicion to be unfounded with regard to either of the two societies which are advocating a League of Nations.

The other suspicion is that there are people advocating a League of Nations who desire a League of Nations propaganda to be used in order to secure a peace without being clear exactly as to whether it is a really satisfactory and sincere peace—in other words, who desire a League of Nations propaganda to be used as a substitute for the successful termination of the war. That is not in our minds either. A League of Nations cannot be a substitute for the successful termination of the war. It must arise out of a successful termination of the war.

[Speaking next on the formation of the League, Lord Grey said:] A League of Nations must be formed at the peace. If it is delayed beyond that, its chances of ever being formed are prejudiced. The elaboration, the consideration of the scheme will take weeks, may take months, and as it must be formed at the peace there is no time to be lost now.

Public opinion must ripen on the subject. Those who have ideas should work on the subject. The Government should prepare whatever scheme it can by the best minds at its disposal in order that things may be ready. I think that formula ought to be good enough for everybody who cares for a League of Nations.

Now let me go on to another point. One of the commonest objections I find to a League of Nations is this. People say: "You have had these schemes before. They have never come to anything. Why should they come to anything now?" Well, a League of Nations is machinery, and machinery is of no use unless there is power to drive it.

Our whole case is that the world, with the experiences of this war, with the revelation of what future wars will be, will be convinced at the end of this war that another war will be a crime and disaster to be avoided at all costs. That is what you must rely on to make the League of Nations machinery work, and one of the influences I rely on, in my time at any rate, is the men who survive this war and come back to their own country. These are the men who are going to be the most earnest about keeping the peace in the future. We all of us see some of them from time to time, and I know the feelings of those I see—I am thinking of the men from the ranks who come home. They wish this war to be brought to a successful conclusion to make peace secure, but they are determined that after it is made secure, so far as it lies with them, there shall be no more fighting in their lifetime.

Your League of Nations, therefore, is the machinery to carry out the determination on the part of the world to save future

wars. If that determination does not exist the machinery will be of no use, but if the machinery does exist then I believe that the world will insist upon the machinery being brought into use, and that is why I believe that the formation of a League of Nations is not only possible but is the test of whether the experience of this war has altered the whole point of view of nations with regard to the war engine.

Now let me take one or two points which we ought to have definitely settled in our mind with regard to the working of a League of Nations. How is it going to affect fiscal questions, for instance? There, again, I take, as I understand it, President Wilson's attitude the other day. He said, "No economic boycott within the League of Nations," but, as I understand, he contemplates each individual member of the League of Nations, each Empire, each State, each Republic, or whatever it may be, as being free within the League to settle its own fiscal questions for itself. We may have our own, we probably shall have our own, views here about the fiscal question. It will be very surprising if there is not some discussion upon it and some controversy, but, with regard to the League of Nations, we might keep that outside the question of the League, separate for ourselves in our own way.

But having settled our fiscal question, then you must recognize that in the League of Nations you will be bound to apply that fiscal system, whatever it may be, equally to all the other members of the League, and you won't be able to differentiate against them. That I understand to be the principle laid down by President Wilson. That is a principle which certainly commends itself to me. And that, I think, is the principle which must be accepted if the League of Nations is to be a league that is to guarantee the peace of the world.

There is another important point in connection with the fiscal side of the League of Nations. During this war there has been brought into existence an economic boycott of the enemy countries, and I am told it has been very effective. The machinery for it is in existence. In my opinion, the Allies who have brought that machinery into existence should keep that machinery ready as part of the League of Nations, and if in future years an individual member of the League breaks the covenant of that League, that economic weapon is going to be the most powerful weapon in the hands of the League as a whole.

I think that economic weapon most valuable as a future influence in keeping peace, in deterring nations who have come

into the League of Nations from breaking any covenants of that League. But if it is to be a valuable influence for that purpose, you must not bring it into existence before the purpose has arisen, before there has been some breach of the covenant on which the League is formed.

I come to another thorny and difficult subject connected with the League of Nations—the question of what is called disarmament. You have got the principle. You have to handle the question of disarmament very carefully. You will find many apprehensions. There are many apprehensions in this country that, somehow or other, a League of Nations is going to put us in a disadvantageous position—where we might, by a bit of bad faith or otherwise, be put in a position in which we are not sufficiently capable of defending ourselves.

I think you have got to go very carefully in your League of Nations in the proposals you may take or adopt with regard to what is called disarmament.

One thing I don't mind saying at once. Before this war the expenditure on armaments, naval and military, had been going up by leaps and bounds. Germany had been forcing the pace in both. She led the way up the hill in increasing expenditure on armaments. She must lead the way down the hill. That, as the first condition from our point of view, goes without saying. There can be no talk of disarmament till Germany, the great armourer, is disarmed.

But then, I think, we must go much further than that. I think a League of Nations might insist upon each Government which is a member of the League becoming itself responsible for the amount of armaments made in its own country. Your difficulty now is that in any given country there may be a vast number of ships of war, guns, munitions of war being made, and the Government may say, "But these are being made by private firms for other countries. We have nothing to do with them." I do not see why it should be impossible for Governments to agree that they will keep that matter in their own hands, that they will give the fullest possible information and the fullest opportunities for acquiring information as to the actual amount of what are called armaments being constructed or available in each country at any given time. If that is done, and you find some Government beginning to force the pace in armaments, I rather think you will find the matter being brought before the League of Nations. A discussion would arise as to whether it was not time to bring the economic weapon into use before things had gone any further.

A League of Nations may have considerable power provided the Governments admit responsibility for the amount of armaments being constructed. But, remember, even so you will not have, by any regulations you make about armaments, disposed completely of the question. Supposing to-morrow, or after the war is over, financial pressure was so great and the feeling that another war was very remote was so strong that ships of war and munitions of war ceased to be constructed in the world at large, and those which are now in existence were allowed to lapse or become obsolete till armaments had disappeared in the form in which we know them. Suppose that happened. You would not have settled the question, because then the potential weapons of war would be the merchant ships, commercial aeroplanes—all those things which will be developed after the war, and upon the construction of which you can have no limitation. They will go on being built. You cannot limit these ships or commercial aeroplanes, and the fewer ships of war and the fewer fighting aeroplanes that there are in the ordinary sense of these words as we now know them, the more potential as weapons of war become the ships, chemicals of all kinds, and aeroplanes used in commerce.

Is not the moral this, then, that the one thing which is going to produce disarmament in the world is a sense of security, and I believe a League of Nations may produce, and will produce, that sense of security in the world at large which will make disarmament in the sense of reduction of armaments a reality and not a sham. That is one reason for advocating a League of Nations, in order to get that sense of security.

One other point. We must, with a League of Nations, be sure, in putting all these ideals forward, that we have been saying what we mean and meaning what we say. When the time comes for the war to be brought to a successful conclusion we must make it clear that the object of a League of Nations has been to get a League formed—and that is made clear in every speech of President Wilson—into which you can get Germany, and not formed in order to find a pretext for keeping her out. On the other hand, your League must not be a sham, and you must have no nations in it who are not sincere; and that means you must have every Government in the League representing a free people, which is as thoroughly convinced as the countries now wishing the League of the objects of the League, and as thoroughly determined to carry out those objects in all sincerity. That you must do.

When you come to define democracy—real democracy and not a sham democracy—I would call to mind that it is not a question of defining special Constitutions. We here under a form of constitutional monarchy are as democratic as any Republic in the world, and I trust the people of this country to do as Lord Morley once said about jingoism. He said, “I cannot define a jingo, but I know one when I see him”; and I believe the people of this country are perfectly capable, though they may not wish to define what constitutes democracy, of knowing democracy when they see it. You can trust no Government, as President Wilson has said, which does not come to you with credentials that it exists with the confidence of the people behind it, and is responsible to that people and no one else.

There are one or two things more which I think may be done by a League of Nations, and which are very important. I don't see why a League of Nations, once formed, should necessarily be idle. I don't see why it should not arrange for having an international force at its disposal, which should act as the police act in individual countries.

It sometimes happens, for instance, that a wrong is done for which some backward country—very often a small backward country—will not give redress. Its Government perhaps lacks authority, and you have seen from time to time under such circumstances that the stronger nation has resorted to force and has seized a port, or brought some other pressure to bear, and invariably the other nations' jealousies are excited, quite apart from the merits of the dispute, thinking that the stronger nation is in some way pursuing its own interest. I think these cases may be settled by a League of Nations, if it had an international force, without giving rise to suspicions and jealousies or separate political aims being pursued.

Another thing: it may possibly do a great deal with regard to Labour. I think Labour is undoubtedly going to take a larger and more permanent share in the Governments than it has done before. It may be that here or elsewhere we shall have Labour Governments—I put this forward tentatively. Labour now has international conferences, but they are unofficial. Is it not possible that, as Labour takes a larger and more permanent share in the Governments, it may find the League of Nations useful as a means of giving a more official character to these international consultations on the interests of Labour which independent Labour has already encouraged and taken part in?

There are countries in the world, independent nations but more loosely organized, for one reason or another incapable through their Governments of managing their own affairs effectively from the point of view of those other more highly organized countries who wish to treat with them, and they want assistance in the shape of officials from the more highly organized countries. There is an instance in the Imperial Maritime Customs service in China, formed by the Chinese Government under Sir Robert Hart, and worked as an international force with the approval of all, and worked in the interests of China and the whole world: But there are other countries in the world where that sort of thing is even more needed, and it is very seldom done because the weaker country which needs it is afraid of admitting the foreign officials, for fear there should come political designs and influences. It is discouraged, too, because the individual countries are jealous of one another getting a footing in these countries through the officials. But if you had a League of Nations, what was done for China in the form of an international Customs service might be done for other countries which need such assistance more frequently.

It is true that in future fresh troubles may arise. You cannot get absolute security by any human machinery you may invent, but a League of Nations will improve your chance of security, and place the international relations of the world on a higher plane than we have ever reached before or was ever possible before.

LXXVI

**THE GERMAN NOTE OF OCTOBER 12, 1918, IN REPLY
TO PRESIDENT WILSON'S NOTE OF OCTOBER 8th.**

In reply to the questions of the President of the United States of America the German Government hereby declares :—

The German Government has accepted the terms laid down by President Wilson in his address of January the 8th and in his subsequent addresses on the foundation of a permanent peace of justice. Consequently its object in entering into discussions would be only to agree upon practical details of the application of these terms.

The German Government believes that the Governments of the Powers associated with the Government of the United States also adopt the position taken by President Wilson in

his address. The German Government, in accordance with the Austro-Hungarian Government, for the purpose of bringing about an armistice, declares itself ready to comply with the propositions of the President in regard to evacuation. The German Government suggests that the President may occasion the meeting of a mixed Commission for making the necessary arrangements concerning the evacuation.

The present German Government, which has undertaken the responsibility for this step towards peace, has been formed by conferences and in agreement with the great majority of the Reichstag. The Chancellor, supported in all of his actions by the will of this majority, speaks in the name of the German Government and of the German people.

SOLF,
State Secretary of Foreign Office.

LXXVII

PRESIDENT WILSON'S REPLY TO THE GERMAN NOTE OF OCTOBER 12th. OCTOBER 14, 1918.

In reply to the communication of the German Government dated the 12th inst., which you handed me to-day, I have the honour to request you to transmit the following answer :—

The unqualified acceptance by the present German Government, and by the large majority of the German Reichstag, of the terms laid down by the President of the United States of America in his address to Congress of the United States on the 8th of January, 1918, and in his subsequent addresses, justifies the President in making a frank and direct statement of his opinion with regard to the communications of the German Government of the 8th and 12th of October, 1918.

It must be clearly understood that the process of evacuation and the conditions of armistice are matters which must be left to the judgment and advice of the military advisers of the Government of the United States and the Allied Governments, and the President feels it his duty to say that no arrangement can be accepted by the Government of the United States which does not provide absolutely satisfactory safeguards and guarantees of the maintenance of the present military supremacy of the armies of the United States and the Allies in the field. He

feels confident that he can safely assume that this will also be the judgment and decision of the Allied Governments.

The President feels that it is also his duty to add that neither the Government of the United States nor (he is quite sure) the Governments with which the Government of the United States is associated as a belligerent will consent to consider an armistice as long as the armed forces of Germany continue the illegal and inhuman practices which they still persist in.

At the very time that the German Government approaches the Government of the United States with proposals of peace its submarines are engaged in sinking passenger ships at sea, and not ships alone, but the very boats in which their passengers and crews seek to make their way to safety ; and in their present enforced withdrawal from Flanders and France the German armies are pursuing a course of wanton destruction which has always been regarded as in direct violation of the rules and practices of civilized warfare. Cities and villages (if not destroyed) are being stripped of all they contain ; not only that, but often of their very inhabitants.

The nations associated against Germany cannot be expected to agree to the cessation of arms while acts of inhumanity, spoliation, and desolation are being continued which they justly look upon with horror and with burning hearts.

It is necessary also, in order that there may be no possibility of misunderstanding, that the President should very solemnly call the attention of the Government of Germany to the language and plain intent of one of the terms of peace which the German Government has now accepted. It is contained in the address of the President delivered at Mount Vernon on the 4th of July last. It is as follows :—

“The destruction of every arbitrary power anywhere that can separately, secretly, and of its single choice disturb the peace of the world, or if it cannot be presently destroyed at least its reduction to virtual impotency.”

The power which has hitherto controlled the German nation is of the sort here described. It is within the choice of the German nation to alter it.

The President's words just quoted naturally constitute a condition precedent to peace if peace is to come by the action of the German people themselves.

The President feels bound to say that the whole process of peace will, in his judgment, depend upon the definiteness and satisfactory character of the guarantees which can be given

in this fundamental matter. It is indispensable that the Governments associated against Germany should know beyond a peradventure with whom they are dealing.

The President will make a separate reply to the Royal and Imperial Government of Austria-Hungary.

Accept, sir, the renewed assurances of my high consideration.

(Signed) ROBERT LANSING.

LXXVIII

PRESIDENT WILSON'S NOTE OF OCTOBER 18th, IN REPLY TO THE AUSTRIAN NOTE OF OCTOBER 7th.,

From the Secretary of State to the Minister of Sweden.

SIR,

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your Note of the 7th inst., in which you transmit a communication of the Imperial and Royal Government of Austria-Hungary to the President. I am now instructed by the President to request you to be good enough, through your Government, to convey to the Imperial and Royal Government the following :—

The President deems it his duty to say to the Austro-Hungarian Government that he cannot entertain the present suggestion of that Government because of certain events of the utmost importance which, occurring since the delivery of his Address of January 8th last, have necessarily altered the attitude and responsibility of the Government of the United States. Among the fourteen terms of peace which the President formulated at that time occurred the following: "The peoples of Austria-Hungary whose place among the nations we wish to see safeguarded and assured should be accorded the freest opportunity of autonomous development."

Since that sentence was written and uttered to the Congress of the United States the Government of the United States has recognized¹ that a state of belligerency exists between the Czecho-Slovaks and the German and Austro-Hungarian Empires, and that the Czecho-Slovak National Council is a *de facto* belligerent Government, clothed with proper authority to direct the military and political affairs of the Czecho-Slovaks.

¹ See No. LVIII.

It has also recognized in the fullest manner the justice of the nationalistic aspirations of the Jugo-Slavs for freedom.

The President is therefore no longer at liberty to accept a mere "autonomy" of these peoples as a basis of peace, but is obliged to insist that they, and not he, shall be the judges of what action on the part of the Austro-Hungarian Government will satisfy their aspirations and their conception of their rights and destiny as members of the family of nations.

Accept, sir, the renewed assurances of my highest consideration.

(Signed) ROBERT LANSING.

LXXIX

THE GERMAN NOTE OF OCTOBER 20, 1918, IN REPLY TO PRESIDENT WILSON'S NOTE OF OCTOBER 14th.

In accepting the proposal for an evacuation of the occupied territories, the German Government has started from the assumption that the procedure of this evacuation and of the conditions of armistice should be left to the judgment of the military advisers, and that the actual standard of power on both sides in the field has to form the basis for arrangements safeguarding and guaranteeing this standard.

The German Government suggests to the President that an opportunity should be brought about for fixing the details. It trusts that the President of the U.S. will approve of no demand which would be irreconcilable with the honour of the German people and with opening a way to a peace of justice.

The German Government protests against the reproach of illegal and inhumane actions made against the German land and sea forces, and thereby against the German people. For the covering of a retreat destructions will always be necessary, and are, in so far, permitted by International law.

The German troops are under the strictest instruction to spare private property and to exercise care for the population to the best of their ability. Where transgressions occur in spite of these instructions the guilty are being punished.

The German Government further denies that the German Navy in sinking ships has ever purposely destroyed lifeboats with their passengers.

The German Government proposes, with regard to all these charges, that the facts be cleared up by neutral Commissions.

In order to avoid anything that might hamper the work of peace, the German Government has caused orders to be dispatched to all submarine commanders precluding the torpedoing of passenger ships, without, however, for technical reasons, being able to guarantee that these orders will reach every single submarine at sea before its return.

As the fundamental condition for peace, the President prescribes the destruction of every arbitrary power that can separately, secretly, and of its own single choice disturb the peace of the world. To this the German Government replies: Hitherto the representation of the people of the German Empire has not been endowed with an influence on the formation of the Government. The Constitution did not provide for a concurrence of the representation of the people in decisions of peace and war.

These conditions have just now undergone a fundamental change. The new Government has been formed in complete accordance with the wishes of the representatives of the people, based on equal, universal, secret, direct franchise. The leaders of the great parties of the Reichstag are members of this Government.

In future no Government can take, or continue in, office without possessing the confidence of the majority of the Reichstag. The responsibility of the Chancellor of the Empire to the representatives of the people is being legally developed and safeguarded.

The first act of the new Government has been to lay before the Reichstag a Bill to alter the constitution of the Empire, so that the consent of the representatives of the people is required for decisions on war and peace. The permanence of the new system is, however, guaranteed not only by constitutional safeguards, but also by the unshakeable determination of the German people, whose vast majority stands behind these reforms and demands their energetic continuance.

The question of the President, with whom he and the Governments associated against Germany are dealing, is, therefore, answered in a clear and unequivocal manner by the statement that the offer of peace and an armistice has come from a Government which, free from any arbitrary and irresponsible influence, is supported by the approval of the overwhelming majority of the German people.

(Signed) SOLF,
State Secretary of the Foreign Office.

LXXX

**PRESIDENT WILSON'S NOTE OF OCTOBER 23, 1918, IN
REPLY TO THE GERMAN NOTE OF OCTOBER 20th.**

*(Addressed to the Chargé d'Affaires of Switzerland at
Washington.)*

From the Secretary of State to the Chargé d'Affaires of Switzerland, *ad interim* in charge of German interests in the United States.

SIR,

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your Note of the 22nd transmitting a communication under date of the 20th from the German Government and to advise you that the President has instructed me to reply thereto as follows:—

Having received the solemn and explicit assurance of the German Government that it unreservedly accepts the terms of peace laid down in his Address to the Congress of the United States on January 8, 1918, and the principles of settlement enunciated in his subsequent Addresses, particularly the Address of September 27th, and that it is ready to discuss the details of their application, and that this wish and purpose emanate, not from those who have hitherto dictated German policy and conducted the present war on Germany's behalf, but from Ministers who speak for the majority of the Reichstag, and for an overwhelming majority of the German people; and having received also the explicit promise of the present German Government that the humane rules of civilized warfare will be observed both on land and sea by the German armed forces, the President of the United States feels that he cannot decline to take up with the Governments with which the Government of the United States is associated the question of an armistice.

He deems it is his duty to say again, however, that the only armistice he would feel justified in submitting for consideration would be one which should leave the United States and the Powers associated with her in a position to enforce any arrangements that may be entered into, and to make a renewal of hostilities on the part of Germany impossible.

The President has, therefore, transmitted his correspondence

with the present German authorities to the Governments with which the Government of the United States is associated as a belligerent, with the suggestion that, if those Governments are disposed to effect peace upon the terms and principles indicated, their military advisers and the military advisers of the United States be asked to submit to the Governments associated against Germany the necessary terms of such an armistice as will fully protect the interests of the peoples involved, and ensure to the associated Governments the unrestricted power to safeguard and enforce the details of the peace to which the German Government has agreed, provided they deem such an armistice possible from the military point of view.

Should such terms of armistice be suggested, their acceptance by Germany will afford the best concrete evidence of her unequivocal acceptance of the terms and principles of peace from which the whole action proceeds. The President would deem himself lacking in candour did he not point out in the frankest possible terms the reason why extraordinary safeguards must be demanded.

Significant and important as the constitutional changes seem to be which are spoken of by the German Foreign Secretary in his Note of October 20th, it does not appear that the principle of a Government responsible to the German people has yet been fully worked out, or that any guarantees either exist or are in contemplation that the alterations of principle and of practice now partially agreed upon will be permanent.

Moreover, it does not appear that the heart of the present difficulty has been reached. It may be that future wars have been brought under the control of the German people, but the present war has not been ; and it is with the present war that we are dealing. It is evident that the German people have no means of commanding the acquiescence of the military authorities of the Empire in the popular will ; that the power of the King of Prussia to control the policy of the Empire is unimpaired ; that the determining initiative still remains with those who have hitherto been the masters of Germany.

Feeling that the whole peace of the world depends now on plain speaking and straightforward action, the President deems it his duty to say, without any attempt to soften what may seem harsh words, that the nations of the world do not and cannot trust the word of those who have hitherto been the masters of German policy, and to point out once more that in concluding peace and attempting to undo the infinite injuries and injustices of this war the Government of the United States

cannot deal with any but veritable representatives of the German people who have been assured of a genuine constitutional standing as the real rulers of Germany.

If it must deal with the military masters and the monarchical autocrats of Germany now, or if it is likely to have to deal with them later in regard to the international obligations of the German Empire, it must demand not peace negotiations but surrender. Nothing can be gained by leaving this essential thing unsaid.

Accept, sir, the renewed assurances of my high consideration.

(Signed) ROBERT LANSING.

LXXXI

THE GERMAN NOTE OF OCTOBER 27th IN REPLY TO PRESIDENT WILSON'S NOTE OF OCTOBER 23rd.

The German Government takes cognizance of the reply of the President of the United States.

The President knows the deep-rooted changes which have taken place and are still taking place in German constitutional life. The peace negotiations will be conducted by a People's Government, in whose hands the decisive legal power rests in accordance with the Constitution, and to which the Military Power will also be subject.

The German Government now awaits the proposals for an armistice which will introduce a peace of justice such as the President in his manifestations has described.

LXXXII

THE AUSTRIAN NOTE OF OCTOBER 27th IN REPLY TO PRESIDENT WILSON'S NOTE OF OCTOBER 18, 1918.

In reply to the Note which President Wilson on October 18th addressed to the Austro-Hungarian Government, and in the sense of the decision of the President to deal in particular with Austria-Hungary in regard to the question of an armistice and peace, the Austro-Hungarian Government has the honour to declare that, as in the case of the preceding statements of

the President, it also adheres to his point of view as laid down in his last Note regarding the rights of the peoples of Austro-Hungary, particularly those of the Czecho-Slovaks and the Jugo-Slavs.

Consequently, as Austria-Hungary accepts all conditions upon which the President makes an entry into the negotiations regarding an armistice and peace dependent, nothing now stands in the way, in the opinion of the Austro-Hungarian Government, of the commencement of *pourparlers*.

The Austro-Hungarian Government declares itself in consequence prepared, without awaiting the result of other negotiations, to enter into *pourparlers* regarding peace between Austria-Hungary and the States of the opposing party, and regarding immediate armistice on all the fronts of Austria-Hungary.

It begs President Wilson to be good enough to make overtures on this subject.¹

LXXXIII

PRESIDENT WILSON'S NOTE TO GERMANY OF NOVEMBER 5, 1918.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE,
November 5, 1918.

SIR,

I have the honour to request you to transmit the following communication to the German Government.

In my Note of October 23, 1918, I advised you that the President had transmitted his correspondence with the German authorities to the Governments with which the Government of the United States is associated as a belligerent, with the suggestion that, if those Governments were disposed to effect peace upon the terms and principles indicated, their military advisers and the military advisers of the United States be asked to submit to the Governments associated against Germany the necessary terms of such an armistice as would fully protect the interest of the peoples involved and ensure to the associated Governments the unrestricted power to safeguard and enforce the details of the peace to which the German Government had agreed, provided they deemed such an armistice possible from the military point of view. The President is now in receipt

¹ The terms of the armistice were drawn up by the War Council of the Allies in Paris, and accepted by Austria-Hungary on November 3rd.

of a memorandum of observations by the Allied Governments on this correspondence, which is as follows :—

The Allied Governments have given careful consideration to the correspondence which has passed between the President of the United States and the German Government. Subject to the qualifications which follow, they declare their willingness to make peace with the Government of Germany on the terms of peace laid down in the President's Address to Congress of January 8, 1918, and the principles of settlement enunciated in his subsequent Addresses.

They must point out, however, that Clause 2, relating to what is usually described as the freedom of the seas, is open to various interpretations, some of which they could not accept.

They must, therefore, reserve to themselves complete freedom on this subject when they enter the Peace Conference.

Further, in the conditions of peace laid down in his Address to Congress of January 8, 1918, the President declared that the invaded territories must be restored as well as evacuated and freed, and the Allied Governments feel that no doubt ought to be allowed to exist as to what this provision implies.

By it they understand that compensation will be made by Germany for all damage done to the civilian population of the Allies and their property by the aggression of Germany by land, by sea, and from the air.

I am instructed by the President to say that he is in agreement with the interpretation set forth in the last paragraph of the memorandum above quoted.

I am further instructed by the President to request you to notify the German Government that Marshal Foch has been authorized by the Government of the United States and the Allied Governments to receive properly accredited representatives of the German Government, and to communicate to them the terms of an armistice.¹

Accept, sir, the renewed assurances of my highest consideration.

(Signed) ROBERT LANSING.

To MR. HANS SULZER, *Minister of Switzerland, in charge of German interests in the United States.*

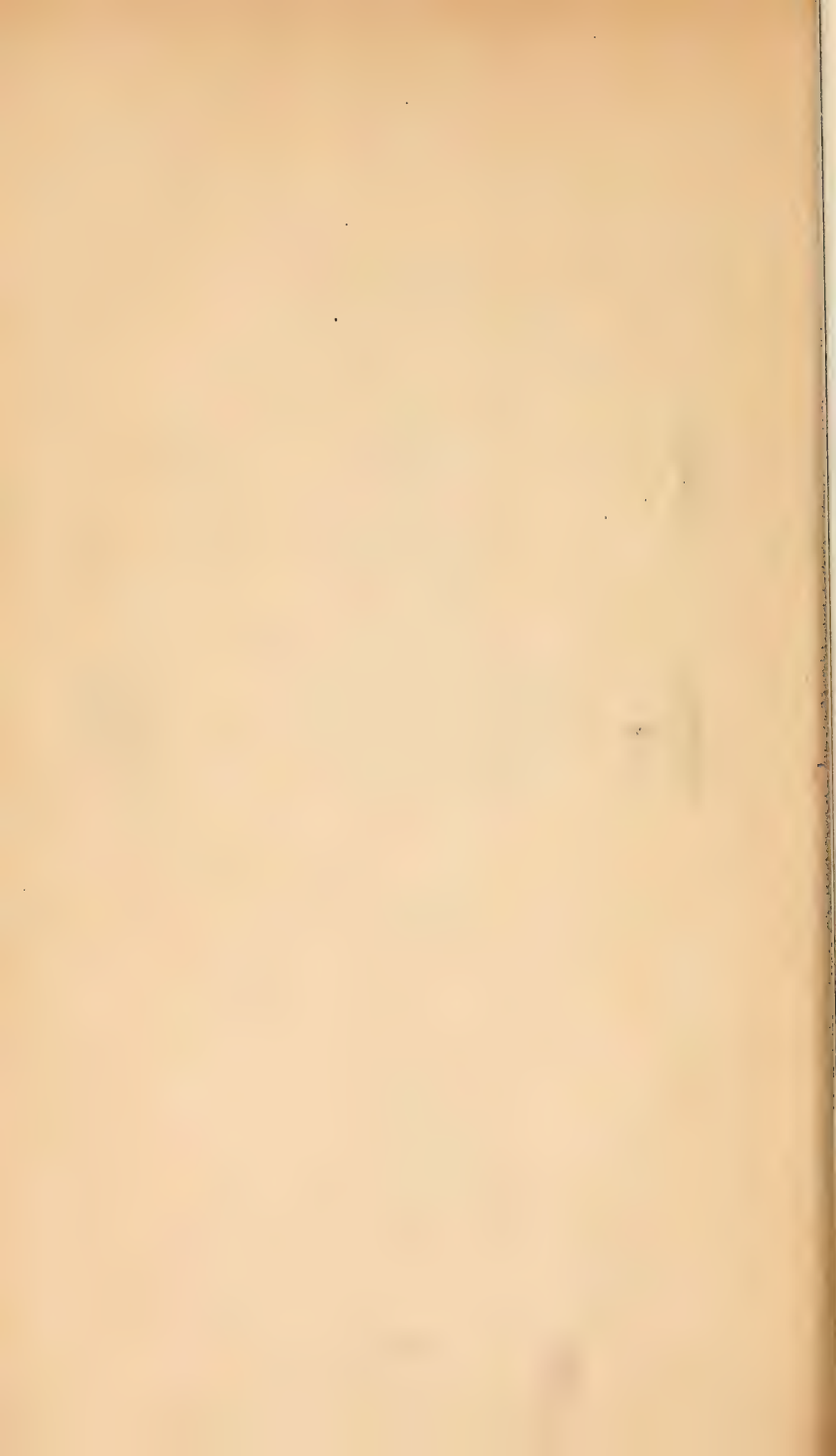
¹ The armistice was signed on November 11th.

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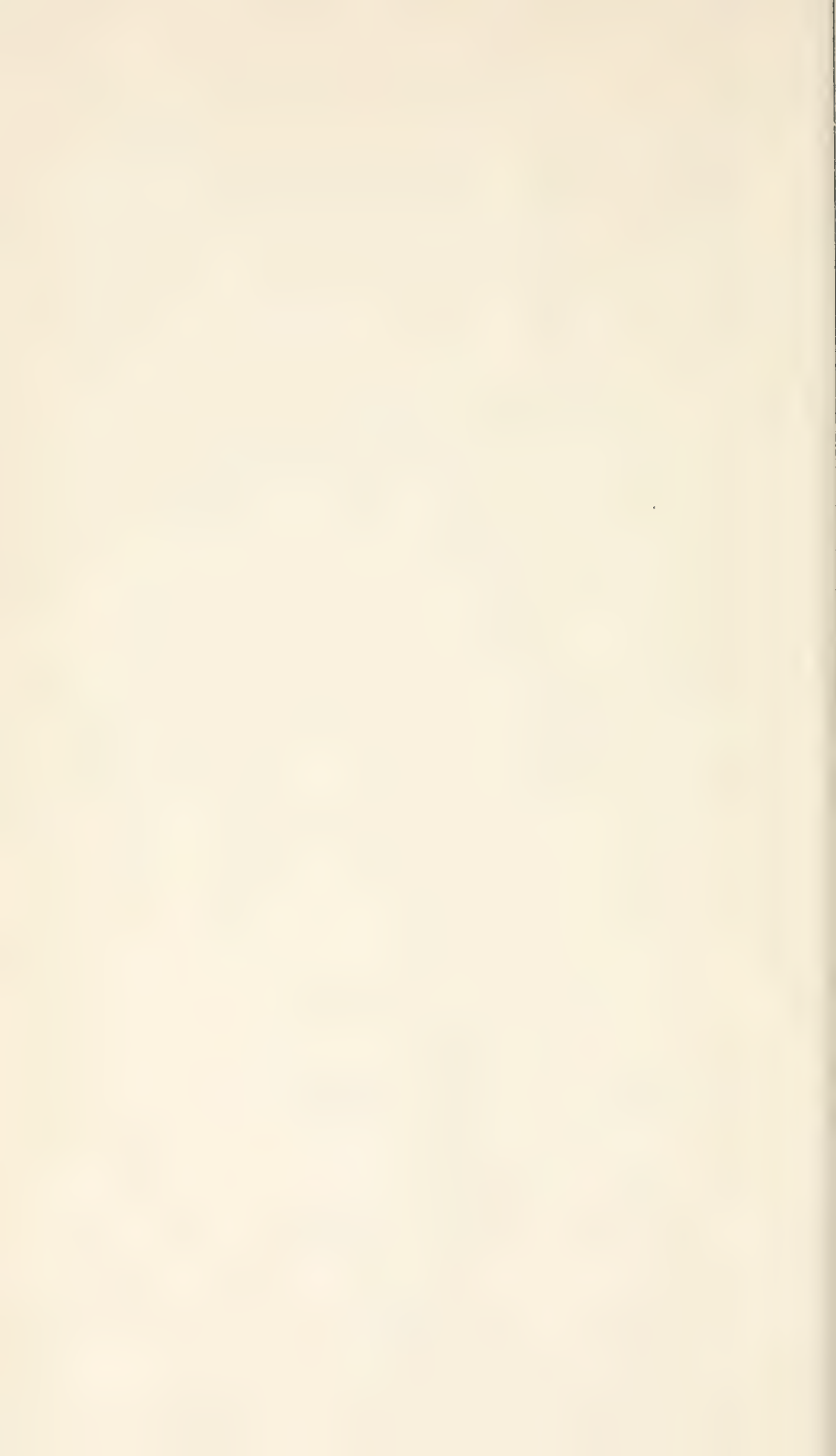
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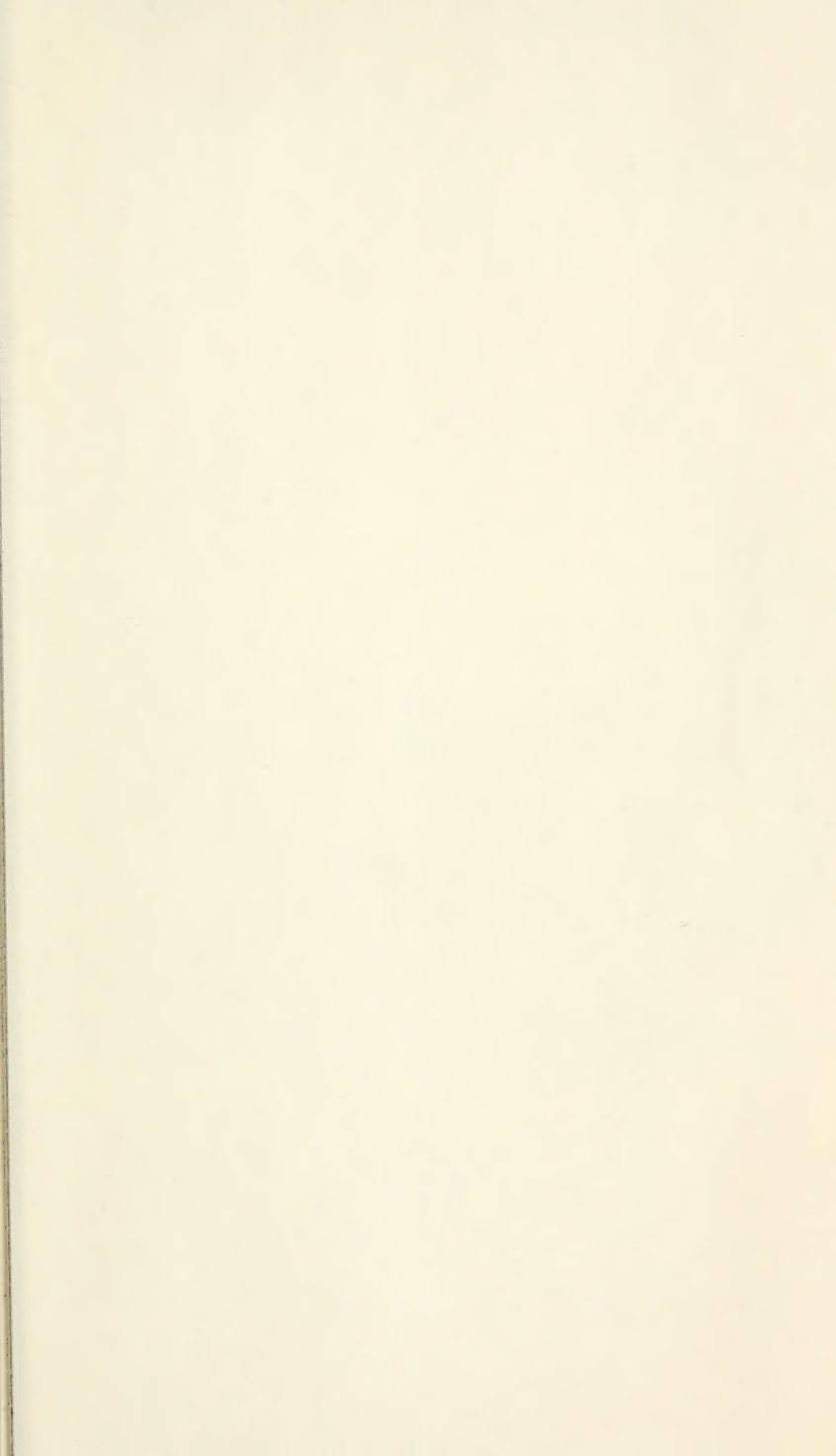
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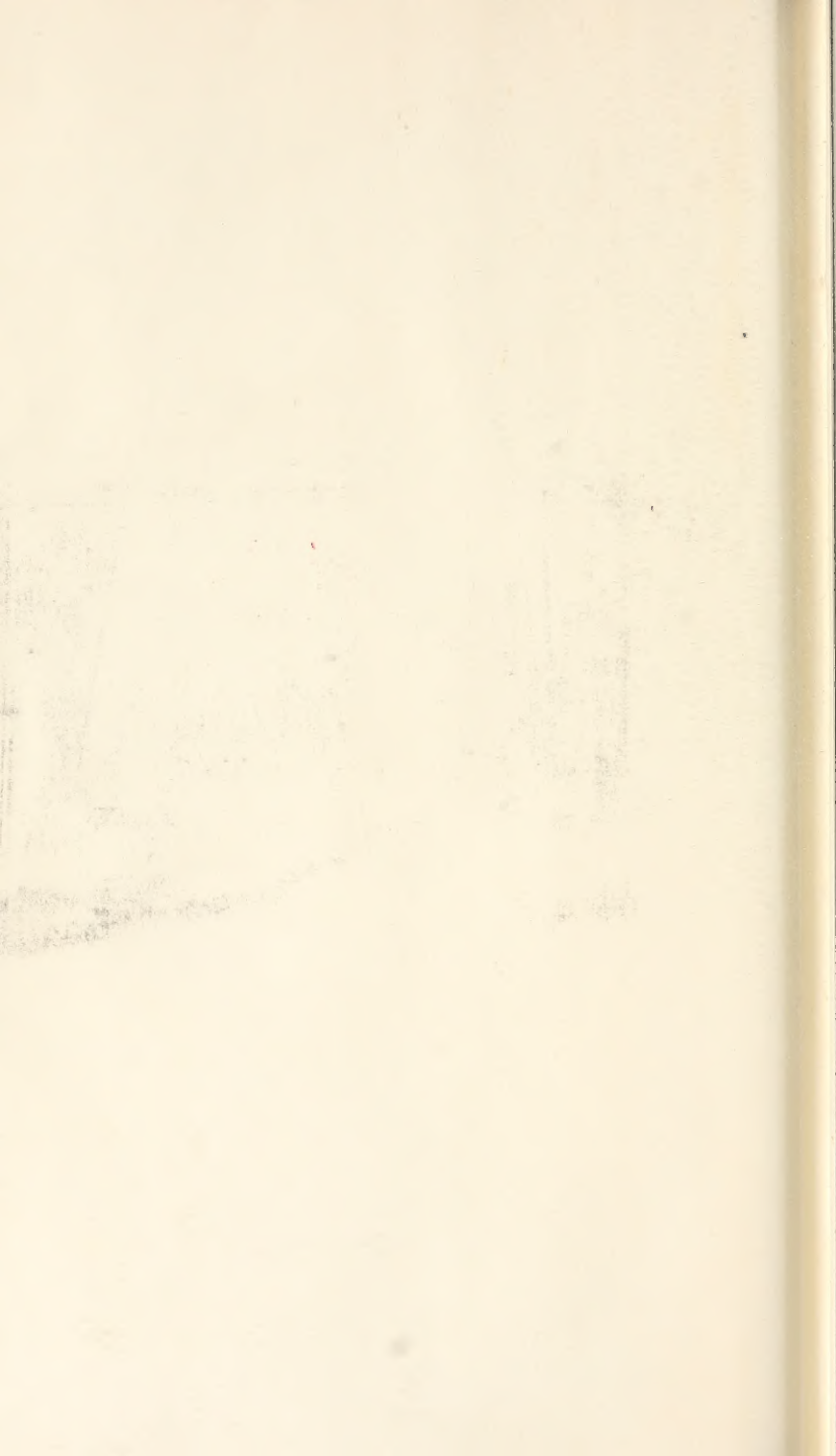












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