In the World War eBook

In the World War by Ottokar Graf Czernin

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IN THE WORLD WAR

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY REFLECTIONS

1

The bursting of a thunderstorm is preceded by certain definite phenomena in the atmosphere. The electric currents separate, and the storm is the result of atmospheric tension which can no longer be repressed. Whether or no we become aware of these happenings through outward signs, whether the clouds appear to us more or less threatening, nothing can alter the fact that the electric tension is bound to make itself felt before the storm bursts.

For years the political barometer of the European Ministries of Foreign Affairs had stood at “storm.” It rose periodically, to fall again; it varied—naturally; but for years everything had pointed to the fact that the peace of the world was in danger.

The obvious beginnings of this European tension date back several years: to the time of Edward VII. On the one hand England’s dread of the gigantic growth of Germany; on the other hand Berlin’s politics, which had become a terror to the dwellers by the Thames; the belief that the idea of acquiring the dominion of the world had taken root in Berlin. These fears, partly due merely to envy and jealousy, but partly due also to a positive anxiety concerning

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existence; these fears led to the encircling policy of Edward VII., and thus was started the great drive against Germany. It is well known that Edward VII. made an attempt to exercise a direct influence on the Emperor Francis Joseph to induce him to secede from the Alliance and join the Powers encircling Germany. It is likewise known that the Emperor Francis Joseph rejected the proposal, and that this decided the fate of Austria-Hungary. From that day we were no longer the independent masters of our destiny. Our fate was linked to that of Germany; without being conscious of it, we were carried away by Germany through the Alliance.

I do not mean absolutely to deny that, during the years preceding war, it would still have been possible for Germany to avert it if she had eradicated from European public opinion all suspicion respecting her dream of world dominion, for far be it from me to assert that the Western Powers were eager for war. On the contrary, it is my firm conviction that the leading statesmen of the Western Powers viewed the situation as such, that if they did not succeed in defeating Germany, the unavoidable result would be a German world domination. I mention the Western Powers, for I believe that a strong military party in Russia, which had as chief the Grand Duke Nicholas, thought otherwise, and began this war with satisfaction. The terrible tragedy of this, the greatest misfortune of all time—and such is this war—lies in the fact that nobody responsible willed it; it arose out of a situation created first by a Serbian assassin and then by some Russian generals keen on war, while the events that ensued took the monarchs and statesmen completely by surprise. The Entente group of Powers is as much to blame as we are. As regards this, however, a very considerable difference must be made between the enemy states. In 1914 neither France nor England desired war. France had always cherished the thought of revenge, but, judging from all indications, she had no intention of fighting in 1914; but, on the contrary—as she did fifty years ago—left the decisive moment for entering into war to the future. The war came quite as a surprise to France. England, in spite of her anti-German policy, wished to remain neutral and only changed her mind owing to the invasion of Belgium. In Russia the Tsar did not know what he wanted, and the military party urged unceasingly for war. As a matter of fact, Russia began military operations without a declaration of war.

The states that followed after—Italy and Roumania—entered into the war for purposes of conquest, Roumania in particular. Italy also, of course, but owing to her geographical position, and being exposed to pressure from England, she was less able to remain neutral than Roumania.

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But the war would never have broken out had it not been that the growing suspicion of the Entente as to Germany's plans had already brought the situation to boiling point. The spirit and demeanour of Germany, the speeches of the Emperor William, the behaviour of the Prussians throughout the world—whether in the case of a general at Potsdam or a *commis voyageur* out in East Africa—these Prussian manners inflicting themselves upon the world, the ceaseless boasting of their own power and the clattering of swords, roused throughout the whole world a feeling of antipathy and alarm and effected that moral coalition against Germany which in this war has found such terribly practical expression. On the other hand, I am fairly convinced that German, or rather Prussian tendencies have been misunderstood by the world, and that the leading German statesmen never had any intention of acquiring world dominion. They wished to retain Germany's place in the sun, her rank among the first Powers of the world; it was undoubtedly her right, but the real and alleged continuous German provocation and the ever-growing fears of the Entente in consequence created just that fatal competition in armaments and that coalition policy which burst like a terrible thunderstorm into war.

It was only on the basis of these European fears that the French plans of revenge developed into action. England would never have drawn the sword merely for the conquest of Alsace-Lorraine; but the French plan of revenge was admirably adapted to suit the policy inaugurated by King Edward, which was derived not from French but from English motives.

Out of this dread of attack and defence arose that mad fever for armaments which was characteristic of pre-war times. The race to possess more soldiers and more guns than one's neighbour was carried to an absurd extreme. The armaments which the nations had to bear had become so cumbersome as to be unbearable, and for long it had been obvious to everyone that the course entered upon could no longer be pursued, and that two possibilities alone remained—either a voluntary and general disarmament, or war.

A slight attempt at the first alternative was made in 1912 through negotiations between Germany and England respecting naval disarmament, but never got beyond the first stage. England was no readier for peace, and no more disposed to make advances than was Germany, but she was cleverer and succeeded in conveying to the world that she was the Power endangered by Germany's plans for expansion.

I recollect a very telling illustration of the German and British points of view, given to me by a prominent politician from a neutral state. This gentleman was crossing the Atlantic on an American steamer, and among the other travellers were a well-known German industrial magnate and an Englishman. The German was a great talker and preferred addressing as large an audience as possible, expatiating on the "uprising"

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of Germany, on the irrepressible desire for expansion to be found in the German people, on the necessity of impregnating the world with German culture, and on the progress made in all these endeavours. He discoursed on the rising prosperity of German trade in different parts of the world; he enumerated the towns where the German flag was flying; he pointed out with emphasis how “Made in Germany” was the term that must and would conquer the world, and did not fail to assert that all these grand projects were built on solid foundations upheld by military support. Such was the German. When my informant turned to the silent, quietly smiling Englishman and asked what he had to say to it, he simply answered: “There is no need for me to say anything, for I know that the world belongs to us.” Such was the Englishman. This merely illustrates a certain frame of mind. It is a snapshot, showing how the German and the English mentality was reflected in the brain of a neutral statesman; but it is symptomatic, because thousands have felt the same, and because this impression of the German spirit contributed so largely to the catastrophe.

The Aehrenthal policy, contrary to what we were accustomed to on the Ballplatz, pursued ambitious plans for expansion with the greatest strength and energy, thereby adding to the suspicions of the world regarding us. For the belief gained credence that the Vienna policy was an offshoot of that of Berlin, and that the same line of action would be adopted in Vienna as in Berlin, and the general feeling of anxiety rose higher. Blacker and blacker grew the clouds; closer and closer the meshes of the net; misfortune was on the way.

2

I was in Constantinople shortly before the outbreak of war, and while there had a lengthy discussion of the political situation with the Markgraf Pallavicini, our most efficient and far-seeing ambassador there. He looked upon the situation as being extremely grave. Aided by his experience of a decade of political observations, he was able to put his finger on the pulse of Europe, and his diagnosis was as follows: that if a rapid change in the entire course of events did not intervene, we were making straight for war. He explained to me that he considered the only possibility of evading a war with Russia lay in our definitely renouncing all claims to influence in the Balkans and leaving the field to Russia. Pallavicini was quite clear in his own mind that such a course would mean our resigning the status of a Great Power; but apparently to him even so bitter a proceeding as that was preferable to the war which he saw was impending. Shortly afterwards I repeated this conversation to the Archduke and heir, Franz Ferdinand, and saw that he was deeply impressed by the pessimistic views of Pallavicini, of whom, like everyone else, he had a very high opinion. The Archduke promised to discuss the question as soon as possible with the Emperor. I never saw him again. That was the last conversation I had with him, and I do not know whether he ever carried out his intention of discussing the matter with the monarch.

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The two Balkan wars were as summer lightning before the coming European thunderstorm. It was obvious to anyone acquainted with Balkan conditions that the peace there had produced no definite result, and the Peace of Bucharest in 1913, so enthusiastically acclaimed by Roumania, carried the germ of death at its birth. Bulgaria was humiliated and reduced; Roumania and, above all, Serbia, enlarged out of all proportion, were arrogant to a degree that baffles description. Albania, as the apple of discord between Austria-Hungary and Italy, was a factor that gave no promise of relief, but only of fresh wars. In order to understand the excessive hatred prevailing between the separate nations, one must have lived in the Balkans. When this hatred came to an outburst in the world war the most terrible scenes were enacted, and as an example it was notorious that the Roumanians tore their Bulgarian prisoners to pieces with their teeth, and that the Bulgarians, on their part, tortured the Roumanian prisoners to death in the most shocking manner. The brutality of the Serbians in the war can best be described by our own troops. The Emperor Francis Joseph clearly foresaw that the peace after the second Balkan war was merely a respite to draw breath before a new war. Prior to my departure for Bucharest in 1913 I was received in audience by the aged emperor, who said to me: "The Peace of Bucharest is untenable, and we are faced by a new war. God grant that it may be confined to the Balkans." Serbia, which had been enlarged to double its size, was far from being satisfied; but, on the contrary, was more than ever ambitious of becoming a Great Power.

Apparently the situation was still quiet. In fact, a few weeks before the catastrophe at Sarajevo the prevailing state of affairs showed almost an improvement in the relations between Vienna and Belgrade. But it was the calm before the storm. On June 28 the veil was rent asunder, and from one moment to the next a catastrophe threatened the world. The stone had started rolling.

At that time I was ambassador to Roumania. I was therefore only able from a distance to watch developments in Vienna and Berlin. Subsequently, however, I discussed events in those critical days with numerous leading personalities, and from all that I heard have been able to form a definite and clear view of the proceedings. I have no doubt whatever that Berchtold, even in his dreams, had never thought of a world war of such dimensions as it assumed; that he, above all, was persuaded that England would remain neutral; and the German Ambassador, Tschirsky, confirmed him in the conviction that a war against France and Russia would inevitably end in victory. I believe that the state of mind in which Count Berchtold addressed the ultimatum to Serbia was such that he said to himself, either—and this is the most favourable view—Serbia will accept the ultimatum, which would mean a great diplomatic success; or she will

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refuse it, and then, thanks to Germany's help, the victorious war against Russia and France will effect the birth of a new and vastly stronger Monarchy. It cannot for a moment be denied that this argument contained a series of errors; but it must be stated that, according to my convictions, Count Berchtold did not intend to incite war by the ultimatum, but hoped to the very last to gain the victory by the pen, and that in the German promises he saw a guarantee against a war in which the participators and the chances of victory were equally erroneously estimated.

Berchtold could not have entertained any doubt that a Serbian war would bring a Russian one in its train. At any rate, the reports sent by my brother, who was a business man in Petersburg, left him in no doubt on the matter.

Serbia's acceptance of the ultimatum was only partial, and the Serbian war broke out. Russia armed and joined in. But at this moment extremely important events took place.

On July 30, at midday, Tschirsky spoke in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and communicated to Berchtold the contents of a telegram received from Lichnowsky. This important telegram contained the following: He (Lichnowsky) had just returned from seeing Grey, who was very grave, but perfectly collected, though pointing out that the situation was becoming more and more complicated. Sassonoff had intimated that after the declaration of war he was no longer in a position to negotiate direct with Austria-Hungary, and requested England to resume proceedings, the temporary cessation of hostilities to be taken for granted. Grey proposed a negotiation between four, as it appeared possible to him (Grey) that Austria-Hungary, after occupying Belgrade, would state her terms.

To this Grey added a private comment, calling Lichnowsky's attention to the fact that a war between Russia and Austria-Hungary would facilitate England's neutrality, but that the conditions would inevitably change in the event of Germany and France being involved. Public opinion in England, which after the assassination was very favourable to Austria, was now beginning to fluctuate, as it was difficult to understand Austria's obstinacy.

Lichnowsky also added that Grey had told the Italian Ambassador that he thought Austria would receive every satisfaction on accepting negotiation. In any case the Serbians would be punished. Even without a war Austria would receive a guarantee for the future.

Such were the contents of the communication from London sent by Tschirsky, to which Bethmann added that he urgently requested the Vienna Cabinet to accept the negotiation. On receiving this information, Berchtold conveyed the news to the Emperor. His position was this: that Russia was already at war with the Monarchy on

the evening of the same day on which the order for general mobilisation was to be submitted to the Emperor, and it appeared doubtful to him whether a postponement of their own mobilisation would be possible

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in view of the Russian attack. He had also to take into consideration the different parties prevailing in Russia, and no guarantee was obtainable that those who were in favour of negotiation would gain the day. Any postponement of mobilisation might in this case lead to incalculable military consequences. Obviously hostilities had begun without the knowledge and against the wishes of the Tsar; if they were also to be carried on against his wish, then Austria-Hungary would be too late.

I have never discussed this phase with Berchtold, but the material placed at my disposal leaves no doubt that he felt bound to inquire into this side of the question and then leave the decision to the Emperor Francis Joseph.

On the following day, July 31, therefore, Tschirsky, at the Ballplatz, communicated the contents of a telegram from King George to Prince Henry of Prussia. It ran as follows: —

"Thanks for telegram. So pleased to hear of William's efforts to concert with Nicky to maintain peace. Indeed, I am earnestly desirous that such an irreparable disaster as a European war should be averted. My Government is doing its utmost, suggesting to Russia and France to suspend further military preparations if Austria will consent to be satisfied with occupation of Belgrade and the neighbouring Serbian territory as a hostage for satisfactory settlement of her demands, other countries meanwhile suspending their war preparations. Trust William will use his great influence to induce Austria to accept this proposal, thus proving that Germany and England are working together to prevent what would be an international catastrophe. Pray assure William I am doing and shall continue to do all that lies in my power to preserve peace of Europe.

George."

Both the telegrams cited were received in Vienna on July 31, subject to certain military precautions, a proceeding that did not satisfy London.

In London, as in Berlin, an effort was made to confine the conflict to Serbia. Berchtold did the same. In Russia there was a strong party working hard to enforce war at any price. The Russian invasion was an accomplished fact, and in Vienna it was thought unwise to stop mobilisation at the last moment for fear of being too late with defence. Some ambassadors did not keep to the instructions from their Governments; they communicated messages correctly enough, but if their personal opinion differed they made no secret of it, and it certainly weighed in the balance.

This added to the insecurity and confusion. Berchtold vacillated, torn hither and thither by different influences. It was a question of hours merely; but they passed by and were not made use of, and disaster was the result.

Russia had created strained conditions which brought on the world war.

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Some months after the outbreak of war I had a long conversation on all these questions with the Hungarian Prime Minister, Count Stephen Tisza. He was decidedly opposed to the severe ultimatum, as he foresaw a war and did not wish for it. It is one of the most widely spread errors to stigmatise Tisza to-day as one of the instigators of the war. He was opposed to it, not from a general pacifist tendency, but because, in his opinion, an efficiently pursued policy of alliance would in a few years considerably strengthen the powers of the Monarchy. He particularly returned to the subject of Bulgaria, which then was still neutral and whose support he had hoped to gain before we went to war. I also obtained from Tisza several details concerning the activities of the German Government as displayed by the German Ambassador immediately preceding the war. I purposely made a distinction between the German Government and the German diplomat, as I was under the impression that Herr von Tschirsky had taken various steps without being instructed so to do, and when I previously have alluded to the fact that not all the ambassadors made use of the language enjoined by their Governments, I had Herr von Tschirsky specially in my mind; his whole temperament and feelings led him to interfere in our affairs with a certain vehemence and not always in the most tactful way, thus rousing the Monarchy out of its lethargy.

There is no doubt whatever that all Herr von Tschirsky's private speeches at this time were attuned to the tone of "Now or Never," and it is certain that the German Ambassador declared his opinion to be "that at the present moment Germany was prepared to support our point of view with all her moral and military power, but whether this would prove to be the case in future if we accepted the Serbian rebuff appears to me doubtful." I believe that Tschirsky in particular was firmly persuaded that in the very near future Germany would have to go through a war against France and Russia, and he considered that the year 1914 would be more favourable than a later date. For this reason, because first of all he did not believe in the fighting capacity of either Russia or France, and secondly because—and this is a very important point—he was convinced that he could bring the Monarchy into this war, while it appeared doubtful to him that the aged and peace-loving Emperor Francis Joseph would draw the sword for Germany on any other occasion where the action would centre less round him, he wished to make use of the Serbian episode so as to be sure of Austria-Hungary in the deciding struggle. That, however, was his policy, and not Bethmann's.

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This, I repeat, is the impression produced on me by lengthy conversations with Count Tisza—an impression which has been confirmed from other sources. I am persuaded, however, that Tschirsky, in behaving as he did, widely overstretched his prescribed sphere of activity. Iswolsky was not the only one of his kind. I conclude this to be so, since Tschirsky, as intimated in a former dispatch, was never in a position to make an official declaration urging for war, but appears only to have spoken after the manner of diplomatic representatives when anxious to adapt the policy of their Government to their own point of view. Undoubtedly Tschirsky transmitted his instructions correctly and loyally, nor did he keep back or secrete anything. An ambassador attains more or less according to the energy expended by him in carrying out the instructions of his Government; and the private opinion of the ambassador is, under certain circumstances, not easy to distinguish from his official one. At all events, the latter will be influenced by the former, and Tschirsky's private opinion aimed at a more vigorous policy.

In complete ignorance of impending events, I had arrived at Steiermark a few days before the ultimatum in order to establish my family there for the summer. While there I received a message from Berchtold to return to my post as quickly as possible. I obeyed at once, but before leaving had one more audience with the Emperor Francis Joseph at Ischl. I found the Emperor extremely depressed. He alluded quite briefly to the coming events, and merely asked me if, in case of a war, I could guarantee Roumania's neutrality. I answered in the affirmative, so long as King Carol was alive; beyond that any guarantee was impossible.

3

Certain extremely important details relating to the period immediately preceding the outbreak of war can only be attributed to the influence of the group represented by Tschirsky. It is incomprehensible why we granted to our then allies, Italy and Roumania, facilities for playing the part of seceders by presenting them with an ultimatum before action was completed, instead of winning them over and involving them also.

I am no accurate judge of the events in Rome, but King Carol in Roumania had certainly tried everything to induce Serbia to yield. In all probability he would not have succeeded, as Serbia had no idea of renouncing her plans for a Greater Serbia; but presumably an anxious feeling would have arisen between Bucharest and Belgrade, which would strongly have influenced further Roumanian policy in our favour.

Bucharest has made enormous capital out of the diplomatic proceedings.

Before the first decisive Cabinet Council Baron Fasciotti, the Italian Ambassador, harangued all the members in this spirit, and declared that the situation in Roumania and Italy was similar, and in each case there was no reason for co-operation, as neither

Rome nor Bucharest had previously come to an understanding regarding the ultimatum. His efforts were crowned with success.

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On August 1, 1914, I sent the following telegram to Berchtold:

“The Prime Minister has just notified me the result of the Cabinet Council. After a warm appeal from the King to bring the treaty into force, the Cabinet Council, with one exception, declared that no party could undertake the responsibility of such action.“The Cabinet Council has resolved that *as Roumania was neither notified nor consulted concerning the Austro-Hungarian action in Belgrade no casus foederis exists*. The Cabinet Council further resolved that military preparations for the safety of the frontier be undertaken, which would be an advantage for the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, as several hundred miles of its frontiers would thereby be covered.

> “The Prime Minister added that he had already given orders to strengthen all military posts, after which by degrees general mobilisation would follow.
>
> “The Government intends only to publish a short communique relating to the military measures taken for the safety of the country.”

Secondly, it appears incomprehensible why the ultimatum was drawn up as it was. It was not so much a manifestation of Berchtold’s wish for war, as of other influences, above all that of Tschirsky. In 1870 Bismarck also desired war, but the Ems telegram was of quite a different character.

In the present case it appears incomprehensible why a Note should have been selected which by its wording gave umbrage to many who hitherto were favourably disposed towards us.

Had we, before the ultimatum and after the assassination, secretly and confidentially furnished proofs to the Great Powers who were not inimical to us, and especially to England, that trouble was impending over a political murder staged at Belgrade, we should have evoked a very different frame of mind in those Governments. Instead, we flung the ultimatum at them and at the whole of Europe.

It was feared probably at the Ballplatz that any communication to the Powers would result in their intervention in the form of a new conference of ambassadors, and that stagnation would ensue. But in the year 1914 the case was very different from former days—before the ultimatum right was so undoubtedly on our side.

At all events, the Tschirsky group dreaded such an insipid solution, and had insisted, therefore, on drastic action. In 1870 Bismarck was the attacking party, and he succeeded in interchanging the parts. We also succeeded, but in an opposite sense.

4

Then came our greatest disaster: the German entry into Belgium.

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Had England remained neutral we should not have lost the war. In his book, “Ursachen und Ausbruck des Krieges,” page 172, Jagow tells how on August 4, towards the close of the Reichstag session, the English Ambassador appeared there and again asked whether Germany would respect Belgium’s neutrality. At that time German troops were already on Belgian soil. On hearing that, the Ambassador retired, but, returning in a few hours, demanded a declaration, to be handed in before midnight, that the further advance of the German troops into Belgium would cease, otherwise he was instructed to ask for his passport and England would then protect Belgium. Germany refused, and the consequence was a declaration of war by England.

That England on the same day sent word to Belgium that she would resist with her utmost strength any violation of her neutrality is fully in accordance with the steps taken at Berlin by the English Ambassador.

Two days before, on August 2, the English Cabinet certainly gave France the assurance that, in addition to the protection of Belgian neutrality, she had demanded that there should be no naval action against France. The contradiction between both points of view is clearly visible. It appears to me, however, that the only explanation is that on August 4 England no longer adhered to her standpoint of August 2, for the German acceptance of the English ultimatum on the evening of August 4 had wrested from England the moral possibility of making further claims. If England, on August 4, had sought a pretext for war, she would have put forward, besides the Belgian demand, also that referring to the abstention from naval action. But she did not do so, and confined her ultimatum to the Belgian question, thereby tying her own hands in the event of Germany accepting the ultimatum. *On the night of August 4, between the hours of nine and midnight, the decision as to whether England would remain neutral or no lay with Germany.*

Germany kept to her resolve to violate Belgian neutrality in spite of the certainty of the English declaration of war resulting therefrom. That was the first fateful victory of the militarists over the diplomats in this war. The former were naturally the motive power.

The German military plan was to overrun France and then make a furious onslaught on Russia. This plan was shattered on the Marne.

In more respects than one, German policy foundered on the heritage left by Bismarck. Not only was the conquest of Alsace-Lorraine a lasting obstacle to friendly relations with France, perpetually forcing the latter into the arms of every anti-German coalition, but Bismarck’s heritage became Germany’s curse, because the Germans, though desirous of following in his footsteps, had no one sufficiently competent to lead them therein.

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Bismarck created the German Empire out of Dueppel, Koeniggraetz and Sedan. His policy was one of “blood and iron”—and for fifty years that policy of violence and violent means had been engrained in the mind of every German schoolboy as the gospel of diplomatic art—but Bismarck was not able to bequeath to the German people his genial efficiency, wisdom and prudence in the use of his violent means. Bismarck carefully prepared the wars of 1866 and 1870, and struck when he held good cards in his hand. The Germany of William II. had no desire for war, but one day plunged headlong into it, and during the first week had already created political situations which were beyond her power to cope with. Belgium and Luxembourg were treated on the Bismarckian principle of “Might before Right,” and the world rose against Germany. I say world, because England’s power extended over the world.

At the beginning of the war England stood at “order arms.” It would have been entirely true to her traditional policy to allow Germany to fight against France and Russia and mutually weaken each other, then at a given moment to intervene and enjoin peace. England was forced to join in by Germany threatening to establish herself in Belgium. How far the German invasion of Belgium can morally be extenuated owing to a French purpose to do likewise has still not been made clear—but this argument does not apply to Luxembourg, and the breach of right remains the same whether the country where it occurs be large or small.

The invasion of Belgium and Luxembourg was a stroke of the Bismarckian policy of violence, not carried out by politicians but by generals who were devoid of Bismarck’s power of calculating the devastating consequences.

Later on, during the course of the war, the German Supreme Command made repeated use of violent means, which were more detrimental than useful to us, though subsequently these means were morally justifiable and comprehensible; in fact, were directly forced on us, seeing that Germany was fighting for her existence, and her adversaries, who would not come to an understanding, left her no choice of means. The use of noxious gas, aerial attacks on open towns and the U-boat warfare were means used in desperation against a merciless enemy, who left women and children to die of starvation and declared day by day that Germany must be annihilated.

When war was declared, that murderous element was lacking, and it was only the entry into neutral territory that fostered an atmosphere of such terrible hatred and vengeance and stamped the struggle as a war of annihilation.

England’s policy concerning Napoleon III. was more of a diplomatic than a military nature, and everything tends to show that in the present case England originally had no intention of joining in the conflagration, but was content to see Germany weakened by her own confederates.

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So far as I am in a position to review the situation no blame for the wrongly estimated English attitude can be attached to our ambassadors in London. Their predictions and warnings were correct, and the final decision respecting the previously mentioned English ultimatum was taken in Berlin and not in London. Moreover, the German Foreign Office would never voluntarily have consented to the acts of violence, but the military party, who cared neither for diplomatic reports nor political complications, carried everything before them.

It will always be particularly difficult in a war to define the limits of military and political spheres of action. The activities of both encroach to so great an extent on each other as to form one whole, and very naturally in a war precedence is given to military needs. Nevertheless, the complete displacement of politicians into subordinate positions which was effected in Germany and thereby made manifest the fact that the German Supreme Military Command had possessed itself of all State power of command, was a misfortune. Had the politicians at Berlin obtained a hearing there would never have been any invasion of Belgium, nor yet the ruthless U-boat warfare, the abstention from which would in both cases have saved the life of the Central Powers.

From the very first day the Emperor William was as a prisoner in the hands of his generals.

The blind faith in the invincibility of the army was, like so much else, an heirloom from Bismarck, and the “Prussian lieutenant, inimitable save in Germany,” became her doom. The entire German people believed in victory and in an Emperor who flung himself into the arms of his generals and took upon himself a responsibility far surpassing the normal limit of what was bearable. Thus the Emperor William allowed his generals full liberty of action, and, to begin with, their tactics seemed to be successful. The first battle of the Marne was a godsend for the Entente in their direst need. But, later, when the war long since had assumed a totally different character, when the troops were made stationary by the war of position and fresh enemies were constantly rising up against us, when Italy, Roumania, and finally America appeared on the scene, then did the German generals achieve miracles of strategy. Hindenburg and Ludendorff became gods in the eyes of the German people; the whole of Germany looked up to them and hoped for victory through them alone. They were more powerful than the Emperor, and he, therefore, less than ever in a position to oppose them.

Both the generals drew the wellnigh unlimited measure of their power direct from the Entente, for the latter left the Germans in no doubt that they must either conquer or die. The terrified and suffering people clung, therefore, to those who, as they believed, alone could give them victory.

5

Anglo-German competition, the increasing decadence of the Monarchy, and the consequent growing lust of conquest evinced by our neighbours had prepared the soil for war. Serbia, by the assassination, brought about an acute state of tension, and Russia profited thereby to fling herself on the Central Powers.

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That appears to me to be briefly an objective history of the beginning of the war. Faults, errors and omissions from the most varied sources may occur in it, but can neither alter nor affect the real nature of the case.

The victorious Entente gives a different interpretation of it. They maintain that Germany let loose the war, and the terrible peace of Versailles is the product of that conception, for it serves as punishment.

A neutral court of justice, as proposed by Germany, was refused. Their own witnesses and their own judges suffice for them. They are judge and prosecutor in one. In Dr. Bauer, the German-Austrian Secretary of State, they have certainly secured an important witness for their view of the case. In the winter of 1918 the latter openly declared that “three Austro-Hungarian counts and one general had started the war."[1]

Were that true, then Germany would also have to bear a vast amount of blame. For the four “guilty ones” could not have incited to war without being sure of having Germany at their back, and were it true, there could only have been a question of some plot laid by the Austro-Hungarian and the German Governments, in which case Germany, being the vastly superior military element, would undoubtedly have assumed the role of leader.

Bauer’s statement shows that they who inflicted the punitive peace were right.

6

While the war was going on, a separate peace on our side that would have delivered up Germany would have been treachery. But had attempts at peace failed owing to the claims put forward by Germany, we should have been morally justified in breaking away from them, as we were united together in a war of defence and not in a war of conquest. Although the German military party both dreamed and talked incessantly of conquest, which doubtless gave rise to a misunderstanding of the situation, that was by no means the exclusive reason why peace could not be attained. It simply was because on no consideration could the Entente be induced to pardon Germany. I have already mentioned this in my speech of December 11, 1918,[2] in which I discoursed on politics in the world war: “Ludendorff is exactly like the statesmen of France and England. None of them wishes to compromise, they only look for victory: in that respect there is no difference between them.” As long as I was in office the Entente would never come to an agreement with Germany *inter pares*, thereby directly forcing us to assume the part of a war of defence. Had we succeeded in what we so often attempted to do, namely to make the Entente pronounce the saving word; and had we ever been able to make the Entente state that they were ready to conclude a *status quo* peace with Germany, we would have been relieved of our moral obligations. Against this may be quoted: “*Salus rei publicas supreme lex*”—in order to save the Monarchy Germany would have to be given up, and therefore the other question must be

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inquired into as to whether the “physical possibility” of a separate peace really did exist. I also mentioned this matter in the aforesaid speech, and expressly stated then, and withdraw nothing, that after the entry of England, then of Italy, Roumania, and finally of America into the war, I considered a victory peace on our side to be a Utopian idea. But up to the last moment of my official activities, I cherished the hope of a *peace of understanding* from month to month, from week to week, even from day to day, and believed that the possibility would arise of obtaining such a peace of understanding, however great the sacrifices. Just as little as anyone else could I foresee the end which practically has arrived, nor yet the present state of affairs. A catastrophe of such magnitude and such dimensions was never what I feared. This is confirmed in the published report of my aforesaid speech, where I say: “A victory peace was out of the question; we are therefore compelled to effect a peace with sacrifice.” The Imperial offer to cede Galicia to Poland, and, indirectly, to Germany, arose out of this train of thought, as did all the peace proposals to the Entente, which always clearly intimated that we were ready for *endurable* sacrifices.

It had always been obvious that the Entente would tear the Monarchy in shreds, both in the event of a peace of understanding and of a separate peace. It was quite in keeping with the terms of the Pact of London of April 26, 1915.

The resolutions passed at that congress which prepared for Italy’s entry into the war, determined the further course of the war, for they included the division of the Monarchy, and forced us, therefore, into a desperate war of defence. I believe that London and Paris, at times when the fortune of war was on our side, both regretted the resolutions that had been adopted, as they prevented the dwellers on both the Seine and the Thames from making any temporarily desired advances to us.

As far back as 1915 we received vague news of the contents of this strictly secret London agreement; but only in February, 1917, did we obtain the authentic whole, when the Russian revolutionary Government published a protocol referring to it, which subsequently was reproduced in our papers.

I add this protocol to the appendix of the book,[3] as, in spite of its being so eminently important, it has not received adequate attention on the part of the public.

According to the settlements, which were binding on the four States—England, France, Russia, and Italy—the last-named was awarded the Trentino, the whole of South Tyrol as far as the Brenner Pass, Trieste, Gorizia, Gradisca, the whole of Istria with a number of islands, also Dalmatia.

In the course of the war the Entente had further made binding promises to the Roumanians and Serbians, hence the need for the dissolution of the Monarchy.

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Having made these statements, I wish to explain why a separate peace was a sheer impossibility for us. In other words, what were the reasons that prevented us from ending the war and becoming neutral—reasons which only left one possibility open to us: to change our adversary, and instead of fighting the Entente, together with Germany, to join the Entente and with her fight against Germany? It must, above all, be kept in mind that up to the last days that I held office the Eastern front was manned by Austro-Hungarian and German troops all mixed together, and this entire army was under the Imperial German Command. We had no army of our own in the East—not in the true sense of the word, as it had been merged into the German army. That was a consequence of our military inferiority. Again and again we resorted to German aid. We called repeatedly for help in Serbia, Roumania, Russia, and Italy, and were compelled to purchase it by giving up certain things. Our notorious inferiority was only in very slight degree the fault of the individual soldier; rather did it emanate from the general state of Austro-Hungarian affairs. We entered the war badly equipped and sadly lacking in artillery; the various Ministers of War and the Parliaments were to blame in that respect. The Hungarian Parliament neglected the army for years because their national claims were not attended to, and in Austria the Social Democrats had always been opposed to any measures of defence, scenting therein plans for attack and not defence.

Our General Staff was in part very bad. There were, of course, exceptions, but they only prove the rule. What was chiefly wanting was contact with the troops. These gentlemen sat with their backs turned and gave their orders. Hardly ever did they see the men at the front or where the bullets whistled. During the war the troops learned to *hate* the General Staff. It was very different in the German army. The German General Staffs exacted much, but they also achieved much; above all, they exposed themselves freely and set an example. Ludendorff, sword in hand, took Liege, accompanied by a couple of men! In Austria archdukes were put into leading posts for which they were quite unsuited. Some of them were utterly incompetent; the Archdukes Friedrich, Eugen, and Joseph formed three exceptions. The first of these in particular very rightly looked upon his post not as that of a leader of operations, but as a connecting link between us and Germany, and between the army and the Emperor Francis Joseph. He always acted correctly and with eminent tact, and overcame many difficulties. What was left of our independence was lost after Luck.

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To return, therefore, to the plan developed above: a separate peace that would have contained an order for our troops on the Eastern front to lay down their arms or to march back would immediately have led to conflict at the front. Following on the violent opposition that such an order would naturally have aroused in the German leaders, orders from Vienna and counter-orders from Berlin would have led to a state of complete disorganisation, even to anarchy. Humanly speaking, it was out of the question to look for a peaceful and bloodless unravelment at the front. I state this in order to explain my firm conviction that the idea that such a separating of the two armies could have been carried out in mutual agreement is based on utterly erroneous premises, and also to prove that we have here the first factor showing that we would not have ended the war by a separate peace, but would, on the contrary, have been entangled in a new one.

But what would have been enacted at the front would also, and in aggravated fashion, have been repeated throughout the entire country: a civil war would have been inevitable.

I must here explain a second misunderstanding, resulting also from my speech of December 11, which is due to my statement that “if we came out Germany could not carry on the war.” I admit that this statement is not clearly expressed, and was interpreted as though I had intended to say that if we came out the immediate collapse of Germany was a foregone conclusion. I did not intend to say that, nor did I say or mean it. I meant to say that our secession from Germany would render impossible a victorious ending of the war, or even a lasting successful continuance of the war; that Germany through this would be faced by the alternative of either submitting to the dictates of the Entente or of bringing up her supremest fighting powers and suppressing the Monarchy, preparing for her the same fate as Roumania met with. I meant to say that Austria-Hungary, if she allowed the Entente troops to enter, would prove such a terrible danger to Germany that she would be compelled to use every means to forestall us and paralyse the move. Whoever imagines that the German military leaders would not have seized the latter eventuality knows them but badly, and has a poor opinion of their spirit. In order to be able to form an objective judgment of this train of thought one should be able to enter into the spirit of the situation. In April, 1916, when I sent in my resignation for other reasons, Germany’s confidence in victory was stronger than ever. The Eastern front was free: Russia and Roumania were out of action. The troops were bound westward, and no one who knew the situation as it was then can repudiate my assertion that the German military leaders believed themselves then to be nearer than ever to a victory peace; that they were persuaded they would take both Paris and Calais and force the Entente to its knees. It is out of the question that at such a moment and under such conditions they could have replied to the falling away of Austria-Hungary otherwise than by violence.

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All who will not admit the argument, I would refer to a fact which it would be difficult to evade. Six months afterwards, when there was already clear evidence of the German collapse, when Andrassy declared a separate peace, the *Germans, as a matter of fact, threw troops into the Tyrol*. If they, when utterly exhausted, defeated, and ruined, with revolution at their back, still held firmly to this decision and endeavoured to make a battlefield on Austrian territory, how much more would they have done that six months earlier, when they still stood full of proud defiance and their generals dreamed of victory and triumph? What I, secondly, also would maintain is that the immediate consequence of a separate peace would have been the conversion of Austria-Hungary into a theatre of war. The Tyrol, as well as Bohemia, would have become fields of battle.

If it be maintained now that the great exhaustion from the war that prevailed throughout the Monarchy before April, 1917, had caused the entire population of the former Monarchy to rally round the Minister who had concluded the separate peace, it is a conscious or unconscious untruth. Certainly the Czechs were decidedly against Germany, and it would not have been reasons of political alliance that would have prevented them from agreeing. But I would like to know what the Czech people would have said if Bohemia had been turned into a theatre of war and exposed to all the sufferings endured by this and all other peoples, and when to it had been added the devastation of the fatherland, for, let there be no doubt about it, the troops advancing with flying colours from Saxony would have made their way to Prague and penetrated even farther. We had no military forces in Bohemia; we should not have been able to check the advance, and quicker than either we or the Entente could have sent troops worth mentioning to Bohemia, the Germans, drawing troops from their wellnigh inexhaustible reserves, would have marched either against us or against the Entente on our territory. The German-Austrian public would not have been in agreement with such a Minister; the German Nationalists and the German *bourgeoisie* have no say in the matter.

On October 28 the German Nationalists published their own particular point of view in the following manner:

“The members of the German Nationalist parties were highly indignant at the way in which Count Andrassy answered Wilson’s Note. Count Andrassy came from Hungary, and neither came to any agreement with the Imperial German Government nor with the representatives of the Executive Committee before drawing up the Note. Although the peace negotiations were most warmly welcomed and considered most necessary, still the one-sided action of Count Andrassy in dispatching the Note to Wilson without previous arrangement with the German Empire has roused the greatest indignation in the German parties. A few days ago a delegation from the German Executive

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Committee was in Berlin and was favourably received by the German Imperial Government in the matter of providing for German-Austria. Although German soldiers fought by the side of ours in the Alps and the Carpathians, the alliance has now been violated by this effort to approach Wilson without the consent of the German Empire, as is expressly stated in the Note. Besides which, no previous agreement with the representatives of the German Executive Committee was sought for. They were ignored and the answer was sent to Wilson. The German Nationalist parties strongly protest against such an *unqualifiable act* and will insist in the German Executive Committee that German-Austria's right of self-determination be unconditionally upheld and peace be secured in concert with the German Empire."

Neither would the German-Austrian Social Democrats have been a party to such a movement.

A conscious and intended misrepresentation of fact lies before us if it be maintained to-day that either the National Assembly or the Austrian Social Democrats would have approved of and supported such policy. I again have in mind the Andrassy days.

On October 30 the National Assembly took up its position for action. Dr. Sylvester drew up the report and pointed out the following:

"It was, however, neither necessary nor desirable to make the attempt in such a way as to create an incurable rupture between German-Austria and the German Empire that would endanger the future of our people. The German-Austrian National Assembly asserts that the Note of October 27 from the Royal and Imperial Minister for Foreign Affairs was drawn up and dispatched to President Wilson without in any way coming to an agreement with the representatives of the German-Austrian people. The National Assembly protests all the more insistently against this proceeding as the nation to which the present Minister for Foreign Affairs belongs has expressly refused any joint dealings. The National Assembly states that it and its organs alone have the right to represent the German-Austrian people in all matters relating to foreign affairs and particularly in all peace negotiations."

The protest met with no opposition in the National Assembly.

Afterwards the chairman, Dr. Ellenbogen, the Social Democrat, spoke as follows:

"Instead of now telling the German Emperor that his remaining in office is the greatest obstacle to peace" (loud applause from the Social Democrats), "and if there ever were an object in Curtius's famous leap, it would be comprehensible now were the German Emperor to copy it to save his people, this coalition now seizes the present moment to break away from Germany and in doing so attacks German democracy in the rear. Those gentlemen arrived too late to gain any profit from the peace. What now remains

is the *bare and shameful breach of faith*, the thanks of the House of Austria, so styled by a celebrated German poet." (Applause from the Social Democrats and the German Radicals.)

It was the attack on the separate peace that furnished the exceptional opportunity for Social Democrats and German Radicals to unite in common applause, probably the first instance of such a thing in all these years of war.

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If that could happen at a moment when it already was obvious that there was no longer a possibility of making a peace of understanding together with Germany—what would have happened, I ask, at a time when this was by no means so clear to the great majority of the population; at a time when it was still far from certain, or, at least, not to be proved mathematically, that we in time and together with Germany might still be able to conclude a peace of understanding? Disbandment at the front, where all would be fighting against all, civil war in the interior—such would have been the result of a separate peace. And all that in order finally to impose on us the resolutions passed in London! For never—as I shall presently show—had the Entente given up their decision, as they were bound to Italy, and Italy would allow of no change. Such a policy would have been as suicide from the sheer fear of death.

In 1917 I once discussed the whole question with the late Dr. Victor Adler, and pointed out to him the probabilities ensuing from a separate peace.

Dr. Adler replied: "For God's sake, do not plunge us into a war with Germany!" After the entry of Bavarian troops into the Tyrol (Adler was then a secretary in the Foreign Affairs department) he reminded me of our conversation, and added: "The catastrophe we spoke of then has arrived. The Tyrol will become a theatre of war."

Everyone in Austria wished for peace. No one wanted a new war—and a separate peace would have brought about not peace, but a new war with Germany.

In Hungary, Stephen Tisza ruled with practically unlimited powers; he was far more powerful than the entire Wekerle Ministry put together. As applied to Hungary, a separate peace would also have meant the carrying out of the Entente aims; that is, the loss of the largest and richest territories in the north and south of Czecho-Slovakia, Roumania and Serbia. Is there anyone who can honestly maintain that the Hungarians in 1917 would have agreed to these sacrifices without putting up the bitterest resistance? Everyone who knows the circumstances must admit that in this case Tisza would have had the whole of Hungary behind him in a fierce attack on Vienna. Soon after I took office I had a long and very serious conversation with him on the German and the peace questions. Tisza pointed out that the Germans were difficult to deal with; they were arrogant and despotic; yet without them we could not bring the war to an end. The proposal to cede Hungarian territory (Transylvania) and also the plan to enforce an internal Hungarian reform in favour of the subject nationalities were matters that were not capable of discussion. The congress in London in 1915 had adopted resolutions that were quite mad and never could be realised, and the desire for destruction prevailing in the Entente could only be suppressed by force. In all circumstances, we must keep our place by the side of Germany.

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In Hungary are many different currents of feeling—but the moment that Vienna prepared to sacrifice any part of Hungary, the whole country would rise as one man against such action. In that respect there was no difference between him—Tisza—and Karolyi. Tisza alluded to Karolyi's attitude before the Roumanian declaration of war, referred to the attitude of Parliament, and said that if peace were to be made behind Hungary's back she would separate from Austria and act independently.

I replied that there was no question either of separating from Germany or of ceding any Hungarian territory, but that we must be quite clear as to what we had to guard should we be carried further through the German lust of conquest.

Thereupon Tisza pointed out that the situation was different. It was not known for certain what had been determined at the conference in London (the protocol had not then been published), but that Hungarian territory was promised to Roumania was just as certain as that the Entente was planning to intervene in Hungarian internal affairs, and both contingencies were equally unacceptable. Were the Entente to give Hungary a guarantee for the *status quo ante* and to desist from any internal interference it would alter the situation. Until then he must declare against any attempt at peace.

The conversation as it proceeded became more animated, owing particularly to my accusing him of viewing all politics from a Hungarian point of view, which he did not deny, though he maintained that the dispute was a mere platonic one, as the Entente peace terms appeared to be such that Austria would be left with much less than Hungary. I was also first to state the terms under which we could make peace; then only would it be seen whether extreme pressure brought to bear on Germany were advisable or not. There was no sense in Germany's advocating peace if she intended to continue fighting. For Germany was fighting above all for the integrity of the Monarchy, which would be lost the moment Germany laid down her arms. Whatever German politicians and generals said was of little consequence. As long as England remained bent on satisfying her Allies with our territory, Germany was the only protection against these plans.

Tisza had no desire for conquest beyond a frontier protection from Roumania, and he was decidedly opposed to the dismemberment of new states (Poland); that would be to weaken not to strengthen Hungary.

After a lengthy discussion we agreed to bind ourselves to the following policy:

(1) So long, as the determination made at the conference in London, *i.e*. the destruction of the Monarchy, continues to be the Entente's objective, we must fight on in the certain hope of crushing that spirit of destruction.

(2) But as our war is purely a defensive war, it will on no account be carried on for purposes of conquest.

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(3) Any semblance of the weakening of our allied relations must be avoided.

(4) No concession of Hungarian territory may take place without the knowledge of the Prime Minister.

(5) Should the Austrian Ministry agree with the Foreign Minister respecting a cession of Austrian territory, the Hungarian Prime Minister will naturally acquiesce.

When the conference in London and the destruction of the Monarchy came into question, Tisza was entirely in the right, and that he otherwise to the end adhered to his standpoint is proved on the occasion of his last visit to the Southern Slavs, which he undertook at the request of the Emperor immediately before the collapse, and when in the most marked manner he showed himself to be opposed to the aspirations of the Southern Slavs.

Whoever attempts to judge in objective fashion must not, when looking back from to-day, relegate all that has since happened to former discernible facts, but should consider that, in spite of all pessimism and all fears, the hopes of a reasonable peace of understanding, even though involving sacrifices, still existed, and that it was impossible to plunge the Monarchy into a catastrophe at once for fear of its coming later.

If the situation is described to-day as though the inhabitants of the Monarchy, and especially the Social Democrats, were favourably disposed for any eventuality, even for a separate peace, I must again most emphatically repudiate it. I bear in mind that Social Democracy without doubt was the party most strongly in favour of peace, and also that Social Democracy in Germany, as with us, repeatedly stated that there were certain limits to its desire for peace. The German Social Democrats never agreed that Alsace-Lorraine ought to be given up, and never have our Social Democrats voted for ceding Trieste, Bozen and Meran. This would in any case have been the price of peace—and also the price of a separate peace—for, as I have already pointed out, at the conference in London, which dates back to 1915, binding obligations had been entered into for the partition of the Monarchy, while all that had been promised to Italy.

The fall of the Monarchy was quite inevitable, whether through the separation from Germany or through the vacillation in the Entente ranks—for the claims of the Italians, the Roumanians, the Serbians, and the Czechs had all been granted. In any case the Monarchy would have fallen and German-Austria have arisen as she has done now; and I doubt whether the part played by that country during the proceedings would have recommended it to the special protection of the Entente. It is a very great mistake, whether conscious or unconscious, to believe and to maintain that the population of German-Austria, and especially the present leaders of Social Democracy, are devoid of

any strong national feeling. I refer to the part played by the Austrian Social Democracy in the

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question of union. It was the motive power in the union with Germany, and the papers repeated daily that no material advantages which the Entente could offer to Austria could alter the decision. How, therefore, can this same Social Democracy, whose entire political views and aims are subordinate to the desire for a union with Germany—how can this Social Democracy demand a policy which, without doubt, must lead not only to a separation from Germany, but to a fratricidal war with the German nation? And why condemn the upholding of allied relations when Andrassy was abused for doing the opposite?

But what was the situation in March, 1918, shortly before my resignation? Germany stood at the height of her success. I do not pretend to say that her success was real. In this connection that is of no moment; but the Germans were persuaded that they were quite near a victorious end, that after leaving the Eastern front they would throw themselves on to the Western front, and that the war would end before America had time to come in. Their reckoning was at fault, as we all know to-day. But for the German generals the will to victory was the leading spirit, and all decisions arrived at by Germany against the defection of Austria-Hungary proceeded from that dominant influence.

As already mentioned, I stated in my speech of December 11, on foreign policy, that neither the Entente nor Germany would conclude a peace of renunciation. Since then I have had opportunity to speak with several men of the Entente, and consequent on the views that I obtained, I feel I must formulate my previous opinion in still stronger terms. I came to the firm conclusion that the Entente—England above all—from the summer of 1917 at any rate, had formed an unbending resolve to shatter Germany.

From that time onwards England, with the obstinacy which is her chief characteristic, appears to have been determined not to treat further with Germany, nor to sheathe her sword until Germany lay crushed to earth. It makes no difference in the matter that the German military party—though for other reasons—from a total misconception of their chances of victory, steadily refused a peace involving sacrifice at a time when it might have been possible. This is an historical fact, but as an upholder of truth I must distinctly state that I doubt whether concessions would have changed the fate of Germany. *We* could have gone over to the enemy—in 1917 and also in 1918; we could have fought against Germany with the Entente on Austro-Hungarian soil, and would doubtless have hastened Germany's collapse; but the wounds which Austria-Hungary would have received in the fray would not have been less serious than those from which she is now suffering: she would have perished in the fight against Germany, as she has as good as perished in her fight allied with Germany.

Austria-Hungary's watch had run down. Among the few statesmen who in 1914 wished for war—like Tschirsky, for instance—there can have been none who after a few months

had not altered and regretted his views. They, too, had not thought of a world war. I believe to-day, nevertheless, that even without the war the fall of the Monarchy would have happened, and that the assassination in Serbia was the first step.

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The Archduke Heir Apparent was the victim of Greater Serbia's aspirations; but these aspirations, which led to the breaking away of our Southern Slav provinces, would not have been suppressed, but, on the contrary, would have largely increased and asserted themselves, and would have strengthened the centrifugal tendencies of other peoples within the Monarchy.

Lightning at night reveals the country for a second, and the same effect was produced by the shots fired at Sarajevo. It became obvious that the signal for the fall of the Monarchy had been given. The bells of Sarajevo, which began to toll half an hour after the murder, sounded the death knell of the Monarchy.

The feeling among the Austrian people, and especially at Vienna, was very general that the outrage at Sarajevo was a matter of more importance than the murder of an Imperial prince and his wife, and that it was the alarm signal for the ruin of the Habsburg Empire.

I have been told that during the period between the assassination and the war, warlike demonstrations were daily occurrences in the Viennese restaurants and people's parks; patriotic and anti-Serbian songs were sung, and Berchtold was scoffed at because he could not "exert himself to take any energetic steps." This must not be taken as an excuse for any eventual mistakes on the part of the leaders of the nation, for a leading statesman ought not to allow himself to be influenced by the man in the street. It is only to prove that the spirit developed in 1914 appears to have been very general. And it may perhaps be permitted to add this comment: how many of those who then clamoured for war and revenge and demanded "energy," would, now that the experiment has totally failed, severely criticise and condemn Berchtold's "criminal behaviour"?

It is, of course, impossible to say in what manner the fall of the Monarchy would have occurred had war been averted. Certainly in a less terrible fashion than was the case through the war. Probably much more slowly, and doubtless without dragging the whole world into the whirlpool. We were bound to die. We were at liberty to choose the manner of our death, and we chose the most terrible.

Without knowing it, we lost our independence at the outbreak of war. We were transformed from a subject into an object.

This unfortunate war once started, we were powerless to end it. At the conference in London the death sentence had been passed on the Empire of the Habsburgs and a separate peace would have been no easier a form of death than that involved in holding out at the side of our Allies.

FOOTNOTES:

[1] Supposed to be the Counts Berchtold, Tisza and Stuergkh and General Conrad von Hohendorf.

[2] See Appendix, p. 325.

[3] See page 275.

CHAPTER II

KONOPISCHT

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Konopischt has become the cradle of manifold legends. The lord of the castle was the first victim of the terrible world conflagration, and the part that he played before the war has been the subject of much and partly erroneous commentary.

The Archduke and heir to the throne was a man of a very peculiar nature. The main feature of his character was a great lack of balance. He knew no middle course and was just as eager to hate as to love. He was unbalanced in everything; he did nothing like other people, and what he did was done in superhuman dimensions. His passion for buying and collecting antiquities was proverbial and fabulous. A first-rate shot, sport was for him a question of murdering *en masse*, and the number of game shot by him reached hundreds of thousands. A few years before his death he shot his 5,000th stag.

His ability as a good shot was phenomenal. When in India, during his voyage round the world, and while staying with a certain Maharajah, an Indian marksman gave an exhibition of his skill. Coins were thrown into the air which the man hit with bullets. The Archduke tried the same and beat the Indian. Once when I was staying with him at Eckartsau he made a *coup double* at a stag and a hare as they ran; he had knocked over a fleeing stag, and when, startled by the shot, a hare jumped up, he killed it with the second bullet. He scorned all modern appliances for shooting, such as telescopic sights or automatic rifles; he invariably used a short double-barrelled rifle, and his exceptionally keen sight rendered glasses unnecessary.

The artistic work of laying out parks and gardens became in latter years his dominating passion. He knew every tree and every bush at Konopischt, and loved his flowers above everything. He was his own gardener. Every bed and every group was designed according to his exact orders. He knew the conditions essential to the life of each individual plant, the quality of the soil required; and even the smallest spot to be laid out or altered was done according to his minute instructions. But here, too, everything was carried out on the same gigantic lines, and the sums spent on that park must have been enormous. Few people had the varied artistic knowledge possessed by the Archduke; no dealer could palm off on him any modern article as an antique, and he had just as good taste as understanding. On the other hand, music to him was simply a disagreeable noise, and he had an unspeakable contempt for poets. He could not bear Wagner, and Goethe left him quite cold. His lack of any talent for languages was peculiar. He spoke French tolerably, but otherwise no other language, though he had a smattering of Italian and Czech. For years—indeed, to the end of his life—he struggled with the greatest energy to learn Hungarian. He had a priest living permanently in the house to give him Hungarian lessons. This priest accompanied him on his travels, and at St. Moritz, for instance,

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Franz Ferdinand had a Hungarian lesson every day; but, in spite of this, he continued to suffer from the feeling that he would never be able to learn the language, and he vented his annoyance at this on the entire Hungarian people. "Their very language makes me feel antipathy for them," was a remark I constantly heard him make. His judgment of people was not a well-balanced one; he could either love or hate, and unfortunately the number of those included in the latter category was considerably the greater.

There is no doubt about it that there was a very hard strain in Franz Ferdinand's mentality, and those who only knew him slightly felt that this hardness of character was the most notable feature in him and his great unpopularity can doubtless be attributed to this cause. The public never knew the splendid qualities of the Archduke, and misjudged him accordingly.

Apparently he was not always like that. He suffered in his youth from severe lung trouble, and for long was given up by the doctors. He often spoke to me of that time and all that he had gone through, and referred with intense bitterness to the people who were only waiting day by day to put him altogether on one side. As long as he was looked upon as the heir to the throne, and people reckoned on him for the future, he was the centre of all possible attention; but when he fell ill and his case was considered hopeless, the world fluctuated from hour to hour and paid homage to his younger brother Otto. I do not for a moment doubt that there was a great deal of truth in what the late Archduke told me; and no one knowing the ways of the world can deny the wretched, servile egotism that is almost always at the bottom of the homage paid to those in high places. More deeply than in the hearts of others was this resentment implanted in the heart of Franz Ferdinand, and he never forgave the world what he suffered and went through in those distressful months. It was chiefly the ostensible vacillation of the then Minister for Foreign Affairs, Count Goluchowski, that had so deeply hurt the Archduke, who had always imagined that Goluchowski was deeply attached to him. According to Franz Ferdinand's account, Goluchowski is supposed to have said to the Emperor Francis Joseph that the Archduke Otto ought now to be given the retinue and household suitable for the heir to the throne as he—Franz Ferdinand—-"was in any case lost." It was not so much the fact as the manner in which Goluchowski tried "to bury him while still living" that vexed and hurt him whom a long illness had made irritable. But besides Goluchowski, there were numberless others whose behaviour at that time he took greatly amiss, and his unparalleled contempt of the world which, when I knew him, was one of his most characteristic features, appears—partly, at any rate—to date from his experiences during that illness.

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In connection with politics, too, this bitterness exercised a lasting influence on his entire mental outlook. I have been told by an authentic witness that the Archduke, when suffering and combating his terrible disease, saw one day an article in a Hungarian paper which, in brutal and derisive tones, spoke of the Archduke's expectations of future government as laid aside, and gloated openly, with malicious delight, over the probable event. The Archduke, who while reading the article had turned ashen grey with rage and indignation, remained silent for a moment and then made the following characteristic remark: "Now I must get better. I shall live from now only for my health. I must get better in order to show them that their joy is premature." And though this may not have been the only reason for his violent antipathy to everything Hungarian, there is no doubt that the episode influenced his mind considerably. The Archduke was a "good hater"; he did not easily forget, and woe betide those upon whom he vented his hatred. On the other hand, though but few knew it, he had an uncommonly warm corner in his heart; he was an ideal husband, the best of fathers, and a faithful friend. But the number of those he despised was incomparably greater than those who gained his affection, and he himself was in no doubt whatever as to his being the most unpopular person in the Monarchy. But there was a certain grandeur in this very contempt of popularity. He never could bring himself to make any advances to newspapers or other organs that are in the habit of influencing public opinion either favourably or unfavourably. He was too proud to sue for popularity, and too great a despiser of men to attach any importance to their judgment.

The Archduke's antipathy to Hungary runs like a scarlet thread through the political chain of his thoughts. I have been told that at the time when the Crown Prince Rudolf was frequently in Hungary shooting, the Archduke was often with him, and that the Hungarian gentlemen took a pleasure in teasing and ridiculing the young Archduke in the presence and to the delight of the considerably older Crown Prince. Ready as I am to believe that the Crown Prince Rudolf enjoyed the jokes—and little do I doubt that there were men there who would act in such fashion so as to curry favour with the Crown Prince—I still think that these unpleasant incidents in his youth weighed less in the balance with Franz Ferdinand than the already-mentioned occurrences during his illness.

Apart from his personal antipathies, which he transferred from a few Hungarians to the entire nation, there were also various far-reaching and well-founded political reasons which strengthened the Archduke in his antagonistic relations with Hungary. Franz Ferdinand possessed an exceptionally fine political *flair*, and this enabled him to see that Hungarian policy was a vital danger to the existence of the whole Habsburg Empire. His desire to overthrow the predominance

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of the Magyars and to help the nationalities to obtain their rights was always in his thoughts, and influenced his judgment on all political questions. He was the steady representative of the Roumanians, the Slovaks, and other nationalities living in Hungary, and went so far in that respect that he would have treated every question at once from an anti-Magyar point of view without inquiring into it in an objective and expert manner. These tendencies of his were no secret in Hungary, and the result was a strong reaction among the Magyar magnates, which he again took as purely personal antagonism to himself, and as the years went on existing differences increased automatically, until finally, under the Tisza regime, they led to direct hostility.

The Archduke's antipathy to party leaders in Hungary was even stronger than that he felt for Tisza, and he showed it particularly to one of the most prominent figures of that time. I do not know for certain what took place between them; I only know that several years before the catastrophe the gentleman in question was received in audience at the Belvedere, and that the interview came to a very unsatisfactory end. The Archduke told me that his visitor arrived bringing a whole library with him in order to put forward legal proofs that the Magyar's standpoint was the right one. He, the Archduke, snapped his fingers at their laws, and said so. It came to a violent scene, and the gentleman, pale as death, tottered from the room.

Certain it is that Ministers and other officials rarely waited on the Archduke without beating hearts. He was capable of flying out at people and terrifying them to such a degree that they lost their heads completely. He often took their fright to be obstinacy and passive resistance, and it irritated him all the more.

On the other hand, it was extremely easy to get on with him if one knew him well and did not stand in awe of him. I had many scenes with him and often lost my temper, too; but there was never any lasting ill-feeling. Once when at Konopischt we had a scene one evening after dinner because, he said, I always worked in opposition to him and rewarded his friendship by treachery. I broke off the conversation, remarking that, if he could say such things, any further serious conversation would be impossible, and I also stated my intention of leaving the next morning. We separated without saying good night to each other. Quite early next morning—I was still in bed—he appeared in my room and asked me to forget what he had said the previous evening, that he had not meant it seriously, and thus completely disarmed my still prevailing vexation.

A despiser of men, with his wits sharpened by his own experiences, he never allowed himself to be fooled by servile cringing and flattery. He listened to people, but how often have I heard him say: "He is no good; he is a toady." Such people never found favour with him, as he always mistrusted them at the outset. He was protected more than others in such high spheres from the poison of servility that attacks all monarchs.

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His two best friends, and the men to whom—after his own nearest relations—he was most attached, were his brother-in-law Albrecht von Wuertemberg and the Prince Karl of Schwarzenberg.

The former, a man of charming personality, great intelligence, and equally efficient in political as in military matters, lived on a footing of true brotherly unity with Franz Ferdinand, and also, naturally, on terms of perfect equality.

Karl of Schwarzenberg was the most sincere, honourable and straightforward character I have ever encountered; a man who concealed the truth from no one. Rich, independent, and devoid of personal ambition, it was quite immaterial to him whether the Archduke was pleased with what he asserted or no. He was his *friend*, and considered it his duty to be honest and open—and if necessary, disagreeable. The Archduke understood, appreciated, and valued this attitude. I do not think there are many monarchs or heirs to the throne who would have suffered, as the Archduke did, Schwarzenberg's sayings and doings.

Franz Ferdinand was on very bad terms with Aehrenthal, who easily became abrupt and repellent. Still, there was another reason why two such hard millstones could not grind together. I do not believe that the many reproaches launched against Aehrenthal by the Archduke were consequent on political differences; it was more Aehrenthal's manner that invariably irritated the Archduke. I had occasion to read some of Aehrenthal's letters to Franz Ferdinand which, perhaps unintentionally, had a slight ironical flavour which made the Archduke feel he was not being taken seriously. He was particularly sensitive in this respect.

When Aehrenthal fell ill the Archduke made unkind remarks about the dying man, and there was great and general indignation at the want of feeling shown by him. He represented the Emperor at the first part of the funeral service, and afterwards received me at the Belvedere. We were standing in the courtyard when the procession, with the hearse, passed on the way to the station. The Archduke disappeared quickly into a cottage close by, the windows of which looked on to the road, and there, concealed behind the window curtain, he watched the procession pass. He said not a word, but his eyes were full of tears. When he saw that I noticed his emotion he turned away angrily, vexed at having given proof of his weakness. It was just like him. He would rather be considered hard and heartless than soft and weak, and nothing was more repugnant to him than the idea that he had aroused suspicion of striving to enact a touching scene. I have no doubt that at that moment he was suffering the torture of self-reproach, and probably suffered the more through being so reserved and unable to give free play to his feelings.

The Archduke could be extremely gay, and possessed an exceptionally strong sense of humour. In his happiest years he could laugh like any youth, and carried his audience with him by his unaffected merriment.

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Some years ago a German prince, who was unable to distinguish between the numerous archdukes, came to Vienna. A dinner was given in his honour at the Hofburg, where he was seated next to Franz Ferdinand. Part of the programme was that he was to have gone the next morning with the Archduke to shoot in the neighbourhood. The German prince, who mistook the Archduke Franz Ferdinand for someone else, said to him during dinner: "I am to go out shooting to-morrow, and I hear it is to be with that tiresome Franz Ferdinand; I hope the plan will be changed." As far as I know, the expedition did not take place; but I never heard whether the prince discovered his mistake. The Archduke, however, laughed heartily for days at the episode.

The Archduke invariably spoke of his nephew, the present Emperor Charles, with great affection. The relations between the two were, however, always marked by the absolute subordination of the nephew to the uncle. In all political discussions, too, the Archduke Charles was always the listener, absorbing the precepts expounded by Franz Ferdinand.

Charles's marriage met with the full approval of his uncle. The Duchess of Hohenberg, too, entertained the warmest affection for the young couple.

The Archduke was a firm partisan of the Great-Austria programme. His idea was to convert the Monarchy into numerous more or less independent National States, having in Vienna a common central organisation for all important and absolutely necessary affairs—in other words to substitute Federalisation for Dualism. Now that, after terrible military and revolutionary struggles, the development of the former Monarchy has been accomplished in a national spirit, there cannot be many to contend that the plan is Utopian. At that time, however, it had many opponents who strongly advised against dissecting the State in order to erect in its place something new and "presumably better," and the Emperor Francis Joseph was far too conservative and far too old to agree to his nephew's plans. This direct refusal of the idea cherished by the Archduke offended him greatly, and he complained often in bitter terms that the Emperor turned a deaf ear to him as though he were the "lowest serving man at Schoenbrunn."

The Archduke lacked the knowledge of how to deal with people. He neither could nor would control himself, and, charming though he could be when his natural heartiness was allowed free scope, just as little could he conceal his anger and ill-humour. Thus it came about that the relations between him and the aged Emperor grew more and more strained. There were doubtless faults on both sides. The standpoint of the old Emperor, that as long as he lived no one else should interfere, was in direct opposition to that of the Archduke, who held that he would one day have to suffer for the present faults in the administration, and anyone acquainted with life at court will know that such differences between the highest individuals are quickly raked together and exaggerated. At every court there are men who seek to gain their master's favour by pouring oil on the flames, and who, by gossip and stories of all kinds, add to the

antipathy that prevails. Thus it was in this case, and, instead of being drawn closer together, the two became more and more estranged.

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The Archduke had but few friends, and under the old monarch practically none at all. That was one of the reasons for the advances he made to the Emperor William. In reality, they were men of such a different type that there could be no question of friendship in the true sense of the word, or any real understanding between him and the Emperor William, and the question was never mooted practically. The only point common to both their characters was a strongly defined autocratic trait. The Archduke had no sympathy with the speeches of the Emperor William, nor yet with his obvious desire for popularity, which the Archduke could not understand. The Emperor William, on his part, undoubtedly grew more attached to the Archduke during his latter years than he had been originally. Franz Ferdinand was not on such good terms with the Crown Prince of Germany. They spent some weeks together at St. Moritz in Switzerland, without learning to know each other any better; but this can readily be explained by the difference in age and also by the much more serious views of life held by the Archduke.

The isolation and retirement in which the Archduke lived, and the regrettably restricted intercourse he had with other circles, gave rise to the circulation of some true, besides numerous false, rumours. One of these rumours, which is still obstinately kept up, was to the effect that the Archduke was a fanatic for war and looked upon war as a necessary aid to the realisation of his plans for the future. Nothing could be more untrue, and, although the Archduke never openly admitted it to me, I am convinced that he had an instinctive feeling that the Monarchy would never be able to bear the terrible test of strength of a war, and the fact is that, instead of working to encourage war, his activities lay all in the opposite direction. I recollect an extremely symptomatic episode: I do not remember the exact date, but it was some time before the death of the Archduke. One of the well-known Balkan turmoils threw the Monarchy into a state of agitation, and the question whether to mobilise or not became the order of the day. I chanced to be in Vienna, where I had an interview with Berchtold who spoke of the situation with much concern and complained that the Archduke was acting in a warlike spirit. I offered to draw the Archduke’s attention to the danger of the proceeding, and put myself in telegraphic communication with him. I arranged to join his train that same day when he passed through Wessely on his way to Konopischt. I only had the short time between the two stations for my conversation. I therefore at once took the bull by the horns and told him of the rumours current about him in Vienna and of the danger of promoting a conflict with Russia by too strong action in the Balkans. I did not meet with the slightest opposition from the Archduke, and in his usual expeditious way he wrote, while still in the train, a telegram to Berchtold in which he expressed his perfect agreement

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in maintaining a friendly attitude and repudiated all the reports of his having been opposed to it. It is a fact that certain of the military party, who were anxious for war, made use of the Archduke, or rather misused him, in order to carry on a military propaganda in his name and thus gave rise to so wrongful an estimate of him. Several of these men died a hero's death in the war; others have disappeared and are forgotten. Conrad, Chief of the General Staff, was never among those who misused the Archduke. He could never have done such a thing. He carried out himself what he considered necessary and did it openly and in face of everybody.

In connection with these reports about the Archduke there is one remarkable detail that is worthy of note. He told me himself how a fortune-teller once predicted that "he would one day let loose a world war." Although to a certain extent this prophecy flattered him, containing as it did the unspoken recognition that the world would have to reckon on him as a powerful factor, still he emphatically pointed out how mad such a prophecy was. It was fulfilled, however, later, though very differently from what was meant originally, and never was prince more innocent of causing blood to flow than the unhappy victim of Sarajevo.

The Archduke suffered most terribly under the conditions resulting from his unequal marriage. The sincere and true love he felt for his wife kept alive in him the wish to raise her to his rank and privileges, and the constant obstacles that he encountered at all court ceremonies embittered and angered him inexpressibly. The Archduke was firmly resolved that when he came to the throne he would give to his wife, not the title of Empress, but a position which, though without the title, would bestow upon her the highest rank. His argument was that wherever he was she would be the mistress of the house, and as such was entitled to the highest position, "therefore she will take precedence of all the archduchesses." Never did the Archduke show the slightest wish to alter the succession and put his son in place of the Archduke Charles. On the contrary, he was resolved that his first official act on coming to the throne would be to publish a solemn declaration containing his intention, in order to counteract the ever-recurring false and biassed statements. As regards his children, for whom he did everything that a loving father's heart could devise, his greatest wish was to see them become wealthy, independent private individuals, and able to enjoy life without any material cares. His plan was to secure the title of Duke of Hohenberg for his eldest son. It was, therefore, in harmony with this intention that the Emperor Charles conferred the title on the youth.

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One fine quality in the Archduke was his fearlessness. He was quite clear that the danger of an attempt to take his life would always be present, and he often spoke quite simply and openly of such a possibility. A year before the outbreak of war he informed me that the Freemasons had resolved to kill him. He even gave me the name of the town where the resolution was passed—it has escaped my memory now—and mentioned the names of several Austrian and Hungarian politicians who must have been in the secret. He also told me that when he went to the coronation in Spain he was to have made the journey with a Russian Grand Duke, but shortly before the train started the news came that the Grand Duke had been murdered on the way. He did not deny that it was with mixed feelings that he stepped into his compartment. When at St. Moritz news was sent him that two Turkish anarchists had arrived in Switzerland intending to murder him, that every effort was being made to capture them, but that so far no trace of them had been discovered, and he was advised to be on his guard. The Archduke showed me the telegram at the time. He laid it aside without the slightest sign of fear, saying that such events, when announced beforehand, seldom were carried out. The Duchess suffered all the more in her fears for his life, and I think that in imagination the poor lady often went through the catastrophe of which she and her husband were the victims. Another praiseworthy feature in the Archduke was that, out of consideration for his wife's anxiety, he tolerated the constant presence of a detective, which not only bored him terribly but in his opinion was absurd. He was afraid that if the fact became known it would be imputed to timidity on his part, and he conceded the point solely with the view of calming his wife's fears.

But he anxiously concealed all his good qualities and took an obstinate pleasure in being hard and disagreeable. I will not endeavour here to excuse certain traits in his character. His strongly pronounced egotism cannot be denied any more than the hardness of character, which made him insensible to the sufferings of all who were not closely connected with him. He also made himself hated by his severe financial proceedings and his inexorable judgment on any subordinate whom he suspected of the slightest dishonesty. In this connection there are hundreds of anecdotes, some true, some false. These petty traits in his character injured him in the eyes of the great public, while the really great and manly qualities he possessed were unknown to them, and were not weighed in the balance in his favour. For those who knew him well his great and good qualities outweighed the bad ones a hundredfold.

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The Emperor was always very perturbed concerning the Archduke's plans for the future. There was a stern trait also in the old monarch's character, and in the interests of the Monarchy he feared the impetuosity and obstinacy of his nephew. Nevertheless, he often took a very magnanimous view of the matter. For instance, Count Stuergkh, the murdered Prime Minister, gave me details respecting my nomination to the Herrenhaus which are very characteristic of the old monarch. It was Franz Ferdinand's wish that I should be in the Herrenhaus, as he was anxious for me to be one of a delegation and also to profit by my extensive training in the province of foreign policy. I must mention here that it had been impressed on the Emperor on all sides that the Archduke's friends and trusted men were working against him; a version of affairs which to a certain degree he obviously believed, owing to his numerous disputes with Franz Ferdinand. On Stuergkh mentioning my name as a candidate for the Herrenhaus, the Emperor hesitated a moment and then said: "Ah, yes. That is the man who is to be Minister for Foreign Affairs when I am dead. Let him go to the Herrenhaus that he may learn a little more."

Political discussions with the Emperor Francis Joseph were often very difficult, as he kept strictly to the Government department in question and only discussed what referred thereto. While I was ambassador the Emperor would discourse to me on Roumania and the Balkans, but on nothing else. Meanwhile, the different questions were often so closely interwoven that it was impossible to separate them. I remember at one audience where I submitted to the Emperor the Roumanian plans for a closer connection with the Monarchy—plans which I shall allude to in a later chapter—and in doing so I was naturally bound to state what the Roumanians proposed respecting the closer connection with Hungary, and also what changes would be necessitated thereby in the Hungarian administration. The Emperor at once broke off the conversation, saying that it was a matter of Hungarian internal policy.

The old Emperor was almost invariably kind and friendly, and to the very last his knowledge of the smallest details was astonishing. He never spoke of the different Roumanian Ministers as the Minister of Agriculture, of Trade, or whatever it might be, but mentioned them all by name and never made a mistake.

I saw him for the last time in October, 1916, after my definite return from Roumania, and found him then quite clear and sound mentally, though failing in bodily health.

The Emperor Francis Joseph was a "Grand Seigneur" in the true sense of the word. He was an Emperor and remained always unapproachable. Everyone left his presence feeling he had stood before an Emperor. His dignity in representing the monarchical idea was unsurpassed by any sovereign in Europe.

He was borne to his grave at a time of great military successes for the Central Powers. He lies now in the Imperial vault, and a century seems to have elapsed since his death; the world is changed.

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Day by day streams of people pass by the little church, but no one probably gives a thought to him who lies in peace and forgotten, and yet he, through many long years, embodied Austria, and his person was a common centre for the State that so rapidly was falling asunder.

He is now at rest, free from all care and sorrow; he saw his wife, his son, his friends all die, but Fate spared him the sight of his expiring Empire.

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[Illustration: THE ARCHDUKE FRANZ FERDINAND *Photo: Pietzner, Vienna.*]

Franz Ferdinand's character held many sharply defined corners and edges; judging him objectively, no one can deny his great faults. Though the circumstances of his death were so tragic, it may well be that for him it was a blessing. It is hardly conceivable that, once on the throne, the Archduke would have been able to carry out his plans. The structure of the Monarchy which he was so anxious to strengthen and support was already so rotten that it could not have stood any great innovations, and if not the war, then probably the Revolution, would have shattered it. On the other hand, there seems to be no doubt that the Archduke, with all the vehemence and impulsiveness of his character, would have made the attempt to rebuild the entire structure of the Monarchy. It is futile to comment on the chances of his success, but according to human foresight the experiment would not have succeeded, and he would have succumbed beneath the ruins of the falling Monarchy.

It is also futile to conjecture how the Archduke would have acted had he lived to see the war and the upheaval. I think that in two respects his attitude would have differed from that taken. In the first place, he never would have agreed to our army being under German control. It would not have been consistent with his strongly developed autocratic tendencies, and he was too clever politically not to see that we should thereby lose all political freedom of action. In the second place, he would not, like the Emperor Charles, have yielded to revolution. He would have gathered his faithful followers round him and would have fallen fighting, sword in hand. He would have fallen as did his greatest and most dangerous enemy, Stephen Tisza.

But he died the death of a hero on the field of honour, valiantly and in harness. The golden rays of the martyr's crown surrounded his dying head. Many there were who breathed more freely on hearing the news of his death. At the court in Vienna and in society at Budapest there was more joy than sorrow, the former having rightly foreseen that he would have dealt hardly with them. None of them could guess that the fall of the strong man would carry them all with it and engulf them in a world catastrophe.

Franz Ferdinand will remain portrayed in history as a man who either loved or hated. But his tragic end at the side of his wife, who would not allow death to separate them,

throws a mild and conciliatory light on the whole life of this extraordinary man, whose warm heart to the very last was devoted to his Fatherland and duty.

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There was a widely-spread but entirely wrongful idea in the Monarchy that the Archduke had drawn up a programme of his future activities. This was not the case. He had very definite and pronounced ideas for the reorganisation of the Monarchy, but the ideas never developed into a concrete plan—they were more like the outline of a programme that never was completed in detail. The Archduke was in touch with experts from the different departments; he expounded the fundamental views of his future programme to prominent military and political officials, receiving from them hints on how to materialise these views; but a really finished and thought-out programme was never actually produced. The ground lines of his programme were, as already mentioned, the abolition of the dualism and the reorganisation of the Monarchy to form a federative state. He was not clear himself into how many states the Habsburg Monarchy should be converted, but the principle was the rebuilding of the Monarchy on a national basis. Having always in view that prosperity depended on the weakening of the Magyar influence, the Archduke was in favour of a strong preference for the different nationalities living in Hungary, the Roumanians in particular. Not until my return to Bucharest and following on my reports did the Archduke conceive the plan of ceding Transylvania to Roumania and thus adding Greater Roumania to the Habsburg Empire.

His idea was to make of Austria separate German, Czech, Southern Slav and Polish states, which in some respects would be autonomous; in others, would be dependent on Vienna as the centre. But, so far as I know, his programme was never quite clearly defined, and was subject to various modifications.

The Archduke had a great dislike for the Germans, especially the northern Bohemians, who were partisans of the Pan-Germanic tendencies, and he never forgave the attitude of the Deputy Schoenerer. He had a decided preference for all Germans in the Alpine countries, and generally his views were very similar to those of the Christian Socialists. His political ideal was Lueger. When Lueger was lying ill the Archduke said to me: “If God will only spare this man, no better Prime Minister could be found.” Franz Ferdinand had a keen desire for a more centralised army. He was a violent opponent of the endeavours of the Magyars whose aim was an independent Hungarian army, and the question of rank, word of command, and other incidental matters could never be settled as long as he lived, because he violently resisted all Hungarian advances.

The Archduke had a special fondness for the navy. His frequent visits to Brioni brought him into close touch with our navy. He was always anxious to transform the Austrian Navy into one worthy of a Great Power. In regard to foreign policy, the Archduke was always in favour of a Triple Alliance of the three Emperors. The chief motive of this idea must have been that, in the three then apparently so powerful

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monarchs at Petersburg, Berlin and Vienna, he saw the strongest support against revolution, and wished thereby to build up a strong barrier against disorganisation. He saw great danger to the friendly relations between Russia and ourselves in the rivalry between Vienna and Petersburg in the Balkans, and contrary to the reports that have been spread about him, he was rather a partisan than an opposer of Serbia. He was in favour of the Serbians because he felt assured that the petty agrarian policy of the Magyars was responsible for the constant annoyance of the Serbians. He favoured meeting Serbia half-way, because he considered that the Serbian question was a source of discord between Vienna and Petersburg. Another reason was that he was no friend of King Ferdinand of Bulgaria, who constantly pursued an anti-Serbian policy. I believe that if those who were responsible for the organisation of the assassination of the Archduke had known what little justification there was for supposing him to be the man they thought him, they would have desisted.

Franz Ferdinand had a very pronounced feeling that in spite of all alliances the Monarchy must remain independent. He was opposed to any closer combine with Germany, not wishing to be bound to Germany more than to Russia, and the plan that was formulated later as “Central Europe” was always far removed from his wishes and endeavours.

His plans for the future were not worked out, not complete, but they were sound. This, however, is not sufficient to enable one to say that they could have been successfully carried out. In certain circumstances more harm than good will result from energy devoid of the necessary calm prudence, wisdom and, above all, patience.

CHAPTER III

WILLIAM II

1

The Emperor William has been for so long the centre of historic events, so much has been written about him, that apparently he should be known to all the world; and yet I believe he has often been misrepresented.

It is well known that the scarlet thread running through the whole character of William II. was his firm conviction that he was the “elect of God,” and that the dynasty was inextricably bound to the German people. Bismarck also believed in the dynastic fidelity of the Germans. It seems to me that there is just as little dynastic as republican spirit in nations—just as little in the Germans as in others. There is merely a feeling of content or discontent which manifests itself either for or against the dynasty and the form of

government. Bismarck himself was a proof of the justice of this argument. As he himself always maintained, he was thoroughly dynastic—but only during the lifetime of the Emperor William I. He had no love for William II., who had treated him badly, and made no secret of his feelings. He hung the picture of the “young man” in the scullery and wrote a book about him which, owing to its contents, could not be published.

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The Monarchists who derive benefit from their attachment to the reigning monarch deceive themselves as to their true feelings. They are Monarchists because they consider that form of government the most satisfactory one. The Republicans, who apparently glorify the majesty of the people, really mean themselves. But in the long run a people will always recognise that form of government which soonest can give it order, work, prosperity and contentment. In ninety-nine per cent. of the population the patriotism and enthusiasm for one or other form of government is nothing but a matter of material considerations. They prefer a good king to a bad republic, and vice versa; the form of government is the means to the end, but the end is the contentment of the people governed. Nor has the liberty of those governed anything to do with the form of government. Monarchical England is just as free as Republican America, and the Bolshevists have demonstrated *ad oculus* to the whole world that the proletariat exercises the greatest tyranny.

The war that was lost swept away the monarchs, but the Republics will only be maintained if they can convince the people that they are more successful in satisfying the masses than the monarchs were, a proof which—it seems to me—the German-Austrian Republic, at any rate, has hitherto failed to give.

The conviction that these questionable statements not only are false but also objectionable and criminal errors; that the Divine Will has placed the monarch at his post and keeps him there—this conviction was systematically imprinted in the German people, and formed an integral part of the views attributed to the Emperor. All his pretensions are based on this; they all breathe the same idea. Every individual, however, is the product of his birth, his education and his experience. In judging William II. it must be borne in mind that from his youth upwards he was deceived and shown a world which never existed. All monarchs should be taught that their people do not love them; that they are quite indifferent to them; that it is not love that makes them follow them and look up to them, but merely curiosity; that they do not acclaim them from enthusiasm, but for their own amusement, and would as soon hiss at them as cheer them. The loyalty of subjects can never be depended on; it is not their intention to be loyal, but only contented; they only tolerate the monarchs as long as they themselves are contented, or as long as they have not enough strength to abolish them. That is the truth, a knowledge of which would prevent monarchs from arriving at unavoidably false conclusions.

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The Emperor William is an example of this. I do not think there is another ruler who had better intentions than he had. He lived only for his calling—as he viewed it. All his thoughts and longings were centred round Germany. His relations, pleasures and amusements were all subservient to the one idea of making and keeping the German people great and happy, and if good will were sufficient to achieve great things William II. would have achieved them. From the very beginning he was misunderstood. He made statements and gestures intended not only to win his listeners but the whole world, which had just the contrary effect. But he never was conscious of the practical effect of his actions, because he was systematically misled, not only by those in his immediate presence, but by the entire German people. How many millions, who to-day fling curses at him, could not bow low enough when he appeared on the horizon in all his splendour; how many felt overjoyed if the Imperial glance fell on them!—and none of them realise that they themselves are to blame for having shown the Emperor a world which never existed, and driven him into a course which he otherwise would never have taken. It certainly cannot be denied that the whole nature of the Emperor was peculiarly susceptible to this characteristically German attitude, and that monarchs less talented, less keen, less ready, and above all, less impregnated with the idea of self-sufficiency, are not so exposed to the poison of popularity as he was.

I once had the opportunity of studying the Emperor William in a very important phase of his life. I met him at the house of a friend in the celebrated days of November, 1908, when great demonstrations against the Emperor occurred in the Reichstag, and when the then Imperial Chancellor, Prince Buelow, exposed him. Although he did not allude to the matter to us with whom he was not familiar, the powerful impression made upon him by these events in Berlin was very obvious, and I felt that in William II. I saw a man who, for the first time in his life, with horror-stricken eyes, looked upon the world as it really was. He saw brutal reality in close proximity. For the first time in his life, perhaps, he felt his position on his throne to be a little insecure. He forgot his lesson too quickly. Had the overwhelming impression which prevailed for several days been a lasting one it might perhaps have induced him to descend from the clouds to which his courtiers and his people had raised him, and once more feel firm ground beneath his feet. On the other hand, had the German people often treated the German Emperor as they did then it might have cured him.

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A remarkable incident which occurred on this occasion is characteristic of the way in which the Emperor was treated by many of the gentlemen of his suite. I had opportunity, while waiting at a German station restaurant for the arrival of the next train, to watch and study the excitement of the population at the events in Berlin, which bore signs of a revolutionary character. The densely crowded restaurant re-echoed with discussion and criticisms of the Emperor, when suddenly one of the men stood up on a table and delivered a fiery speech against the head of the Government. With the impression of this scene fresh in my mind, I described it to the members of the Emperor's suite, who were just as disagreeably affected by the episode, and it was suggested that nothing should be said about it to the Emperor. One of them, however, protested most energetically and declared that, on the contrary, every detail should be told to the Emperor, and, so far as I know, he himself probably undertook this disagreeable task. This case is characteristic of the desire to keep all unpleasantness from the Emperor and to spare him even the most well-founded criticisms; to praise and exalt him, but never to show that he was being blamed. This systematic putting forward of the Emperor's divine attributes, which in reality was neither due to love of his personality nor any other dynastic cause, but to the purely egotistical wish not to get into disfavour themselves or expose themselves to unpleasantness; this unwholesome state must in the long run act on mind and body as an enervating poison. I readily believe that the Emperor William, unaccustomed to so great an extent to all criticism, did not make it easy for those about him to be open and frank. It was, nevertheless, true that the enervating atmosphere by which he was surrounded was the cause of all the evil at his court. In his youth the Emperor William did not always adhere strictly to the laws of the Constitution; he subsequently cured himself of this failing and never acted independently of his counsellors. At the time when I had official dealings with him he might have served as a model of constitutional conduct.

In the case of so young and inexperienced a man as the Emperor Charles it was doubly necessary to uphold the principle of ministerial responsibility to the fullest extent. As according to our Constitution the Emperor is not responsible to the law, it was of the greatest importance to carry out the principle that he could undertake no administrative act without the cognisance and sanction of the responsible Ministers, and the Emperor Francis Joseph adhered to this principle as though it were gospel.

The Emperor Charles, though full of good intentions, was devoid of all political training and experience, and ought to have been brought up to understand the principles of the Constitution. This, however, had never been taken into consideration.

After my resignation in April, 1918, a deputation from the Constitutional and Central Party in the Herrenhaus waited on the Prime Minister, Dr. von Seidler, and pointed out the importance of a severely constitutional regime, whereupon Dr. von Seidler declared that he took upon himself the full responsibility of the "letter incident."

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This was quite preposterous. Dr. von Seidler could not be responsible for events that had occurred a year before—at a time when he was not Minister—apart from its being an established fact that during his tenure of office he was not aware of what had happened, and not until after my resignation did he learn the Imperial views on the situation. He might just as well have accepted responsibility for the Seven Years War or for the battle of Koeniggraetz.

In 1917 and ’18, when I had certain official dealings with the Emperor William, his horror of an unpleasant discussion was so great that it was a matter of extreme difficulty to impart the necessary information to him. I recollect how once, at the cost of the consideration due to an Emperor, I was compelled to extract a direct statement from him. I was with the Emperor Charles on the Eastern front, but left him at Lemberg and, joining the Emperor William in his train, travelled with him for a couple of hours. I had certain things to submit to him, none of which was of an unpleasant nature. I do not know why it was, but it was obvious that the Emperor was expecting to hear some disagreeable statements, and offered a passive resistance to the request for a private interview. He invited me to breakfast with him in his dining-car, where he sat in the company of ten other gentlemen, and there was no possibility of beginning the desired conversation. Breakfast had been over some time, but the Emperor made no sign of moving. I was several times obliged to request him to grant me a private interview before he rose from the table, and even then he took with him an official from the Foreign Ministry to be present at our conversation as though to have some protection against anticipated troubles. The Emperor William was never rude to strangers, though he often was so to his own people.

With regard to the Emperor Charles, the situation was very different. He was never anything but friendly; in fact I never saw him angry or vexed. There was no need for any special courage in making an unpleasant statement to him, as there was no danger of receiving a violent answer or any other disagreeable consequences. And yet the desire to believe only what was agreeable and to put from him anything disagreeable was very strong in the Emperor Charles, and neither criticism nor blame made any lasting impression on him. But in his case, too, the atmosphere that surrounded him rendered it impossible to convince him of the brutal realities prevailing. On one occasion, when I returned from the front, I had a long conversation with him. I reproached him for some act of administration and asserted that not only on me but on the whole Monarchy his action had made a most unfavourable impression. I told him in the course of the conversation that he must remember how, when he came to the throne, the whole Monarchy had looked to him with great hopes, but that now he had already lost 80 per cent. of his popularity.

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The interview ended without incident; the Emperor preserved, as usual, a friendly demeanour, though my remarks must have affected him unpleasantly. Some hours later we passed through a town where not only the station but all buildings were black with people, standing even on the roofs, waving handkerchiefs and loudly welcoming the Imperial train as it passed through. The same scenes were repeated again and again at other stations that we passed. The Emperor turned to me with a smile and a look that showed me he was firmly convinced everything I had told him as to his dwindling popularity was false, the living picture before our eyes proving the contrary.

When I was at Brest-Litovsk disturbances began in Vienna owing to the lack of food. In view of the whole situation, we did not know what dimensions they would assume, and it was considered that they were of a threatening nature. When discussing the situation with the Emperor, he remarked with a smile: "The only person who has nothing to fear is myself. If it happens again I will go out among the people and you will see the welcome they will give me." Some few months later this same Emperor disappeared silently and utterly out of the picture, and among all the thousands who had acclaimed him, and whose enthusiasm he had thought genuine, not one would have lifted a little finger on his behalf. I have witnessed scenes of enthusiasm which would have deceived the boldest and most sceptical judge of the populace. I saw the Emperor and the Empress surrounded by weeping women and men wellnigh smothered in a rain of flowers; I saw the people on their knees with uplifted hands, as though worshipping a Divinity; and I cannot wonder that the objects of such enthusiastic homage should have taken dross for pure gold in the firm belief that they *personally* were beloved of the people, even as children love their own parents. It is easy to understand that after such scenes the Emperor and Empress looked upon all the criticism of themselves and the discontent among the people as idle talk, and held firmly to the belief that grave disturbances might occur elsewhere but not in their own country. Any simple citizen who has held for a time a higher position experiences something of the kind, though in a lesser degree. I could mention names of many men who could not bow low enough as long as I was in power, but after my resignation would cross the street to avoid a bow, fearing that Imperial disfavour might react on them. But years before his rise the simple citizen has an opportunity of learning to know the world, and, if he be a man of normal temperament, will feel the same contempt for the servility shown during his time in office as for the behaviour he meets with afterwards. Monarchs are without training in the school of life, and therefore usually make a false estimate of the psychology of humanity. But in this tragi-comedy it is they who are led astray.

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It is less easy, however, to understand that responsible advisers, who are bound to distinguish between reality and comedy, should also allow themselves to be deceived and draw false political conclusions from such events. In 1918 the Emperor, accompanied by the Prime Minister, Dr. von Seidler, went to the South Slav provinces to investigate matters there. He found, of course, the same welcome there as everywhere, curiosity brought the people out to see him; pressure from the authorities on the one hand, and hope of Imperial favours on the other, brought about ovations similar to those in the undoubtedly dynastic provinces. And not only the Emperor, but von Seidler returned in triumph, firmly convinced that everything stated in Parliament or written in the papers respecting the separatist tendencies of the South Slavs was pure invention and nonsense, and that they would never agree to a separation from the Habsburg Empire.

The objects of these demonstrations of enthusiasm and dynastic loyalty were deceived by them, but I repeat that those who were to blame were not the monarchs, but those who were the instigators and organisers of such scenes and who omitted to enlighten the monarchs on the matter. But any such explanation could only be effectual if all those in the immediate neighbourhood of the ruler concurred in a similar reckless disregard of truth. For if one out of ten people declares such scenes to be not genuine and the others contradict him and assert that the demonstrations of the “love of the people” are overwhelming, the monarch will always be more inclined to listen to the many pleasant rather than to the few unpleasant counsels. Willingly or unwillingly, all monarchs try, very humanly, to resist awakening out of this hypnotic complacency. Naturally, there were men in the entourage of the German Emperor whose pride kept them from making too large an offering to the throne, but as a rule their suffering in the Byzantine atmosphere of Germany was greater than their enjoyment. I always considered that the greatest sycophants were not those living at court, but generals, admirals, professors, officials, representatives of the people and men of learning—-people whom the Emperor met infrequently.

During the second half of the war, however, the leading men around the Kaiser were not Byzantine—Ludendorff certainly was not. His whole nature was devoid of Byzantine characteristics. Energetic, brave, sure of himself and his aims, he brooked no opposition and was not fastidious in his choice of language. To him it was a matter of indifference whether he was confronted by his Emperor or anyone else—he spoke unrestrainedly to all who came in his way.

The numerous burgomasters, town councillors, professors of the universities, deputies —in short, men of the people and of science—had for years prostrated themselves before the Emperor William; a word from him intoxicated them—but how many of them are there now amongst those who condemn the former regime with its abuses and, above all, the Emperor himself!

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His political advisers experienced great difficulty in their business dealings with the Emperor William during the war, as he was generally at Headquarters and seldom in Berlin. The Emperor Charles's absence from Vienna was also at times most inconvenient.

In the summer of 1917, for instance, he was at Reichenau, which necessitated a two hours' motor drive; I had to go there twice or three times a week, thus losing five or six hours which had to be made good by prolonged night work. On no account would he come to Vienna, in spite of the efforts made by his advisers to persuade him to do so. From certain remarks the Emperor let fall I gathered that the reason of this persistent refusal was anxiety concerning the health of the children. He himself was so entirely free from pretensions that it cannot have been a question of his own comfort that prevented his coming.

The Emperor's desire to restore the Archduke Joseph Ferdinand to a post of command was for me a source of much unpleasantness. The Archduke is said to have been to blame for the Luck failure. I cannot judge whether wrongly—as the Emperor maintained—or rightly; but the fact remains that the public no longer had confidence in him. Quite accidentally I learnt that his reinstatement was imminent. As a matter of fact, this purely military proceeding in no way concerned me, but I had to reckon with the feeling of the populace, who were in no mood for further burdens, and also with the fact that, since Conrad had gone, none of those in the Emperor's entourage showed the slightest disposition to acquaint him with the truth. The only general who, to my personal knowledge, was in the habit of speaking frankly to the Emperor, was Alvis Schonburg, and he was at this time somewhere on the Italian front. I therefore told the Emperor that the reinstatement was an impossibility, giving as my reason the fact that the Archduke had forfeited the confidence of the country, and that no mother could be expected to give up her son to serve under a general whom everyone held to be guilty of the Luck catastrophe. The Emperor insisted that this view was unjust, and that the Archduke was not culpable. I replied that, even so, the Archduke would have to submit. Everyone had lost confidence in him, and the most strenuous exertions of the people could neither be expected nor obtained if the command were handed to generals who were unanimously regarded as unworthy of the confidence placed in them.

My efforts were vain.

I then adopted another course. I sent an official from the Department of Foreign Affairs to the Archduke with the request that he would resign voluntarily.

It must be admitted that Joseph Ferdinand took both a loyal and a dignified attitude, as he himself notified the Emperor that he would relinquish his command at the front. A short correspondence followed between the Archduke and myself, which on his side was couched in an indignant and not over-polite tone; this, however, I did not take

amiss, as my interference had been successful in preventing his resuming the command.

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His subsequent appointment as Chief of the Air Force was made without my knowledge; but this was of no importance when compared to the previous plans.

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There is no doubt that the Byzantine atmosphere of Berlin took a more objectionable form than ever was the case in Vienna. The very idea of high dignitaries kissing the Emperor's hand, as they did in Berlin, would have been impossible in Vienna. I never heard of anyone, even among the keenest sycophants, who demeaned themselves by such an act, which in Berlin, as I know from personal observation, was an everyday occurrence. For instance, after a trip on the *Meteor*, during the "Kiel Week," the Emperor presented two German officials with scarf-pins as a souvenir. He handed the pins to them himself, and great was my surprise to see them kiss his hand as they thanked him.

Many foreigners were in the habit of coming for the Kiel Week: Americans, French, and English. The Emperor paid them much attention, and they nearly always succumbed to the charm of his personality. Apparently William II. had a preference for America; on the subject of his feelings regarding England it is difficult to express an opinion. My impression always was that the Emperor resented the scant sympathy shown him in England; he strove to make himself beloved, and the failure of his efforts caused him a certain annoyance. He was quite aware that the extent of his popularity in England would proportionately influence Anglo-German relations, and his desire to find favour in England did not proceed from personal vanity, but from political interests.

King Edward was known to be one of the best judges of men in all Europe, and his interest in foreign policy was predominant. He would have been an ideal ambassador. There was never a very good understanding between uncle and nephew. When the nephew was already Emperor, and his much older uncle still only a prince, the difference in their positions was characterised by the satirical Kiderlen-Waechter in the following terms: "The Prince of Wales cannot forgive his nephew, eighteen years younger than himself, for making a more brilliant career than has fallen to his lot."

Personal sympathy and personal differences in leading circles are capable of influencing the world's history. Politics are, and always will be, made by men, and individual personal relations will always play a certain part in their development. Who can to-day assert that the course of the world might not have been different had the monarchs of Germany and England been more alike in temperament? The encircling policy of King Edward was not brought into play until he was persuaded that an understanding with the Emperor William was impossible.

The difficulty the Emperor experienced in adapting himself to the ideas and views of others increased as the years went by, a state of things largely the fault of his entourage.

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The atmosphere in which he lived would have killed the hardiest plant. Whatever the Emperor said or did, whether it was right or wrong, was received with enthusiastic praise and admiration. Dozens of people were always at hand to laud him to the skies.

For instance, a book was published during the war entitled, “Der Kaiser im Felde,” by Dr. Bogdan Kriegen. The Emperor presented me with a copy when at Kreuznach in May, 1917, and wrote a suitable inscription inside. The book contained an accurate account of all the Emperor had done during the campaign—but it was entirely superficial matter; where he had driven to, where breakfasted, with whom he had spoken, the jokes he had made, what clothes he wore, the shining light in his eyes, *etc*., *etc*. It also recorded his speeches to the troops; dull and uninteresting words that he addressed to individual soldiers, and much more in the same strain. The whole book is impregnated and permeated with boundless admiration and unqualified praise. The Emperor gave me the book when I was leaving, and I read it through when in the train.

I was asked a few weeks later by a German officer what I thought of the book. I replied that it was trash and could only harm the Emperor, and that it should be confiscated. The officer shared my opinion, but said that the Emperor had been assured on all sides that the book was a splendid work and helped to fire the spirit of the army; he therefore had it widely distributed. Once, at a dinner at Count Hertling’s, I called his attention to the book and advised him to suppress it, as such a production could only be detrimental to the Emperor. The old gentleman was very angry, and declared: “That was always the way; people who wished to ingratiate themselves with the Emperor invariably presented him with such things.” A professor from the University had warmly praised the book to me, but he went on to say: “The Emperor had, of course, no time to read such stuff and repudiate the flattery; neither had he himself found time to read it, but would make a point of doing so now.” I did not know much of that professor, but he certainly was not in frequent touch with the Emperor, nor was the author of the book.

In this instance, as in many others, I concluded that many of the members of the Emperor’s suite were far from being in sympathy with such tendencies. The court was not the principal offender, but was carried away by the current of sycophancy.

During my period of office Prince Hohenlohe, the ambassador, had numerous interviews with the Emperor William, and invariably spoke most freely and openly to him, and yet always was on the best footing with him. This was, of course, an easier matter for a foreign ambassador than for a German of the Empire, but it proves that the Emperor accepted it when done in proper form.

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In his own country the Emperor was either glorified and exalted to the skies or else scorned and scoffed at by a minority of the Press in a prejudicial manner. In the latter case it bore so evidently the stamp of personal enmity that it was discredited *a priori*. Had there existed earnest papers and organs that would, in dignified fashion, have discussed and criticised the Emperor's faults and failings, while recognising all his great and good qualities, it would have been much more satisfactory. Had there been more books written about him showing that the real man is quite different from what he is made to appear to be; that he is full of the best intentions and inspired with a passionate love of Germany; that in a true and profound religious sense he often wrestles with himself and his God, asking himself if he has chosen the right way; that his love for his people is far more genuine than that of many of the Germans for him; that he never has deceived them, but was constantly deceived by them—such literature would have been more efficacious and, above all, nearer the truth.

Undoubtedly the German Emperor's gifts and talents were above the average, and had he been an ordinary mortal would certainly have become a very competent officer, architect, engineer, or politician. But for lack of criticism he lost his bearings, and it caused his undoing. According to all the records the Emperor William I. was of a very different nature. Yet Bismarck often had a hard task in dealing with him, though Bismarck's loyalty and subservience to the dynastic idea made him curb his characteristically ruthless frankness. But William I. was a self-made man. When he came to the throne and began to govern his kingdom was tottering. Assisted by the very capable men he was able to find and to retain, he upheld it, and by means of Koeniggraetz and Sedan created the great German Empire. William II. came to the throne when Germany had reached the zenith of her power. He had not acquired what he possessed by his own work, as his grandfather had; it came to him without any effort on his part; a fact which had a great and far from favourable influence on his whole mental development.

The Emperor William was an entertaining and interesting *causeur*. One could listen to him for hours without wearying. Emperors usually enjoy the privilege of finding a ready audience, but even had the Emperor William been an ordinary citizen he would always have spoken to a crowded house. He could discourse on art, science, politics, music, religion, and astronomy in a most animated manner. What he said was not always quite correct; indeed, he often lost himself in very questionable conclusions; but the fault of boring others, the greatest of social faults, was not his.

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Although the Emperor was always very powerful in speech and gesture, still, during the war he was much less independent in his actions than is usually assumed, and, in my opinion, this is one of the principal reasons that gave rise to a mistaken understanding of all the Emperor's administrative activities. Far more than the public imagine he was a driven rather than a driving factor, and if the Entente to-day claims the right of being prosecutor and judge combined in order to bring the Emperor to his trial, it is unjust and an error, as, both preceding and during the war, the Emperor William never played the part attributed to him by the Entente.

The unfortunate man has gone through much, and more is, perhaps, in store for him. He has been carried too high and cannot escape a terrible fall. Fate seems to have chosen him to expiate a sin which, if it exists at all, is not so much his as that of his country and his times. The Byzantine atmosphere in Germany was the ruin of Emperor William; it enveloped him and clung to him like a creeper to a tree; a vast crowd of flatterers and fortune-seekers who deserted him in the hour of trial. The Emperor William was merely a particularly distinctive representative of his class. All modern monarchs suffer from the disease; but it was more highly developed in the Emperor William and, therefore, more obvious than in others. Accustomed from his youth to the subtle poison of flattery, at the head of one of the greatest and mightiest states in the world, possessing almost unlimited power, he succumbed to the fatal lot that awaits men who feel the earth recede from under their feet, and who begin to believe in their Divine semblance.

He is expiating a crime which was not of his making. He can take with him in his solitude the consolation that his only desire was for the best. And notwithstanding all that is said and written about William II. in these days, the beautiful words of the text may be applied to him: "Peace on earth to men of goodwill."[4]

In his retirement from the world his good conscience will be his most precious possession.

Perhaps in the evening of his days William II. will acknowledge that there is neither happiness nor unhappiness in mortal life, but only a difference in the strength to endure one's fate.

2

War was never in William II.'s programme. I am not able to say where, in his own mind, he had fixed the limits he proposed for Germany and whether it was justifiable to reproach him with having gone too far in his ambition for the Fatherland. He certainly never thought of a *unified* German world dominion; he was not so simple as to think he could achieve that without a war, but his plan undoubtedly was permanently to establish Germany among the first Powers of the world. I know for certain that the Emperor's

ideal plan was to come to a world agreement with England and, in a certain sense, to divide the world with her. In this projected

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division of the world a certain part was to be played by Russia and Japan, but he paid little heed to the other states, especially to France, convinced that they were all nations of declining power. To maintain that William intentionally prepared and started this war is in direct opposition to his long years of peaceful government. Helfferich, in his work "Die Vorgeschichte des Weltkrieges," speaks of the Emperor's attitude during the Balkan troubles, and says:
A telegram sent by William II. at that time to the Imperial Chancellor explains the attitude of the German Emperor in this critical position for German politics, being similar to the situation in July, 1914. The contents of the telegram are as follows: "The Alliance with Austria-Hungary compels us to take action should Austria-Hungary be attacked by Russia. In that case France would also be involved, and in those circumstances England would not long remain quiescent. The present prevailing questions of dispute cannot be compared with that danger. It cannot be the intention of the Alliance that we, the life interest of our ally not being endangered, should enter upon a life-and-death conflict for a caprice of that ally. Should it become evident that the other side intend to attack, the danger must then be faced."This calm and decided standpoint which alone could maintain peace was also the German policy observed in further developments. It was upheld when confronted by strong pressure from Russia, as also against other tendencies and a certain transitory ill-feeling in Vienna.

Whether such feeling did exist in Vienna or not I cannot say, but I believe the account is correct.

It has already been mentioned that all the warlike speeches flung into the world by the Emperor were due to a mistaken understanding of their effect. I allow that the Emperor wished to create a sensation, even to terrify people, but he also wished to act on the principle of *si vis pacem para bellum*, and by emphasising the military power of Germany he endeavoured to prevent the many envious enemies of his Empire from declaring war on him.

It cannot be denied that this attitude was often both unfortunate and mistaken, and that it contributed to the outbreak of war; but it is asserted that the Emperor was devoid of the *dolus* of making war; that he said and did things by which he unintentionally stirred up war.

Had there been men in Germany ready to point out to the Emperor the injurious effects of his behaviour and to make him feel the growing mistrust of him throughout the world, had there been not one or two but dozens of such men, it would assuredly have made an impression on the Emperor. It is quite true that of all the inhabitants of the earth, the German is the one the least capable of adapting himself to the mentality of other people, and, as a matter of fact, there were perhaps but few in the immediate entourage of the Emperor

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who recognised the growing anxiety of the world. Perhaps many of those who so continuously extolled the Emperor were really honestly of opinion that his behaviour was quite correct. It is, nevertheless, impossible not to believe that among the many clever German politicians of the last decade there were some who had a clear grasp of the situation, and the fact remains that, in order to spare the Emperor and themselves, they had not the courage to be harsh with him and tell him the truth to his face. These are not reproaches, but reminiscences which should not be superfluous at a time when the Emperor is to be made the scapegoat of the whole world. Certainly, the Emperor, being such as he is, the experiment would not have passed off without there being opposition to encounter and overcome. The first among his subjects to attempt the task of enlightening the Emperor would have been looked upon with the greatest surprise; hence no one would undertake it. Had there, however, been men who, regardless of themselves, would have undertaken to do it, it would certainly have succeeded, as not only was the Emperor full of good intentions, but he was also impressionable, and consistent purposefulness on a basis of fearless honesty would have impressed him. Besides, the Emperor was a thoroughly kind and good man. It was a genuine pleasure for him to be able to do good, neither did he hate his enemies. In the summer of 1917 he spoke to me about the fate of the deposed Tsar and of his desire to help him and subsequently bring him to Germany, a desire due not to dynastic but to human motives. He stated repeatedly that he had no desire for revenge, but “only to succour his fallen adversary.”

I firmly believe that the Emperor clearly saw the clouds grow blacker and blacker on the political horizon, but he was sincerely and honestly persuaded that it was not through any fault of his that they had accumulated, that they were caused by envy and jealousy, and that there was no other way of keeping the threatening war danger at bay than by an ostentatious attitude of strength and fearlessness. “Germany’s power and might must daily be proclaimed to the world, for as long as they fear us they will do us no harm”—that was the doctrine that obtained on the Spree. And the echo came back from the world, “This continued boasting of German power and the perpetual attempts at intimidation prove that Germany seeks to tyrannise the world.”

When war broke out the Emperor was firmly convinced that a war of defence was being forced on him, which conviction was shared by the great majority of the German people. I draw these conclusions solely from my knowledge of the Emperor and his entourage and from other information obtained indirectly. As I have already mentioned, I had not had the slightest connection with Berlin for some years previous to the war, and certainly not for two years after it broke out.

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In the winter of 1917, when I met the Emperor again in my capacity as Minister for Foreign Affairs, I thought he had aged, but was still full of his former vivacity. In spite of marked demonstrations of the certainty of victory, I believe that William II. even then had begun to doubt the result of the war and that his earnest wish was to bring it to an honourable end. When in the course of one of our first conversations I urged him to spare no sacrifice to bring it to an end, he interrupted me, exclaiming: "What would you have me do? Nobody longs for peace more intensely than I do. But every day we are told that the others will not hear a word about peace until Germany has been crushed." It was a true answer, for all statements made by England culminated in the one sentence *Germanium esse delendam*. I endeavoured, nevertheless, to induce the Emperor to consent to the sacrifice of Alsace-Lorraine, persuaded that if France had obtained all that she looked upon in the light of a national idea she would not be inclined to continue the war. I think that, had the Emperor been positively certain that it would have ended the war, and had he not been afraid that so distressing an offer would have been considered unbearable by Germany, he would personally have agreed to it. But he was dominated by the fear that a peace involving such a loss, and after the sacrifices already made, would have driven the German people to despair. Whether he was justified in this fear or not cannot now be confirmed. In 1917, and 1918 as well, the belief in a victorious end was still so strong in Germany that it is at least doubtful whether the German people would have consented to give up Alsace-Lorraine. All the parties in the Reichstag were opposed to it, including the Social Democrats.

A German official of high standing said to me in the spring of 1918: "I had two sons; one of them fell on the field of battle, but I would rather part with the other one too than give up Alsace-Lorraine," and many were of the same opinion.

In the course of the year and a half when I had frequent opportunities of meeting the Emperor, his frame of mind had naturally gone through many different phases. Following on any great military success, and after the collapse of Russia and Roumania, his generals were always able to enrol him on their programme of victory, and it is quite a mistake to imagine that William II. unceasingly clung to the idea of "Peace above all." He wavered, was sometimes pessimistic, sometimes optimistic, and his peace aims changed in like manner. Humanly speaking, it is very comprehensible that the varying situation in the theatre of war must have influenced the individual mind, and everyone in Europe experienced such fluctuations.

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Early in September, 1917, he wrote to the Emperor Charles on the subject of an impending attack on the Italian front, and in this letter was the following passage: "I trust that the possibility of a common offensive of our allied armies will raise the spirits of your Foreign Minister. In my opinion, and in view of the general situation, there is no reason to be anything but confident." Other letters and statements prove the Emperor's fluctuating frame of mind. He, as well as the diplomats in the Wilhelmstrasse, made use, with regard to the "war-weary Austria-Hungary," of such tactics as demonstrated a pronounced certainty of victory in order to strengthen our powers of resistance.

* * * * *

The Archduke Friedrich deserves the greatest praise for having kept up the friendly relations between Vienna and Berlin. It was not always easy to settle the delicate questions relating to the conduct of the war without giving offence. The honest and straightforward nature of the Archduke and his ever friendly and modest behaviour saved many a difficult situation.

After our collapse and overthrow, and when the Imperial family could be abused with impunity, certain newspapers took a delight in covering the Archduke Friedrich with contumely. It left him quite indifferent. The Prince is a distinguished character, of faultless integrity and always ready to put down abuse. He prevented many disasters, and it was not his fault if he did not succeed every time.

When I saw the Crown Prince Wilhelm again after several years, in the summer of 1917, I found him very tired of war and most anxious for peace. I had gone to the French front on purpose to meet him and to try if it were possible through him to exercise some conciliatory pressure, above all, on the military leaders. A long conversation that I had with him showed me very clearly that he—if he had ever been of warlike nature—was then a pronounced pacifist.

Extract from my Diary.

"On the Western front, 1917. We drove to the Camp des Romains, but in detachments in order not to attract the attention of the enemy artillery to our cars, for in some places the road was visible to the enemy. I drove together with Bethmann. When discussing the military leaders, he remarked: 'The generals will probably throw hand grenades at me when they see me.'

"An enemy flier cruised high up in the clouds over our heads. He circled around, paying little heed to the shrapnel bursting on all sides. The firing ceased, and the human bird soared into unapproachable heights. The artillery fire a long way off sounded like distant thunder.

“The French lines are not more than a couple of hundred metres distant from the camp. A shot fell here and there and a shell was heard to whistle; otherwise all was quiet. It was still early. The firing usually begins at ten and ceases at noon—interval for lunch—and begins again in the afternoon.

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“Poincare’s villa is visible on the horizon in the green landscape. A gun has been brought to bear on the house—they mean to destroy it before leaving—they call this the extreme unction.

“The daily artillery duel began on our return drive, and kept up an incessant roar.

“*St. Mihiel.*

“We stopped at St. Mihiel, where many French people still remain. They were detained as hostages to prevent the town from being fired at. People were standing about in the streets watching the cars go by.

“I spoke to an old woman, who sat by herself on her house-steps. She said: ’This disaster can never be made good, and it cannot well be worse than it is now. It is quite the same to me what happens. I do not belong here; my only son has been killed and my house is burnt. Nothing is left me but my hatred of the Germans, and I bequeath that to France.’ And she gazed past me into vacancy. She spoke quite without passion, but was terribly sad.

“This terrible hatred! Generations will go to their graves before the flood of hatred is abated. Would a settlement, a peace of understanding, be possible with this spirit of the nations? Will it not end by one of them being felled to earth and annihilated?

“*St. Privat.*

“We passed through St. Privat on our way to Metz. Monuments that tell the tale of 1870 stand along the road. Everywhere the soil is historic, soaked in blood. Every spot, every stone, is reminiscent of past great times. It was here that the seed was sown that brought forth the plan of revenge that is being fought for now.

“Bethmann seemed to divine my thoughts. ‘Yes,’ he said, ’that sacrifice would be easier for Germany to bear than to part with Alsace-Lorraine, which would close one of the most brilliant episodes in her history.’

“*Sedan.*

“On the way to the Crown Prince’s quarters. There stands the little house where the historic meeting between Napoleon III. and Bismarck took place. The woman who lived there at the time died only a few weeks ago. For the second time she saw the Germans arrive, bringing a Moltke but no Bismarck with them, a detail, however, that cannot deeply have interested the old lady.

“*With the Crown Prince.*

“A pretty little house outside the town. I found a message from the Crown Prince asking me to proceed there immediately, where I had almost an hour’s private conversation with him before supper.

“I do not know if the Crown Prince ever was of a warlike disposition, as people say, but he is so no longer. He longs for peace, but does not know how to secure it. He spoke very quietly and sensibly. He was also in favour of territorial sacrifices, but seemed to think that Germany would not allow it. The great difficulty lay in the contrast between the actual military situation, the confident expectations of the generals, and the fears entertained by the military laymen. Besides, it is not only Alsace-Lorraine. The suppression of German militarism spoken of in London means the one-sided disarmament of Germany. Can an army far advanced on enemy soil whose generals are confident of final victory, can a people still undefeated tolerate that?

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“I advised the Crown Prince to speak to his father on the question of abdication, in which he fully agreed. I then invited him to come to Vienna on behalf of the Emperor, which he promised to do as soon as he could get leave.”

On my return the Emperor wrote him a letter, drawn up by me, which contained the following passage:

My Minister for Foreign Affairs has informed me of the interesting conversation he had the honour to have with you, and it has been a great pleasure to me to hear all your statements, which so exactly reflect my own views of the situation. Notwithstanding the superhuman exertions of our troops, the situation throughout the country demands that a stop be put to the war before winter, in Germany as well as here. Turkey will not be with us much longer, and with her we shall also lose Bulgaria; we two will then be alone, and next spring will bring America and a still stronger Entente. From other sources there are distinct signs that we could win over France if Germany could make up her mind to certain territorial sacrifices in Alsace-Lorraine. With France secured to us we are the conquerors, and Germany will obtain elsewhere ample compensation. But I cannot allow Germany to be the only one to make a sacrifice. I too will take the lion’s share of sacrifice, and have informed His Majesty your father that under the above conditions I am prepared not only to dispense with the whole of Poland, but to cede Galicia to her and to assist in combining that state with Germany, who would thus acquire a state in the East while yielding up a portion of her soil in the West. In 1915, at the request of Germany and in the interests of our Alliance, we offered the Trentino to faithless Italy without asking for compensation in order to avert war. Germany is now in a similar situation, though with far better prospects. You, as heir to the German Imperial crown, are privileged to have a say in the matter, and I know that His Majesty your father entirely shares this view respecting your co-operation. I beg of you, therefore, in this decisive hour for Germany and Austria-Hungary, to consider the whole situation and to unite your efforts with mine to bring the war to a rapid and honourable end. If Germany persists in her standpoint of refusal and thus wrecks the hope of a possible peace the situation in Austria-Hungary will become extremely critical.

> I should be very glad to have a talk with you as soon as possible, and your promise conveyed through Count Czernin soon to pay us a visit gives me the greatest pleasure.

The Crown Prince’s answer was very friendly and full of anxiety to help, though it was also obvious that the German military leaders had succeeded in nipping his efforts in the bud. When I met Ludendorff some time afterwards in Berlin this was fully confirmed by the words he flung at me: “What have you been doing to our Crown Prince? He had turned very slack, but we have stiffened him up again.”

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The game remained the same. The last war period in Germany was controlled by one will only, and that was Ludendorff's. His thoughts were centred on fighting, his soul on victory.

FOOTNOTES:

[4] This is a literal rendering of the famous text from the German.

CHAPTER IV

ROUMANIA

1

My appointment as ambassador to Bucharest in the autumn of 1913 came as a complete surprise to me, and was much against my wishes. The initiative in the matter came from the Archduke Franz Ferdinand. I had never had any doubt that sooner or later the Archduke would take part in politics, but it took me by surprise that he should do so in the Emperor Francis Joseph's lifetime.

A great difference of opinion prevailed then in Vienna on the Roumanian question, a pro-Roumanian spirit fighting against an anti-Roumanian one. The head of the former party was the Archduke Franz, and with him, though in less marked degree, was Berchtold. Tisza was the leader on the other side, and carried with him almost the entire Hungarian Parliament. The pro-Roumanians wished Roumania to be more closely linked to the Monarchy; the others, to replace that alliance by one with Bulgaria; but both were unanimous in seeking for a clear knowledge of how matters stood with the alliance, and whether we had a friend or a foe on the other side of the Carpathians. My predecessor, Karl Fuerstenberg, had sent in a very clear and correct report on the subject, but he shared the fate of so many ambassadors: his word was not believed.

The actual task assigned to me was, first of all to find out whether this alliance was of any practical value, and if I thought not to suggest ways and means of justifying its existence.

I must mention in this connection that my appointment as ambassador to Bucharest had raised a perfect storm in the Hungarian Parliament. The reason for this widely spread indignation in Hungary at my selection for the post was owing to a pamphlet I had written some years previously, in which I certainly had attacked the Magyar policy somewhat vehemently. I maintained the standpoint that a policy of suppression of the nations was not tenable in the long run, and that no future was in store for Hungary unless she definitely abolished that policy and allowed the nations equal rights. This pamphlet gave serious displeasure in Budapest, and representatives in the Hungarian

Parliament were afraid I should introduce that policy in Roumania, which, following the spirit of the pamphlet, was directed against the official policy of Vienna and Budapest. It was at this period that I made Tisza's acquaintance. I had a long and very frank conversation with him on the whole subject, and explained to him that I must uphold the standpoint I put forward in my pamphlet, as it tallied with my convictions, but that I clearly saw that from the moment

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I accepted the post of ambassador I was bound to consider myself as a part of the great state machinery, and loyally support the policy emanating from the Ballplatz. I still maintain that my standpoint is perfectly justifiable. A unified policy would be utterly impossible if every subordinate official were to publish his own views, whether right or wrong, and I for my part would never, as Minister, have tolerated an ambassador who attempted to pursue an independent policy of his own. Tisza begged me to give my word of honour that I would make no attempt to introduce a policy opposed to that of Vienna and Budapest, to which I readily agreed, provided that the Archduke was agreeable to such decision. I then had a conversation with the latter, and found that he quite agreed with my action, his argument being that as long as he was the heir to the throne he would never attempt to introduce a policy opposed to that of the Emperor; consequently he would not expect it from me either. But should he come to the throne he would certainly make an effort to carry out his own views, in which case I should no longer be at Bucharest, but probably in some post where I would be in a position to support his efforts. The Archduke begged me for the sake of my friendship for him to accept the post, which I finally decided to do after I obtained a promise from Berchtold that, at the end of two years as the longest term, he would put no obstacle in the way of my retirement.

The Archduke Franz drew his pro-Roumanian proclivities from a very unreliable source. He hardly knew Roumania at all. So far as I know, he had only once been in the country, and paid a short visit to King Carol at Sinaia; but the friendly welcome accorded to himself and his wife by the old King and Queen entirely took his warm heart by storm, and he mistook King Carol for Roumania. This is again a proof how greatly the individual relations of great personalities can influence the policy of nations. The royal couple met the Archduke at the station; the Queen embraced and kissed the duchess and, placing her at her right side, drove with her to the castle. In short, it was the first time that the Duchess of Hohenberg had been treated as enjoying equal privileges with her husband. During his short stay in Roumania the Archduke had the pleasure of seeing his wife treated as his equal and not as a person of slight importance, always relegated to the background. At the court balls in Vienna the duchess was always obliged to walk behind all the archduchesses, and never had any gentleman allotted to her whose arm she could take. In Roumania she was *his wife*, and etiquette was not concerned with her birth. The Archduke valued this proof of friendly tactfulness on the part of the King very highly, and always afterwards Roumania, in his eyes, was endowed with a special charm. Besides which he very correctly estimated that a change in certain political relations would effect a closer alliance between Roumania and ourselves. He felt, rather than knew, that the Transylvanian question lay like a huge obstacle between Vienna and Bucharest, and that this obstacle once removed would alter the entire situation.

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To find out the real condition of the alliance was my first task, and it was not difficult, as the first lengthy conferences I had with King Carol left no doubt in my mind that the old King himself considered the alliance very unsafe. King Carol was an exceptionally clever man, very cautious and deliberate, and it was not easy to make him talk if he intended to be silent. The question of the vitality of the alliance was settled by my suggesting to the King that the alliance should receive pragmatic sanction, *i.e*. be ratified by the Parliaments at Vienna, Budapest, and Bucharest. The alarm evinced by the King at the suggestion, the very idea that the carefully guarded secret of the existence of an alliance should be divulged, proved to me how totally impossible it would be, in the circumstances, to infuse fresh life into such dead matter.

My reports sent to the Ballplatz leave no doubt that I answered this first question by declaring in categorical fashion that the alliance with Roumania was, under the existing conditions, nothing but a scrap of paper.

The second question, as to whether there were ways and means of restoring vitality to the alliance, and what they were, was theoretically just as easy to answer as difficult to carry out in practice. As already mentioned, the real obstacle in the way of closer relations between Bucharest and Vienna was the question of Great Roumania; in other words, the Roumanian desire for national union with her “brothers in Transylvania.” This was naturally quite opposed to the Hungarian standpoint. It is interesting, as well as characteristic of the then situation, that shortly after my taking up office in Roumania, Nikolai Filippescu (known later as a war fanatic) proposed that Roumania should join with Transylvania and the whole of united Great Roumania enter into relations with the Monarchy similar to the relation of Bavaria to the German Empire. I admit that I welcomed the idea warmly, for if it were launched by a party which justly was held to be antagonistic to the Monarchy there can be no doubt that the moderate element in Roumania would have accepted it with still greater satisfaction. I still believe that had this plan been carried out it would have led to a real linking of Roumania to the Monarchy, that the notification would have met with no opposition, and consequently the outbreak of war would have found us very differently situated. Unfortunately the plan failed at its very first stage owing to Tisza’s strong and obstinate resistance. The Emperor Francis Joseph held the same standpoint as Tisza, and it was out of the question to achieve anything by arguing. On the other hand, nobody had any idea then that the great war, and with it the testing of the alliance, was so imminent, and I consoled myself for my unsuccessful efforts in the firm hope that this grand plan, as it seemed to me both then and now, would be realised one day under the Archduke Franz Ferdinand.

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When I arrived in Roumania a change was proceeding in the Government. Majorescu's Conservative Ministry gave way to the Liberal Ministry of Bratianu. King Carol's policy of government was very peculiar. From the very first his principle was never to proceed with violence or even much energy against injurious tendencies in his own country; but, on the contrary, always to yield to the numerous claims made by extortioners. He knew his people thoroughly, and knew that both parties, Conservatives and Liberals, must alternately have access to the manger until thoroughly satisfied and ready to make room the one for the other. Almost every change in the Government was accomplished in that manner: the Opposition, desirous of coming into power, began with threats and hints at revolution. Some highly unreasonable claim would be put forward and vehemently insisted upon and the people incited to follow it up; the Government would retire, unable to accede to the demands, and the Opposition, once in power, would show no further signs of keeping their promise. The old King was well versed in the game; he allowed the opposition tide to rise to the highest possible limit, when he effected the necessary change of individuals and looked on until the game began again. It is the custom in Roumania, when a new party comes into power, to change the whole personnel, even down to the lowest officials. This arrangement, obviously, has its drawbacks, though on the other hand it cannot be denied that it is a practical one.

In this manner the Bratianu Ministry came into office in 1913. Majorescu's Government gave entire satisfaction to the King and the moderate elements in the country. In the eyes of the Roumanians he had just achieved a great diplomatic success by the Peace of Bucharest and the acquisition of the Dobrudsha, when Bratianu came forward with a demand for vast agrarian reforms. These reforms are one of the hobby-horses of Roumanian policy which is always mounted when it is a question of making use of the poor unfortunate peasants, and the manoeuvre invariably succeeds, largely owing to the lack of intelligence prevailing among the peasant population of Roumania, who are constantly made the tools of one or other party, and simply pushed on one side when the object has been obtained. Bratianu also, once he was in office, gave no thought to the fulfilment of his promises, but calmly proceeded on the lines Majorescu had laid down in his time.

Still, it was more difficult to arrive at a satisfactory settlement in foreign affairs with Bratianu than it had been with Majorescu, as the former was thoroughly conversant with all West European matters, and at the bottom of his heart was anti-German. One of the distinctions to be made between Liberals and Conservatives was that the Liberals had enjoyed a Parisian education: they spoke no German, only French; while the Conservatives, taking Carp and Majorescu as models, were offshoots

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of Berlin. As it was impossible to carry out the plan of firmly and definitely linking Roumania to us by a change of Hungarian internal policy, the idea naturally, almost automatically, arose to substitute Bulgaria for Roumania. This idea, which found special favour with Count Tisza, could be carried out, both because, since the Bucharest peace of 1913, it was out of the question to bring Roumania and Bulgaria under one roof, and because an alliance with Sofia would have driven Roumania straight into the enemy camp. But Berchtold, as well as the Archduke Franz Ferdinand, was opposed to this latter eventuality, nor would the Emperor Francis Joseph have approved of such proceedings. Hence no change was made; Roumania was not won, nor was Bulgaria substituted for her, and they were content in Vienna to leave everything to the future.

In a social sense the year that I spent in Roumania before the war was not an unpleasant one. The relations of an Austrian-Hungarian Ambassador with the court, as with the numerous *Bojars*, were pleasant and friendly, and nobody could then have imagined what torrents of hatred were so soon to be launched against the Austro-Hungarian frontiers.

Social life became less pleasant during the war, as will be seen from the following instance. There lived at Bucharest a certain Lieut.-Colonel Prince Sturdza, who was a noted braggart and brawler and an inveterate enemy of Austria-Hungary. I did not know him personally, and there was no personal reason for him to begin one day to abuse me publicly in the papers as being an advocate of the Monarchy. I naturally took not the slightest notice of his article, whereupon he addressed an open letter to me in the *Adeverul*, in which he informed me that he would box my ears at the first opportunity. I telegraphed to Berchtold and asked the Emperor's permission to challenge this individual, as, being an officer, he was, according to our ideas, entitled to satisfaction. The Emperor sent word that it was out of the question for an ambassador to fight a duel in the country to which he was accredited, and that I was to complain to the Roumanian Government. I accordingly went to Bratianu, who declared that he was totally unable to move in the matter. According to the laws and regulations of the country it was impossible to protect a foreign ambassador against such abuse. If Sturdza carried out his threats he would be arrested. Until then nothing could be done.

Upon this I assured Bratianu that if such were the case I would in future arm myself with a revolver, and if he attacked me shoot the man; if one lived in a country where the habits of the Wild West obtained, one must act accordingly. I sent word to the lieutenant-colonel that each day, at one o'clock, I could be found at the Hotel Boulevard, where he would find a bullet awaiting him.

The next time I saw the Emperor Francis Joseph he asked for further information concerning the episode, and I told him of my conversation with Bratianu and of my firm

intention to be my own helper. The Emperor rejoined: “Naturally you cannot allow yourself to be beaten. You are quite right; if he lays hands on you, shoot him.”

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I afterwards met Sturdza several times in restaurants and drawing-rooms without his attempting to carry out his threats. This man, whose nature was that of a daring adventurer, afterwards deserted to the Russian army, and fought against us at a time when Roumania still was neutral. I then completely lost sight of him.

The absolute freedom of the Press in the Balkan States, combined with the brutality of the prevailing customs, produced the most varied results, even going so far as abuse of their own kings. In this connection King Carol gave me many drastic instances. While King Ferdinand was still neutral, one of the comic papers contained a picture of the King taking aim at a hare, while underneath were these words, supposed to come from the hare: "My friend, you have long ears, I have long ears; you are a coward, I am a coward. Wherefore would my brother shoot me?"

On the day when war broke out this freedom of the Press was diverted into a different channel and replaced by the severest control and censorship.

Roumania is a land of contrasts, both as regards the landscape, the climate, and social conditions. The mountainous north, with the wonderful Carpathians, is one of the most beautiful districts. Then there are the endless, unspeakably monotonous, but fertile plains of Wallachia, leading into the valley of the Danube, which is a very Paradise. In spring particularly, when the Danube each year overflows its banks, the beauty of the landscape baffles description. It is reminiscent of the tropics, with virgin forests standing in the water, and islands covered with luxuriant growth scattered here and there. It is an ideal country for the sportsman. All kinds of birds, herons, ducks, pelicans, and others, are to be met with, besides wolves and wild cats, and days may be spent in rowing and walking in this Paradise without wearying of it.

The Roumanians usually care but little for sport, being averse to physical exertion. Whenever they can they leave the country and spend their time in Paris or on the Riviera. This love of travel is so strong in them that a law was passed compelling them to spend a certain portion of the year in their own country or else pay the penalty of a higher tax. The country people, in their sad poverty, form a great contrast to the enormously wealthy *Bojars*. Although very backward in everything relating to culture, the Roumanian peasant is a busy, quiet, and easily satisfied type, unpretentious to a touching degree when compared with the upper classes.

Social conditions among the upper ten thousand have been greatly complicated owing to the abolition of nobility, whereby the question of titles plays a part unequalled anywhere else in the world. Almost every Roumanian has a title derived from one or other source; he values it highly, and takes it much amiss when a foreigner betrays his ignorance on the subject. As a rule, it is safer to adopt the plan of addressing

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everyone as "*Mon prince*." Another matter difficult for a foreigner to grasp is the real status of Roumanian society, owing to the incessant divorce and subsequent remarriages. Nearly every woman has been divorced at least once and married again, the result being, on the one hand, the most complicated questions of relationship, and, on the other, so many breaches of personal relations as to make it the most difficult task to invite twenty Roumanians, particularly ladies, to dinner without giving offence in some quarter.

In the days of the old regime it was one of the duties of the younger members of the Embassy to develop their budding diplomatic talents by a clever compilation of the list for such a dinner and a wise avoidance of any dangerous rock ahead. But as the question of rank in Roumania is taken just as seriously as though it were authorised, every lady claims to have first rank—the correct allotment of places at a dinner is really a question for the most efficient diplomatic capacities. There were about a dozen ladies in Bucharest who would actually not accept an invitation unless they were quite sure the place of honour would be given to them.

My predecessor cut the Gordian knot of these difficulties by arranging to have dinner served at small separate tables, thus securing several places of honour, but not even by these means could he satisfy the ambition of all.

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While at Sinaia I received the news of the assassination of the Archduke from Bratianu. I was confined to bed, suffering from influenza, when Bratianu telephoned to ask if I had heard that there had been an accident to the Archduke's train in Bosnia, and that both he and the duchess were killed. Soon after this first alarm came further news, leaving no doubt as to the gravity of the catastrophe. The first impression in Roumania was one of profound and sincere sympathy and genuine consternation. Roumania never expected by means of war to succeed in realising her national ambitions; she only indulged in the hope that a friendly agreement with the Monarchy would lead to the union of all Roumanians, and in that connection Bucharest centred all its hopes in the Archduke and heir to the throne. His death seemed to end the dream of a Greater Roumania, and the genuine grief displayed in all circles in Roumania was the outcome of that feeling. Take Jonescu, on learning the news while in my wife's drawing-room, wept bitterly; and the condolences that I received were not of the usual nature of such messages, but were expressions of the most genuine sorrow. Poklewski, the Russian Ambassador, is said to have remarked very brutally that there was no reason to make so much out of the event, and the general indignation that his words aroused proved how strong was the sympathy felt in the country for the murdered Archduke.

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When the ultimatum was made known the entire situation changed at once. I never had any illusions respecting the Roumanian psychology, and was quite clear in my own mind that the sincere regret at the Archduke's death was due to egotistical motives and to the fear of being compelled now to abandon the national ambition. The ultimatum and the danger of war threatening on the horizon completely altered the Roumanian attitude, and it was suddenly recognised that Roumania could achieve its object by other means, not by peace, but by war—not *with*, but *against* the Monarchy. I would never have believed it possible that such a rapid and total change could have occurred practically within a few hours. Genuine and simulated indignation at the tone of the ultimatum was the order of the day, and the universal conclusion arrived at was: *L'Autriche est devenue folle.* Men and women with whom I had been on a perfectly friendly footing for the last year suddenly became bitter enemies. Everywhere I noticed a mixture of indignation and growing eagerness to realise at last their heart's dearest wish. The feeling in certain circles fluctuated for some days. Roumanians had a great respect for Germany's military power, and the year 1870 was still fresh in the memory of many of them. When England, however, joined the ranks of our adversaries their fears vanished, and from that moment it became obvious to the large majority of the Roumanians that the realisation of their aspirations was merely a question of time and of diplomatic efficiency. The wave of hatred and lust of conquest that broke over us in the first stage of the war was much stronger than in later stages, because the Roumanians made the mistake we all have committed of reckoning on too short a duration of the war, and therefore imagined the decision to be nearer at hand than it actually was. After the great German successes in the West, after Goerlitz and the downfall of Serbia, certain tendencies pointing to a policy of delay became noticeable among the Roumanians. With the exception of Carp and his little group all were more or less ready at the very first to fling themselves upon us.

Like a rock standing in the angry sea of hatred, poor old King Carol was alone with his German sympathies. I had been instructed to read the ultimatum to him the moment it was sent to Belgrade, and never shall I forget the impression it made on the old King when he heard it. He, wise old politician that he was, recognised at once the immeasurable possibilities of such a step, and before I had finished reading the document he interrupted me, exclaiming: "It will be a world war." It was long before he could collect himself and begin to devise ways and means by which a peaceful solution might still be found. I may mention here that a short time previously the Tsar, with Sassonoff, had been in Constanza for a meeting with the Roumanian royal family. The day after the Tsar left I went to Constanza myself

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to thank the King for having conferred the Grand Cross of one of the Roumanian orders on me, obviously as a proof that the Russian visit had not made him forget our alliance, and he gave me some interesting details of the said visit. Most interesting of all was his account of the conversations with the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs. On asking whether Sassonoff considered the situation in Europe to be as safe as he (the King) did, Sassonoff answered in the affirmative, "*pourvu que l'Autriche ne touche pas a la Serbie*." I at once, of course, reported this momentous statement to Vienna; but neither by the King nor by myself, nor yet in Vienna, was the train of thought then fully understood. The relations between Serbia and the Monarchy were at that time no worse than usual; indeed, they were rather better, and there was not the slightest intention on our part to injure the Serbians. But the suspicion that Sassonoff already then was aware that the Serbians were planning something against us cannot be got rid of.

When the King asked me whether I had reported Sassonoff's important remark to Vienna, I replied that I had done so, and added that this remark was another reason to make me believe that the assassination was a crime long since prepared and carried out under Russian patronage.

The crime that was enacted at Debruzin, which made such a sensation at the time, gave rise to suspicions of a Russo-Roumanian attempt at assassination.

On February 24, 1914, the Hungarian Correspondence Bureau published the following piece of news:

A terrible explosion took place this morning in the official premises of the newly-instituted Greek-Catholic Hungarian bishopric, which are on the second floor of the Ministry of Trade and Commerce in the Franz Deak Street. It occurred in the office of the bishop's representative, the Vicar Michael Jaczkovics, whose secretary, Johann Slapowszky, was also present in the room. Both of them were blown to pieces. The Greek-Catholic bishop, Stephan Miklossy, was in a neighbouring room, but had a most marvellous escape. Alexander Csatth, advocate and solicitor to the bishopric, who was in another room, was mortally wounded by the explosion. In a third room the bishop's servant with his wife were both killed. All the walls in the office premises fell in, and the whole building is very much damaged. The explosion caused such a panic in the house that all the inhabitants took flight and vanished. All the windows of the neighbouring Town Hall in the Verboczy Street were shattered by the concussion. Loose tiles were hurled into the street and many passers-by were injured. The four dead bodies and the wounded were taken to the hospital. The bishop, greatly distressed, left the building and went to a friend's house. The daughter of the Vicar Jaczkovics went out of her mind on hearing of her father's tragic death. The cause of the explosion has not yet been discovered.

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I soon became involved in the affair when Hungary and Roumania began mutually to blame one another as originators of the outrage. This led to numerous interventions and adjustments, and my task was intensified because a presumed accomplice of the murderer Catarau was arrested in Bucharest, and his extradition to Hungary had to be effected by me. This man, of the name of Mandazescu, was accused of having obtained a false passport for Catarau.

Catarau, who was a Roumanian Russian from Bessarabia, vanished completely after the murder and left no trace. News came, now from Serbia, then from Albania, that he had been found, but the rumours were always false. I chanced to hear something about the matter in this way. I was on board a Roumanian vessel bound from Constanza to Constantinople, when I accidentally overheard two Roumanian naval officers talking together. One of them said: "That was on the day when the police brought Catarau on board to help him to get away secretly."

Catarau was heard of later at Cairo, which he appears to have reached with the aid of Roumanian friends.

It cannot be asserted that the Roumanian Government was implicated in the plot—but the Roumanian authorities certainly were, for in the Balkans, as in Russia, there are many bands like the *Cerna Ruka*, the *Narodna Odbrena*, *etc*., *etc*., who carry on their activities alongside the Government.

It was a crime committed by some Russian or Roumanian secret society, and the Governments of both countries showed surprisingly little interest in investigating the matter and delivering the culprits up to justice.

On June 15 I heard from a reliable source that Catarau had been seen in Bucharest. He walked about the streets quite openly in broad daylight, and no one interfered with him; then he disappeared.

To return, however, to my interview with the old King. Filled with alarm, he dispatched that same evening two telegrams, one to Belgrade and one to Petersburg, urging that the ultimatum be accepted without fail.

The terrible distress of mind felt by the King when, like a sudden flash of lightning from the clouds, he saw before him a picture of the world war may be accounted for because he felt certain that the conflict between his personal convictions and his people's attitude would suddenly be known to all. The poor old King fought the fight to the best of his ability, but it killed him. King Carol's death was caused by the war. The last weeks of his life were a torture to him; each message that I had to deliver he felt as the lash of a whip. I was enjoined to do all I could to secure Roumania's prompt co-operation, according to the terms of the Alliance, and I was even obliged to go so far as to remind him that "a promise given allows of no prevarication: that a treaty is a treaty,

and *his honour* obliged him to unsheathe his sword." I recollect one particularly painful scene, where the King, weeping bitterly, flung himself across his writing-table and with trembling hands tried to wrench from his neck his order *Pour le Merite*. I can affirm without any exaggeration that I could see him wasting away under the ceaseless moral blows dealt to him, and that the mental torment he went through undoubtedly shortened his life.

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Queen Elizabeth was well aware of all, but she never took my action amiss; she understood that I had to deliver the messages, but that it was not I who composed them.

Queen Elizabeth was a good, clever and touchingly simple woman, not a *poet qui court apres l'esprit*, but a woman who looked at the world through conciliatory and poetical glasses. She was a good conversationalist, and there was always a poetic charm in all she did. There hung on the staircase a most beautiful sea picture, which I greatly admired while the Queen talked to me about the sea, about her little villa at Constanza, which, built on the extreme end of the quay, seems almost to lie in the sea. She spoke, too, of her travels and impressions when on the high seas, and as she spoke the great longing for all that is good and beautiful made itself felt, and this is what she said to me: "The sea lives. If there could be found any symbol of eternity it would be the sea, endless in greatness and everlasting in movement. The day is dull and stormy. One after another the glassy billows come rolling in and break with a roar on the rocky shore. The small white crests of the waves look as if covered with snow. And the sea breathes and draws its breath with the ebb and flow of the tide. The tide is the driving power that forces the mighty waters from Equator to North Pole. And thus it works, day and night, year by year, century by century. It takes no heed of the perishable beings who call themselves lords of the world, who live only for a day, coming and going and vanishing almost as they come. The sea remains to work. It works for all, for men, for animals, for plants, for without the sea there could be no organic life in the world. The sea is like a great filter, which alone can produce the change of matter that is necessary for life. In the course of a century numberless rivers carry earth to the sea. Each river carries without ceasing its burden of earth and sand to the ocean; and the sea receives the load which is carried by the current far out to sea, and slowly and by degrees in the course of time the sea dissolves or crushes all it has received. No matter to the sea if the process lasts a thousand years or more—it may even last for ages, who can tell?

"But one day, quite suddenly, the sea begins to wander. Once there was sea everywhere, and all continents are born from the sea. One day land arose out of the sea. The birth was of a revolutionary nature, there were earthquakes, volcanic craters, falling cities and dying men—but new land was there. Or else it moves slowly, invisibly, a metre or two in a century, and returns to the land it used to possess. Thus it restores the soil it stole from it, but cleaner, refined and full of vitality to live and to create. Such is the sea and its work."

These are the words of the old half-blind Queen, who can never look upon the beloved picture again, but she told me how she always idolised the sea, and how her grand nephews and nieces shared her feelings, and how she grew young again with them when she told them tales of olden times.

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One could listen to her for hours without growing weary, and always there was some beautiful thought or word to carry away and think over.

Doubtless such knowledge would be more correct were it taken from some geological work. But Carmen Sylva's words invariably seemed to strike some poetic chord; that is what made her so attractive.

She loved to discourse on politics, which for her meant King Carol. He was her all in all. After his death, when it was said that all states in the world were losing in the terrible war, she remarked: "Roumania has already lost her most precious possession." She never spoke of her own poems and writings. In politics her one thought besides King Carol was Albania. She was deeply attached to the Princess of Wied, and showed her strong interest in the country where she lived. Talking about the Wieds one day afforded me an opportunity of seeing the King vexed with his wife; it was the only time I ever noticed it. It was when we were at Sinaia, and I was, as often occurred, sitting with the King. The Queen came into the room, which she was otherwise not in the habit of entering, bringing with her a telegram from the Princess of Wied in which she asked for something—I cannot now remember what—for Albania. The King refused, but the Queen insisted, until he at last told her very crossly to leave him in peace, as he had other things to think of than Albania.

After King Carol's death she lost all her vital energy, and the change in the political situation troubled her. She was very fond of her nephew Ferdinand—hers was a truly loving heart—and she trembled lest he should commit some act of treachery. I remember once how, through her tears, she said to me: "Calm my fears. Tell me that he will never be guilty of such an act." I was unable to reassure her, but a kind Fate spared her from hearing the declaration of war.

Later, not long before her death, the old Queen was threatened with total blindness. She was anxious to put herself in the hands of a French oculist for an operation for cataract, who would naturally be obliged to travel through the Monarchy in order to reach Bucharest. At her desire I mentioned the matter in Vienna, and the Emperor Francis Joseph at once gave the requisite permission for the journey.

After a successful operation, the Queen sent a short autograph poem to one of my children, adding that it was her *first* letter on recovering her sight. At the same time she was again very uneasy concerning politics.

I wrote her the following letter:

Your Majesty,—My warmest thanks for the beautiful little poem you have sent to my boy. That it was granted to me to contribute something towards the recovery of your sight is in itself a sufficient reward, and no thanks are needed. That Your Majesty has

addressed the first written lines to my children delights and touches me.Meanwhile Your Majesty must not be troubled

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regarding politics. It is of no avail. For the moment Roumania will retain the policy of the late King, and God alone knows what the future will bring forth.We are all like dust in this terrible hurricane sweeping through the world. We are tossed helplessly hither and thither and know not whether we are to face disaster or success. The point is not whether we live or die, but how it is done. In that respect King Carol set an example to us all.I hope King Ferdinand may never forget that, together with the throne, his uncle bequeathed to him a political creed, a creed of honour and loyalty, and I am persuaded that Your Majesty is the best guardian of the bequest.

Your Majesty's grateful and devoted

CZERNIN.

When I said that King Carol fought the fight to the best of his ability, I intended to convey that no one could expect him to be different from what he always was. The King never possessed in any special degree either energy, strength of action, or adventurous courage, and at the time I knew him, as an old man, he had none of those attributes. He was a clever diplomat, a conciliatory power, a safe mediator, and one who avoided trouble, but not of a nature to risk all and weather the storm. That was known to all, and no one, therefore, could think that the King would try to put himself on our side against the clearly expressed views of all Roumania. My idea is that if he had been differently constituted he could successfully have risked the experiment. The King possessed in Carp a man of quite unusual, even reckless, activity and energy, and from the first moment he placed himself and his activities at the King's disposal. If the King, without asking, had ordered mobilisation, Carp's great energy would have certainly carried it through. But, in the military situation as it was then, the Roumanian army would have been forced to the rear of the Russian, and in all probability the first result of the battlefields would have changed the situation entirely, and the blood that was shed mutually in victorious battles would have brought forth the unity that the spirit of our alliance never succeeded in evolving. But the King was not a man of such calibre. He could not change his nature, and what he did do entirely concurred with his methods from the time he ascended the throne.

As long as the King lived there was the positive assurance that Roumania would not side against us, for he would have prevented any mobilisation against us with the same firm wisdom which had always enabled him to avert any agitation in the land. He would then have seen that the Roumanians are not a warlike people like the Bulgarians, and that Roumania had not the slightest intention of risking anything in the campaign. A policy of procrastination in the wise hands of the King would have delayed hostilities against us indefinitely.

Immediately after the outbreak of war Bratianu began his game, which consisted of entrenching the Roumanian Government firmly and willingly in a position between the

two groups of Powers, and bandying favours about from one to the other, reaping equal profits from each, until the moment when the stronger of the two should be recognised as such and the weaker then attacked.

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Even from 1914-16 Roumania was never really neutral. She always favoured our enemies, and as far as lay in her power hindered all our actions.

The transport of horses and ammunition to Turkey in the summer of 1915 that was exacted from us was an important episode. Turkey was then in great danger, and was asking anxiously for munitions. Had the Roumanian Government adopted the standpoint not to favour any of the belligerent Powers it would have been a perfectly correct attitude, viewed from a neutral standpoint, but she never did adopt such standpoint, as is shown by her allowing the Serbians to receive transports of Russian ammunition via the Danube, thus showing great partiality. When all attempts failed, the munitions were transmitted, partially at any rate, through other means.

At that time, too, Russian soldiers were allowed in Roumania and were not molested, whereas ours were invariably interned.

Two Austrian airmen once landed by mistake in Roumania, and were, of course, interned immediately. The one was a cadet of the name of Berthold and a pilot whose name I have forgotten. From their prison they appealed to me to help them, and I sent word that they must endeavour to obtain permission to pay me a visit. A few days later the cadet appeared, escorted by a Roumanian officer as guard. This officer, not being allowed without special permission to set foot on Austro-Hungarian soil, was obliged to remain in the street outside the house. I had the gates closed, put the cadet into one of my cars, sent him out through the back entrance, and had him driven to Giurgui, where he got across the Danube, and in two hours was again at liberty. After a lengthy and futile wait the officer departed. His protests came too late.

The unfortunate pilot who was left behind was not allowed to come to the Embassy. One night, however, he made his escape through the window and arrived. I kept him concealed for some time, and he eventually crossed the frontier safely and got away by rail to Hungary.

Bratianu reproached me later for what I had done, but I told him it was in consequence of his not having strictly adhered to his neutrality. Had our soldiers been left unmolested, as in the case of the Russians, I should not have been compelled to act as I had done.

Bratianu can never seriously have doubted that the Central Powers would succumb, and his sympathies were always with the Entente, not only on account of his bringing up, but also because of that political speculation. During the course of subsequent events there were times when Bratianu to a certain extent seemed to vacillate, especially at the time of our great offensive against Russia. The break through at Goerlitz and the irresistible advance into the interior of Russia had an astounding effect in Roumania. Bratianu, who obviously knew very little about strategy, could simply not understand that the Russian millions, whom he

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imagined to be in a fair way to Vienna and Berlin, should suddenly begin to rush back and a fortress like Warsaw be demolished like a house of cards. He was evidently very anxious then and must have had many a disturbed night. On the other hand, those who to begin with, though not for, still were not against Austria began to raise their heads and breathe more freely. The victory of the Central Powers appeared on the horizon like a fresh event. That was the historic moment when Roumania might have been coerced into active co-operation, but not the Bratianu Ministry. Bratianu himself would never in any case have ranged himself on our side, but if we could have made up our minds then to instal a Majorescu or a Marghiloman Ministry in office, we could have had the Roumanian army with us. In connection with this were several concrete proposals. In order to carry out the plan we should have been compelled to make territorial concessions in Hungary to a Majorescu Ministry—Majorescu demanded it as a primary condition to his undertaking the conduct of affairs, and this proposal failed owing to Hungary's obstinate resistance. It is a terrible but a just punishment that poor Hungary, who contributed so much to our definite defeat, should be the one to suffer the most from the consequences thereof, and that the Roumanians, so despised and persecuted by Hungary, should gain the greatest triumphs on her plains.

One of the many reproaches that have been brought against me recently is to the effect that I, as ambassador at Bucharest, should have resigned if my proposals were not accepted in Vienna. These reproaches are dictated by quite mistaken ideas of competency and responsibility. It is the duty of a subordinate official to describe the situation as he sees it and to make such proposals as he considers right, but the responsibility for the policy is with the Minister for Foreign Affairs, and it would lead to the most impossible and absurd state of things if every ambassador whose proposals were rejected were to draw the conclusion that his resignation was a necessary consequence thereof. If officials were to resign because they did not agree with the view of their chief, it would mean that almost all of them would send in their resignations.

Espionage and counter-espionage have greatly flourished during the war. In that connection Russia showed great activity in Roumania.

In October, 1914, an event occurred which was very unfortunate for me. I drove from Bucharest to Sinaia, carrying certain political documents with me in a dispatch-case, which, by mistake, was fastened on behind instead of being laid in the car. On the way the case was unstrapped and stolen. I made every effort to get it back, and eventually recovered it after a search of three weeks, involving much expense. It was found at last in some peasant's barn, but nothing had apparently been abstracted save the cigarettes that were in it.

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Nevertheless, after the occupation of Bucharest copies and photographs of all my papers were found in Bratianu's house.

After the loss of the dispatch-case I at once tendered my resignation in Vienna, but it was not accepted by the Emperor.

The Red Book on Roumania, published by Burian, which contains a summary of my most important reports, gives a very clear picture of the several phases of that period and the approaching danger of war. The several defeats that Roumania suffered justified the fears of all those who warned her against premature intervention. In order to render the situation quite clear, it must here be explained that during the time immediately preceding Roumania's entry into war there were really only two parties in the country: the one was hostile to us and wished for an immediate declaration of war, and the other was the "friendly" one that did not consider the situation ripe for action and advised waiting until we were weakened still more. During the time of our successes the "friendly" party carried the day. Queen Marie, I believe, belonged to the latter. From the beginning of the war, she was always in favour of "fighting by the side of England," as she always looked upon herself as an Englishwoman, but, at the last moment at any rate, she appears to have thought the time for action premature. A few days before the declaration of war she invited me to a farewell lunch, which was somewhat remarkable, as we both knew that in a very few days we should be enemies. After lunch I took the opportunity of telling her that I *likewise* was aware of the situation, but that "the Bulgarians would be in Bucharest before the Roumanians reached Budapest." She entered into the conversation very calmly, being of a very frank nature and not afraid of hearing the truth. A few days later a letter was opened at the censor's office from a lady-in-waiting who had been present at the lunch. It was evidently not intended for our eyes; it contained a description of the *dejeuner fort embetant*, with some unflattering remarks about me.

Queen Marie never lost her hope in a final victory. She did not perhaps agree with Bratianu in all his tactics, but a declaration of war on us was always an item on her programme. Even in the distressing days of their disastrous defeat she always kept her head above water. One of the Queen's friends told me afterwards that when our armies, from south, north and west, were nearing Bucharest, when day and night the earth shook with the ceaseless thunder of the guns, the Queen quietly went on with her preparations for departure, and was firmly persuaded that she would return as "Empress of all the Roumanians." I have been told that after the taking of Bucharest Bratianu collapsed altogether, and it was Queen Marie who comforted and encouraged him. Her English blood always asserted itself. After we had occupied Wallachia, I received absolutely reliable information

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from England, according to which she had telegraphed to King George from Jassy, recommending “her little but courageous people” to his further protection. After the Peace of Bucharest strong pressure was brought to bear on me to effect the abdication of the King and Queen. It would not in any way have altered the situation, as the Entente would naturally have reinstated them when victory was gained; but I opposed all such efforts, not for the above reason, which I could not foresee, but from other motives, to be mentioned later, although I was perfectly certain that Queen Marie would always remain our enemy.

The declaration of war created a very uncomfortable situation for all Austro-Hungarians and Germans. I came across several friends in the Austro-Hungarian colony who had been beaten by the Roumanian soldiers with the butt-ends of their rifles on their way to prison. I saw wild scenes of panic and flight that were both grotesque and revolting, and the cruel sport lasted for days.

In Vienna all subjects of an enemy state were exempt from deportation. In my capacity as Minister I ordered reprisals on Roumanian citizens, as there were no other means to relieve the fate of our poor refugees. As soon as the neutral Powers notified that the treatment had become more humane, they were set free.

If we showed ourselves at the windows or in the garden of the Embassy the crowd scoffed and jeered at us, and at the station, when we left, a young official whom I asked for information simply turned his back on me.

A year and a half later I was again in Bucharest. The tide of victory had carried us far, and we came to make peace. We were again subjects of interest to the crowds in the streets, but in very different fashion. A tremendous ovation awaited us when we appeared in the theatre, and I could not show myself in the street without having a crowd of admirers in my wake.

Before all this occurred, and when war was first declared, the members of the Embassy, together with about 150 persons belonging to the Austro-Hungarian colony, including many children, were interned, and spent ten very unpleasant days, as we were not sure whether we should be released or not. We had occasion during that time to witness three Zeppelin raids over Bucharest, which, seen in the wonderful moonlight, cloudless nights under the tropical sky, made an unforgettable impression on us.

I find the following noted in my diary:

“*Bucharest, August, 1916.*

“The Roumanians have declared war on my wife and daughter too. A deputation composed of two officials from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, in frock-coats and top hats, appeared last night at eleven o’clock in my villa at Sinaia. My wife was roused out of her sleep, and by the light of a single candle—more is forbidden on account of the Zeppelin raids—they informed her that Roumania had declared war on us.

“As the speaker put it, ‘*Vous avez declare la guerre*.’ He then read the whole declaration of war aloud to them both. Bratianu sent word to me that he would have a special train sent to take my wife and daughter and the whole personnel of the Embassy to Bucharest.

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“*Bucharest, September, 1916.*

“The Roumanians really expected a Zeppelin attack at once. So far it has not occurred, and they begin to feel more at ease, and say that it is too far for the Zeppelins to come all the way from Germany. They seem not to be aware that Mackensen has Zeppelins in Bulgaria. But who can tell whether they really will come?

“*Bucharest, September, 1916.*

“Last night a Zeppelin did come. About three o’clock we were roused by the shrill police whistles giving the alarm. The telephone notified us that a Zeppelin had crossed the Danube, and all the church bells began to peal. Suddenly darkness and silence reigned, and the whole town, like some great angry animal, sullen and morose, prepared for the enemy attack. Nowhere was there light or sound. The town, with a wonderful starry firmament overhead, waited in expectation. Fifteen, twenty minutes went by, when suddenly a shot was fired and, as though it were a signal, firing broke out in every direction. The anti-aircraft guns fired incessantly, and the police, too, did their best, firing in the air. But what were they firing at? There was absolutely nothing to be seen. The searchlights then came into play. Sweeping the heavens from east to west, from north to south, they searched the firmament, but could not find the Zeppelin. Was it really there, or was the whole thing due to excited Roumanian nerves?

“Suddenly a sound was heard: the noise of the propeller overhead. It sounded so near in the clear, starry night, we felt we must be able to see it. But the noise died away in the direction of Colbroceni. Then we heard the first bomb. Like a gust of wind it whistled through the air, followed by a crash and an explosion. A second and third came quickly after. The firing became fiercer, but they can see nothing and seem to aim at where the sound comes from. The searchlights sway backwards and forwards. Now one of them has caught the airship, which looks like a small golden cigar. Both the gondolas can be seen quite distinctly, and the searchlight keeps it well in view, and now a second one has caught it. It looks as though this air cruiser is hanging motionless in the sky, brilliantly lit up by the searchlights right and left. Then the guns begin in good earnest. Shrapnel bursts all around, a wonderful display of fireworks, but it is impossible to say if the aim is good and if the monster is in danger. Smaller and smaller grows the Zeppelin, climbing rapidly higher and higher, until suddenly the miniature cigar disappears. Still the searchlights sweep the skies, hoping to find their prey again.

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“Suddenly utter silence reigns. Have they gone? Is the attack over? Has one been hit? Forced to land? The minutes go by. We are all now on the balcony—the women, too—watching the scene. Again comes the well-known sound—once heard never forgotten—as though the wind were getting up, then a dull thud and explosion. This time it is farther away towards the forts. Again the firing breaks out, and machine-guns bark at the friendly moon; searchlights career across the heavens, but find nothing. Again there falls a bomb—much nearer this time—and again comes the noise of the propellers louder and louder. Shrapnel bursts just over the Embassy, and the Zeppelin is over our heads. We hear the noise very distinctly, but can see nothing. Again a sudden silence everywhere, which has a curious effect after the terrible noise. Time passes, but nothing more is heard. The first rays of dawn are seen in the east; the stars slowly pale.

“A child is heard to cry somewhere, far away: strange how clearly it sounds in the silent night. There is a feeling as though the terrified town hardly dared breathe or move for fear the monster might return. And how many more such nights are there in prospect? In the calm of this fairylike dawn, slowly rising, the crying of the child strikes a note of discord, infinitely sad. But the crying of the child—does it not find an echo among the millions whom this terrible war has driven to desperation?

“The sun rises like a blood-red ball. For some hours the Roumanians can take to sleep and gather fresh strength, but they know now that the Zeppelin’s visit will not be the last.

“*Bucharest, September, 1916.*

“The Press is indignant about the nocturnal attack. Bucharest is certainly a fortress, but it should be known that the guns are no longer in the forts. It was stated in the *Adeverul* that the heroic resistance put up in defence was most successful. That the airship, badly damaged, was brought down near Bucharest, and that a commission started off at once to make sure whether it was an aeroplane or a Zeppelin!

“*Bucharest, September, 1916.*

“The Zeppelin returned again this evening and took us by surprise. It seemed to come from the other side of Plojest, and the sentries on the Danube must have missed it. Towards morning the night watch at the Embassy whose duty it is to see that there is no light in the house saw a huge mass descending slowly over the Embassy till it almost touched the roof. It hovered there a few minutes, making observations. No one noticed it until suddenly the engines started again, and it dropped the first bomb close to the Embassy. A direct hit was made on the house of the Ambassador Jresnea Crecianu, and twenty gendarmes who were there were killed. The royal palace was also damaged. The Government is apparently not satisfied with the anti-aircraft forces, but concludes that practice will make them perfect. Opportunity for practice will certainly not be lacking.

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“Our departure is being delayed by every sort of pretext. One moment it seems as though we should reach home via Bulgaria. This idea suited Bratianu extremely well, as the Bulgarian willingness to grant permission was a guarantee that they had no plans of attack. But he reckoned in this without his host. E. and W. are greatly alarmed because the Roumanians intend to detain them, and will probably hang them as spies. I have told them, ’Either we all stay here or we all start together. No one will be given up.’ That appears to have somewhat quieted their fears.

“As might be expected, these nocturnal visits had disagreeable consequences for us. The Roumanians apparently thought that it was not a question of Zeppelins, but of Austro-Hungarian airships, and that my presence in the town would afford a certain protection against the attacks; after the first one they declared that for every Roumanian killed ten Austrians or Bulgarians would be executed, and the hostile treatment to which we were subjected grew worse and worse. The food was cut down and was terribly bad, and finally the water supply was cut off. With the tropical temperature that prevailed and the overcrowding of a house that normally was destined to hold twenty, and now housed 170, persons, the conditions within the space of twenty-four hours became unbearable and the atmosphere so bad that several people fell ill with fever, and neither doctor nor medicine was obtainable. Thanks to the energetic intervention of the Dutch Ambassador, Herr von Vredenburch, who had undertaken the charge of our State interests, it was finally possible to alter the conditions and to avert the outbreak of an epidemic.”

* * * * *

It was just about that time that our Military Attache, Lieut.-Colonel Baron Randa, made a telling remark. One of our Roumanian slave-drivers was in the habit of paying us a daily visit and talking in the bombastic fashion the Roumanians adopted when boasting of their impending victories. The word “Mackensen” occurred in Randa’s answer. The Roumanian was surprised to hear the name, unknown to him, and said: “Qu’est-ce que c’est que ce Mackensen? Je connais beaucoup d’Allemands, mais je n’ai jamais fait la connaissance de M. Mackensen.” “Eh bien,” replied Randa, patting him on the shoulder, “vous la ferez cette connaissance, je vous en guarantie.” Three months after that Mackensen had occupied all Wallachia and had his headquarters at Bucharest. By that time, therefore, his name must have been more familiar to our Roumanian friend.

At last we set off for home via Russia and had a very interesting journey lasting three weeks, via Kieff, Petersburg, Sweden, and Germany. To spend three weeks in a train would seem very wearisome to many; but as everything in this life is a matter of habit we soon grew so accustomed to it that when we arrived in Vienna there were many of us who could not sleep the first few nights in a proper bed, as we missed

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the shaking of the train. Meanwhile, we had every comfort on the special train, and variety as well, especially when, on Bratianu's orders, we were detained at a little station called Baratinskaja, near Kieff. The reason of this was never properly explained, but it was probably owing to difficulties over the departure of the Roumanian Ambassador in Sofia and to the wish to treat us as hostages. The journey right through the enemy country was remarkable. Fierce battles were just then being fought in Galicia, and day and night we passed endless trains conveying gay and smiling soldiers to the front, and others returning full of pale, bandaged wounded men, whose groans we heard as we passed them. We were greeted everywhere in friendly fashion by the population, and there was not a trace of the hatred we had experienced in Roumania. Everything that we saw bore evidence of the strictest order and discipline. None of us could think it possible that the Empire was on the eve of a revolution, and when the Emperor Francis Joseph questioned me on my return as to whether I had reason to believe that a revolution would occur, I discountenanced the idea most emphatically.

This did not please the old Emperor. He said afterwards to one of his suite: "Czernin has given a correct account of Roumania, but he must have been asleep when he passed through Russia."

3

The development of Roumanian affairs during the war occurs in three phases, the first of which was in King Carol's reign. Then neutrality was guaranteed. On the other hand, it was not possible during those months to secure Roumania's co-operation because we, in the first period of the war, were so unfavourably situated in a military sense that public opinion in Roumania would not voluntarily have consented to a war at our side, and, as already mentioned, such forcible action would not have met with the King's approval.

In the second phase of the war, dating from King Carol's death to our defeat at Luck, conditions were quite different. In this second phase were included the greatest military successes the Central Powers ever obtained. The downfall of Serbia and the conquest of the whole of Poland occurred during this period, and, I repeat, in those months we could have secured the active co-operation of Roumania. Nevertheless, I must make it clearly understood here that if the political preliminaries for intervention on the part of Roumania were not undertaken, the fault must not be ascribed to the then Minister of Foreign Affairs, but to the *vis major* which opposed the project under the form of a Hungarian veto. As previously stated, Majorescu, as well as Marghiloman, would only have given his consent to co-operation if Roumania had been given a slice of the Hungarian state. Thanks to the attitude of absolute refusal observed at the Ballplatz, the territory in question was never definitely decided on, but the idea probably was Transylvania

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and a portion of the Bukovina. I cannot say whether Count Burian, if he had escaped other influences, would have adopted the plan, but certain it is that however ready and willing he was to act he would never have carried out the plan against the Hungarian Parliament. According to the Constitution, the Hungarian Parliament is sovereign in the Hungarian State, and without the use of armed means Hungary could never have been induced to cede any part of her territory.

It is obvious, however, that it would have been impossible during the world war to have stirred up an armed conflict between Vienna and Budapest. My then German colleague, von dem Busche, entirely agreed with me that Hungary ought to make some territorial sacrifices in order to encourage Roumania's intervention. I firmly believe that then, and similarly before the Italian declaration of war, a certain pressure was brought to bear direct on Vienna by Berlin to this end—a pressure which merely contributed to strengthen and intensify Tisza's opposition. For Germany, the question was far simpler; she had drawn payment for her great gains from a foreign source. The cession of the Bukovina might possibly have been effected, as Stuergkh did not object, but that alone would not have satisfied Roumania.

It was quite clear that the opposition to the ceding of Transylvania originated in Hungary. But this opposition was not specially Tisza's, for whichever of the Hungarian politicians might have been at the head of the Cabinet he would have adopted the same standpoint.

I sent at that time a confidential messenger to Tisza enjoining him to explain the situation and begging him in my name to make the concession. Tisza treated the messenger with great reserve, and wrote me a letter stating once for all that the voluntary cession of Hungarian territory was out of the question; "whoever attempts to seize even one square metre of Hungarian soil will be shot."

There was nothing to be done. And still I think that this was one of the most important phases of the war, which, had it been properly managed, might have influenced the final result. The military advance on the flank of the Russian army would have been, in the opinion of our military chiefs, an advantage not to be despised, and through it the clever break through at Goerlitz would have had some results; but as it was, Goerlitz was a strategical trial of strength without any lasting effect.

The repellent attitude adopted by Hungary may be accounted for in two ways: the Hungarians, to begin with, were averse to giving up any of their own territory, and, secondly, they did not believe—even to the very last—that Roumania would remain permanently neutral or that sooner or later we would be forced to fight *against* Roumania unless we in good time carried her with us. In this connection Tisza always

maintained his optimism, and to the very last moment held to the belief that Roumania would

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not dare take it upon herself to attack us. This is the only reason that explains why the Roumanians surprised us so much by their invasion of Transylvania and by being able to carry off so much rich booty. I would have been able to take much better care of the many Austrians and Hungarians living in Roumania—whose fate was terrible after the declaration of war, which took them also by surprise—if I had been permitted to draw their attention more openly and generally to the coming catastrophe; but in several of his letters Tisza implored me not to create a panic, "which would bring incalculable consequences with it." As I neither did, nor could, know how far this secrecy was in agreement with our military counter-preparations, I was bound to observe it. Apparently, Burian believed my reports to a certain extent; at any rate, for some time before the declaration of war he ordered all the secret documents and the available money to be conveyed to Vienna, and entrusted to Holland the care of our citizens; but Tisza told me long after that he considered my reports of too pessimistic a tendency, and was afraid to give orders for the *superfluous* evacuation of Transylvania.

After the unexpected invasion, the waves of panic and rage ran high in the Hungarian Parliament. The severest criticism was heaped upon me, as no one doubted that the lack of preparation was due to my false reports. Here Tisza was again himself when, in a loud voice, he shouted out that it was untrue; my reports were correct; I had warned them in time and no blame could be attached to me; he thus took upon himself the just blame. Fear was unknown to him, and he never tried to shield himself behind anyone. When I arrived back in Vienna after a journey of some weeks in Russia, and only then heard of the incident, I took the opportunity to thank Tisza for the honourable and loyal manner in which he had defended my cause. He replied with the ironical smile characteristic of him that it was simply a matter of course.

But for an Austro-Hungarian official it was by no means such a matter of course. We have had so many cowards on the Ministerial benches, so many men who were brave when dealing with their subordinates, toadied to their superiors, and were intimidated by strong opposition, that a man like Tisza, who was such a contrast to these others, has a most refreshing and invigorating effect. The Roumanians attempted several times to make the maintenance of their *neutrality* contingent on territorial concessions. I was always opposed to this, and at the Ballplatz they were of the same opinion. The Roumanians would have appropriated these concessions and simply attacked us later to obtain more. On the other hand, it seemed to me that to gain *military co-operation* a cession of territory would be quite in order, since, once in the field, the Roumanians could not draw back and their fate would be permanently bound up with ours.

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Finally, the third phase comprises the comparatively short period between our defeat at Luck and the outbreak of the war in Roumania, and was simply the death throes of neutrality.

War was in the air and could be foreseen with certainty.

As was to be expected, the inefficient diplomacy displayed in the preparations for the world war brought down severe criticism of our diplomatic abilities, and if the intention at the Ballplatz was to bring about a war, it cannot be denied that the preparations for it were most inadequate.

Criticism was not directed towards the Ballplatz only, but entered into further matters, such as the qualifications of the individual representatives in foreign countries. I remember an article in one of the most widely-read Viennese papers, which drew a comparison between the “excellent” ambassador at Sofia and almost all of the others; that is, all those whose posts were in countries that either refused their co-operation or even already were in the field against us.

In order to prevent any misunderstanding, I wish to state here that in my opinion our then ambassador to Sofia, Count Tarnowski, was one of the best and most competent diplomats in Austria-Hungary, but that the point of view from which such praise was awarded to him was in itself totally false. Had Count Tarnowski been in Paris, London or Rome, these states, in spite of his undeniable capabilities, would not have adopted a different attitude; while, on the other hand, there are numbers of distinguished members of the diplomatic corps who would have carried out his task at Sofia just as well as Count Tarnowski.

In other words, I consider it is making an unwarrantable demand to expect that a representative in a foreign land should have a leading influence on the policy of the state to which he is accredited. What may be demanded of a diplomatic representative is a correct estimate of the situation. The ambassador must know what the Government of the state where he is will do. A false diagnosis is discreditable. But it is impossible for a representative, whoever he may be, to obtain such power over a foreign state as to be able to guide the policy of that state into the course desired by him. The policy of a state will invariably be subservient to such objects as the Government of that period deem vital, and will always be influenced by factors which are quite outside the range of the foreign representative.

In what manner a diplomatic representative obtains his information is his own affair. He should endeavour to establish intercourse, not only with a certain class of society, but also with the Press, and also keep in touch with other classes of the population.

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One of the reproaches made to the “old regime” was the assumed preference for aristocrats in diplomacy. This was quite a mistake. No preference was shown for the aristocracy, but it lay in the nature of the career that wealth and social polish were assets in the exercise of its duties. An attache had no salary. He was, therefore, expected to have a tolerably good income at home in order to be able to live conformably to his rank when abroad. This system arose out of necessity, and was also due to the unwillingness of the authorities to raise salaries in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. The consequence was that only sons of wealthy parents could adopt such a career. I once told some delegates who interviewed me in connection with the subject that a change of the system depended entirely on themselves and their increased munificence.

A certain amount of social polish was just as necessary for diplomats of the old regime as was the requisite allowance for their household and a knowledge of foreign languages. So long as courts exist in Europe, the court will always be the centre of all social life, and diplomats must have the entree to such circles. A young man who does not know whether to eat with his fork or his knife would play a sorry part there—his social training is not an indifferent matter. Preference is, therefore, not given to the aristocracy, but to young men of wealth familiar with European society etiquette.

That does not mean that a diplomat is to consider it his duty only to show himself at all the parties and fetes given by the upper ten thousand, but it is one of his duties, as at such places he might gain information unobtainable elsewhere. A diplomat must be in touch with all sources from which he can glean information.

Individual capabilities and zeal will naturally play a great part; but the means that a Government places at the disposition of its foreign missions are also of the highest importance.

There are people in the East—I do not know whether to say in contradistinction to the West—who are not immune to the influence of gold. In Roumania, for instance, Russia, before the war, had completely undermined the whole country and had lavished millions long before the war in the hope of an understanding with that country. Most of the newspapers were financed by Russians, and numbers of the leading politicians were bound by Russian interests, whereas neither Germany nor Austria-Hungary had made any such preparations. Thus it happened that, on the outbreak of war, Russia was greatly in advance of the Central Powers, an advance that was all the more difficult to overtake as from the first day of war Russia opened still wider the floodgates of her gold and inundated Roumania with roubles.

If the fact that the scanty preparation for war is a proof of how little the Central Powers reckoned on such a contingency it may on the other hand explain away much apparent inactivity on the part of their representatives. Karl Fuerstenberg, my predecessor at Bucharest, whose estimate of the situation was a just one, demanded to have more

funds at his disposal, which was refused at Vienna on the plea that there was no money. After the war began the Ministry stinted us no longer, but it was too late then for much to be done.

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Whether official Russia, four weeks in advance, had really counted on the assassination of the Archduke and the outbreak of a war ensuing therefrom remains an open question. I will not go so far as to assert it for a fact, but one thing is certain, that Russia within a measurable space of time had prepared for war as being inevitable and had endeavoured to secure Roumania's co-operation. When the Tsar was at Constanza a month before the tragedy at Sarajevo, his Minister for Foreign Affairs, Sassonoff, paid a visit to Bucharest. When there, he and Bratianu went on a walking tour together to Transylvania. I did not hear of this tactless excursion until it was over, but I shared Berchtold's surprise at such a proceeding on the part of both Ministers.

I once, in 1914, overheard by chance a conversation between two Russians. It was at the Hotel Capsa, known later as a resort for anti-Austrians. They were sitting at the table next to mine in the restaurant and were speaking French quite freely and openly. They appeared to be on good terms with the Russian Ambassador and were discussing the impending visit of the Tsar to Constanza. I discovered later that they were officers in mufti. They agreed that the Emperor Francis Joseph could not live very much longer, and that when his death occurred and a new ruler came to the throne It would be a favourable moment for Russia to declare war on us.

They were evidently exponents of the "loyal" tendency that aimed at declaring war on us without a preceding murder; and I readily believe that the majority of the men in Petersburg who were eager for war held the same view.

CHAPTER V

THE U-BOAT WARFARE

1

My appointment as Minister for Foreign Affairs was thought by many to indicate that the Emperor Charles was carrying out the political wishes of his uncle, Ferdinand. Although it had been the Archduke's intention to have made me his Minister for Foreign Affairs, my appointment to the post by the Emperor Charles had nothing to do with that plan. It was due, above all, to his strong desire to get rid of Count Burian and to the lack of other candidates whom he considered suitable. The Red Book that was published by Count Burian after the outbreak of war with Roumania may have attracted the Emperor's attention to me.

Although the Emperor, while still Archduke, was for several years my nearest neighbour in Bohemia—he was stationed at Brandeis, on the Elbe—we never became more closely acquainted. In all those years he was not more than once or twice at my house, and they were visits of no political significance. It was not until the first winter of the war, when I went from Roumania to the Headquarters at Teschen, that the then

Archduke invited me to make the return journey with him. During this railway journey that lasted several hours politics formed the chief subject of conversation, though chiefly concerning Roumania and the Balkan questions. In any case I was never one of those who were in the Archduke's confidence, and my call to the Ballplatz came as a complete surprise.

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At my first audience, too, we conversed at great length on Roumania and on the question whether the war with Bucharest could have been averted or not.

The Emperor was then still under the influence of our first peace offer so curtly rejected by the Entente. At the German Headquarters at Pless, where I arrived a few days later, I found the prevailing atmosphere largely influenced by the Entente's answer. Hindenburg and Ludendorff, who were apparently opposed to Burian's *demarche* for peace, merely remarked to me that a definite victory presented a possibility of ending the war, and the Emperor William said that he had offered his hand in peace but that the Entente had given him a slap in the face, and there was nothing for it now but war to the uttermost.

It was at this time that the question of the unrestricted U-boat warfare began to be mooted. At first it was the German Navy only, and Tirpitz in particular, who untiringly advocated the plan. Hohenlohe,[5] who, thanks to his excellent connections, was always very well informed, wrote, several weeks before the fateful decision was taken, that the German Navy was determined and bent on that aim. Bethmann and Zimmermann were both decidedly against it. It was entirely in keeping with the prudent wisdom of the former not to risk such experiments; Bethmann was an absolutely dependable, honourable and capable partner, but the unbounded growth of the military autocracy must be imputed to his natural tendency to conciliate. He was powerless against Ludendorff and little by little was turned aside by him. My first visit to Berlin afforded me the opportunity of thoroughly discussing the U-boat question with the Imperial Chancellor, and we were quite agreed in our disapproval of that method of warfare. At all events, Bethmann pointed out that such essentially military matters should in the first instance be left to military decision, as they alone were able to form a correct estimate of the result, and these reflections made me fear from the very first that all reasonable political scruples would be upset by military arguments. On this my first visit to Berlin, when this question naturally was the dominating one, the Chancellor explained to me how difficult his position was, because the military leaders, both on land and at sea, declared that if the unrestricted U-boat warfare were not carried out they would not be able to guarantee the Western front. They thus brought an iron pressure to bear on him, for how could he, the Chancellor, undertake to guarantee that the Western front could hold out? As a matter of fact, the danger of introducing the unrestricted U-boat campaign became greater and greater, and the reports sent by Hohenlohe left no doubt as to the further development of affairs in Berlin.

On January 12 he reported as follows:

> The question of the extension of the U-boat warfare, as Your Excellency is aware from the last discussions in Berlin, becomes daily more acute.

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On the one hand, all leading military and naval authorities insist on making use of this means as speedily as possible, as they declare it will end the war much more rapidly; on the other hand, all statesmen have grave fears as to what effect it will have on America and other neutrals.The Supreme Military Command declares that a new offensive on a very large scale is imminent in the West and that the armies which are to resist this attack will not be able to understand why the navy should not do all that lies in its power to prevent, or at any rate to decrease, the reserves and ammunition being sent to our adversaries. The absence of co-operation on the part of the navy in the terrible battles the troops on the Western front will again have to face will have a most *injurious* effect on their *moral*.The objections put forward as to the effect the proceeding might have on America are met in military circles by the assumption that America will take good care not to go to war; that she, in fact, would not be able to do so. The unfortunate failure of the United States military machine in the conflict with Mexico clearly proves what is to be expected from America in that respect. Even a possible breaking off relations with America does not necessarily signify war.Meanwhile all the leading naval authorities reassert that they may be relied on, even though they are not considered capable of crushing England, at least to be able, *before* America can come in, so to weaken the British Island Empire that only one desire will be left to English politicians, that of seating themselves with us at the Conference table.To this the Chancellor asked who would give him a guarantee that the navy was right and in what position should we find ourselves in case the admirals were mistaken, whereupon the Admiralty promptly asked what sort of position the Chancellor expected to find when autumn arrived without having made a proper use of the U-boats and we found ourselves, through exhaustion, compelled to *beg* for peace.

> And thus the scales went up and down, weighing the chances for or against the U-boat war, and there was no possibility of positively determining which decision was the right one.

Doubtless the German Government in the near future will be constrained to take up a definite standpoint respecting the question, and it is obvious—whatever the decision may be—that we also shall be largely involved. Nevertheless, it appears to me that when the German Government does approach us in that connection we should act with all possible reserve. As the matter now stands, a positive decision as to which course is the right one is not possible. I have, therefore, thought it inadvisable to take side definitely with either party and thus remove much of the responsibility from the German Government and render it possible for them to lay it upon us.

> The Imperial and Royal Ambassador,

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G. HOHENLOHE, M.P.

The concluding passage of the above cited report had already been anticipated by me in a telegraphic communication in which I begged the ambassador with all possible energy to urge the political arguments opposed to the unrestricted U-boat warfare, which is proved by a telegram from Hohenlohe on January 13 as follows:

Reply to yesterday's telegram No. 15.

In accordance with the telegram mentioned, and after discussing it with Baron Flotow, I went to the Secretary of State—not being able to see the Chancellor to-day—and in conformity with Your Excellency's intentions called his attention to the fact that we should participate in the results of the U-boat war just as much as Germany and that, therefore, the German Government is bound to listen to us also. All the leading German statesmen know that Your Excellency, during your stay here, expressed *yourself as opposed to the movement*, but that I had come once more as Your Excellency's representative to repeat the *warning against too hasty action*. I further emphasised all the arguments against the U-boat warfare, but will not trouble Your Excellency with a repetition of them, nor yet with the counter-arguments, already known to Your Excellency, that were put forward by the Secretary. I gave a brief summary of both these standpoints in my yesterday's report No. 6 P.Herr Zimmermann, however, laid special stress on the fact that the information he was receiving convinced him more and more that America, especially after the Entente's answer to Mr. Wilson, which was in the nature of an insult, would very probably not allow it to come to a breach with the Central Powers.I did all I possibly could to impress upon him the responsibility Germany was taking for herself and for us by her decision in this question, pointing out very particularly that before any decision was arrived at our opinion from a nautical-technical standpoint must also be heard, in which the Secretary of State fully concurred.I have the feeling that the idea of carrying out the U-boat warfare is more and more favourably received, and Your Excellency had the same impression also when in Berlin. The last word as to the final attitude to be adopted by the German Government will no doubt come from the military side.

In conformity with the instructions received, *I will nevertheless uphold with all firmness the political arguments against the U-boat warfare*.

Baron Flotow will have occasion to meet the Secretary of State this afternoon.

I had sent Baron Flotow, a Chief of Department, to Berlin at the same time, in order that he might support all Hohenlohe's efforts and spare no pains to induce Germany to desist from her purpose.

Flotow sent me the following report on January 15:

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After a two-days' stay in Berlin my impression is that the question of the unrestricted U-boat warfare has again been brought to the front by the leading men in the German Empire. This question—according to Herr Zimmermann—under conditions of the greatest secrecy where the public is concerned, is now under debate between the heads of the Army and Navy and the Foreign Office; they insist on a decision. For if the unrestricted U-boat warfare is to be opened it must be at a time when, in view of the vast impending Anglo-French offensive on the Western front, it will make itself felt. The Secretary of State mentioned the month of February.

> I wish in the following account to summarise the reasons put forward by the Germans for the justification of the unrestricted U-boat warfare:

Time is against us and favours the Entente; if, therefore, the Entente can keep up the desire for war there will be still less prospect of our obtaining a peace on our own terms. The enemy's last Note to Wilson is again a striking example of their war energy.It will be impossible for the Central Powers to continue the war after 1917 with any prospect of success. Peace must, therefore, unless it finally has to be proposed by the enemy, be secured in the course of this year, which means that we must enforce it.The military situation is unfavourable owing to the impending Anglo-French offensive, which, it is presumed, will open with great force, as in the case of the last offensive on the Somme. To meet the attack, troops will have to be withdrawn from other fronts. Consequently, an offensive against Russia with intent to bring that enemy to his knees, which perhaps a year ago would have been possible, can no longer be reckoned on.If, therefore, the possibility of enforcing a decision in the East becomes less and less, an effort must be made to bring it about in the West, and to do it at a time when the unrestricted U-boat warfare would affect the coming Anglo-French offensive by impeding the transport of troops and munitions sailing under a neutral flag.In estimating the effect on England of the unrestricted U-boat warfare, there will be not only the question of hindering the transport of provisions, but also of curtailing the traffic to such a degree as would render it impossible for the English to continue the war. In Italy and in France this will be felt no less severely. The neutrals, too, will be made to suffer, which, however, might serve as a pretext to bring about peace.

> America will hardly push matters further than breaking off diplomatic relations; we need not, therefore, count for certain on a war with the United States.

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It must not be overlooked that the United States—as was the case in regard to Mexico—are not well prepared for war, that their one anxiety is Japan. Japan would not allow a European war with America to pass unheeded.But even if America were to enter the war it would be three to four months before she could be ready, and in that space of time peace must have been secured in Europe. According to the estimate of certain experts (among others, some Dutch corn merchants), England has only provisions sufficient for six weeks, or three months at the outside.It would be possible to carry on the U-boat warfare on England from fifteen bases in the North Sea, so *that the passage of a large vessel through to England would be hardly conceivable*. Traffic in the Channel, even if not entirely stopped, would be very limited, as travelling conditions in France exclude the possibility of suitable connection.And if the unrestricted U-boat warfare once were started, the terror caused by it (the sinking of the vessels without warning) would have such an effect that most vessels would not dare to put to sea.The above already hints at the rejoinder to be put forward to the arguments advanced by us against the opening of the unrestricted U-boat warfare, and also combats the view that the corn supply from the Argentine is not at the present moment so important for the United States as would be a prompt opening of the U-boat campaign, which would mean a general stoppage of all traffic.The fact that America would not be ready for war before the end of three months does not exclude the possibility that it might even be as long as six or eight months, and that she therefore might join in the European war at a time when, without playing our last card, it might be possible to end it in a manner that we could accept. It must not be forgotten, however, that in America we have to do with an Anglo-Saxon race, which—once it had decided on war—will enter on it with energy and tenacity, as England did, who, though unprepared for war as to military matters, can confront to-day the Germans with an army of millions that commands respect. I cannot with certainty make any statement as to the Japanese danger to America at a time when Japan is bound up with Russia and England through profitable treaties and Germany is shut out from that part of the world.

Among other things I referred to the great hopes entertained of the Zeppelins as an efficient weapon of war.

Herr Zimmermann said to me: “Believe me, our fears are no less than yours; they have given me many sleepless nights. There is no positive certainty as to the result; we can only make our calculations. We have not yet arrived at any decision. Show me a way to obtain a reasonable peace and I would be the first to reject the idea of the U-boat warfare. As matters now stand, both I and several others have almost been converted to it.”

But whether, in the event of the ruthless U-boat warfare being decided on, it would be notified in some way, has not yet been decided.

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Zimmermann told me he was considering the advisability of approaching Wilson, and, while referring to the contemptuous attitude of the Entente in the peace question, give the President an explanation of the behaviour of the German Government, and request him, for the safety of the life and property of American citizens, to indicate the steamers and shipping lines by which traffic between America and other neutrals could be maintained.

Vienna, January 15, 1917.

FLOTOW, M.P.

On January 20 Zimmermann and Admiral Holtzendorff arrived in Vienna, and a council was held, presided over by the Emperor. Besides the three above-mentioned, Count Tisza, Count Clam-Martinic, Admiral Haus and I were also present. Holtzendorff expounded his reasons, which I recapitulate below. With the exception of Admiral Haus, no one gave unqualified consent. All the arguments which appear in the official documents and ministerial protocols were advanced but did not make the slightest impression on the German representatives. The Emperor, who took no part in the debate, finally declared that he would decide later. Under his auspices a further conference was held in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at 2 o'clock; the report is as follows:

Report of a conference held January 20, 1917, in the Imperial and Royal Ministry of Home and Foreign Affairs. Members: Dr. Zimmermann, Secretary of State of the German Foreign Affairs Department; Admiral von Holtzendorff, Chief of the German Naval Staff; Count Czernin, Imperial and Royal Minister for Foreign Affairs; Count Tisza, Royal Hungarian Prime Minister; Count Clam-Martinic, Imperial and Royal Prime Minister; Admiral Haus, the German naval attache in Vienna; Baron von Freyburg, the Imperial and Royal naval attache in Berlin; Count B. Colloredo-Mannsfeld.

On January 20 a discussion took place in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the question of establishing unrestricted U-boat warfare.

As evidenced by Admiral v. Holtzendorff's statements, the German naval authorities hold the standpoint that there exists an absolute necessity for the quickest possible inauguration of an unrestricted U-boat campaign. The arguments employed in support of this thesis are known from the reports of the Imperial and Royal Ambassador in Berlin (report of 12/1/17 Nr. 6/P, and telegram of 13/1 Nr. 22), and may be summarised in the following sentences: Lack of time, decreasing human material in the Central Powers, progressive deterioration of the harvest, impending Anglo-French offensive on the Western front with improved and increased means for fighting, and the necessity arising therefrom to prevent or at least check the reinforcements required for such undertaking, the impossibility of obtaining a decision on land, the necessity of raising the *moral* of the

troops by ruthlessly obtained results and the use of every available means in war, certainty

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of the success of an unrestricted U-boat warfare in view of provisions in England only being sufficient for two to three months, as well as the stoppage of the munitions output and industrial production owing to the lack of raw material, the impossibility of supplying coal to France and Italy, *etc*., *etc*.Concerning the carrying out of the plan, the German Navy owns at present for that purpose 120 U-boats of the latest type. In view of the great success achieved by the U-boats at the beginning of the war, when there were only 19 of an antiquated type, the present increased numbers of the vessels offer a safe guarantee of success.February 1 is suggested on the part of the Germans as the date on which to start the unrestricted U-boat warfare and also to announce the blockade of the English coast and the west coast of France. Every vessel disobeying the order will be torpedoed without warning. In this manner it is hoped to bring England to reason within four months, and it must here be added that Admiral von Holtzendorff *expressis verbis* guaranteed the results.As regards the attitude to be taken by the neutrals, leading German circles, although aware of the danger, hold optimistic views. It is not thought that either the Scandinavian countries or Holland will interfere with us, although, in view of the possibility of such happening, military precautions have been taken. The measures taken on the Dutch and Danish frontiers will, in the opinion of the Germans, hold those countries in check, and the possibility of sharing the fate of Roumania will frighten them. Indeed, it is expected that there will be a complete stoppage of all neutral shipping, which in the matter of supplies for England amounts to 39 per cent. of the cargo space. Meanwhile concessions will be granted to the neutrals by fixing a time limit for the withdrawal of such of their vessels as may be at sea on the opening day of the U-boat warfare.With regard to America, the Germans are determined, if at all possible, to prevent the United States from attacking the Central Powers by adopting a friendly attitude towards America (acting upon the proposals made at the time of the *Lusitania* incident), but they are prepared for and await with calmness whatever attitude America may adopt. The Germans are, nevertheless, of the opinion that the United States will not go so far as making a breach with the Central Powers. If that should occur, America would be too late and could only come into action after England had been beaten. America is not prepared for war, which was clearly shown at the time of the Mexican crisis; she lives in fear of Japan and has to fight against agricultural and social difficulties. Besides which, Mr. Wilson is a pacifist, and the Germans presume that after his election he will adopt a still more decided tendency that way, for his election will not be due

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to the anti-German Eastern States, but to the co-operation of the Central and Western States that are opposed to war, and to the Irish and Germans. These considerations, together with the Entente's insulting answer to President Wilson's peace proposal, do not point to the probability of America plunging readily into war.These, in brief, are the points of view on which the German demand for the immediate start of the unrestricted U-boat warfare is based, and which caused the Imperial Chancellor and the Foreign Affairs Department to revise their hitherto objective views.Both the Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Hungarian Prime Minister pointed out what disastrous consequences would ensue from America's intervention, in a military, moral, agricultural and financial sense, and great doubt was expressed of the success of a blockade of England. Count Czernin held that the Germans overlooked the possibility of lowering the consumption in England, taking into consideration the fact that since the war consumption in the countries of the Central Powers had been reduced by half. Further, Count Czernin referred to the very vague and by no means convincing data of the German naval authorities. It was also debated whether a continuation of the U-boat war to the present extent (the destruction on an average of 400,000 tons per month) would not be more likely to achieve the desired end, and if it were not more advisable not to play our last and best card until all other means had been tried. The possibility of being able to start a ruthless U-boat warfare hung like a Damocles' sword over the heads of our adversaries, and would perhaps be a more effectual means of ending the war than the reckless use of the U-boat as a weapon of war, carrying with it the danger of an attack by the neutrals. If the effect expected by Germany was not realised, which was within the bounds of possibility, we must be prepared to see the desire for war in the enemy greatly intensified. However that may be, the vanishing of the desire for peace must be accepted as an established fact. Finally, it was pointed out that the arguments recently put forward by the Germans show a complete *novum*, namely, the danger on the Western front in view of the great Anglo-French offensive that is expected. Whereas formerly it was always said that the attacks of the enemy would be repulsed, it is now considered necessary to relieve the land army by recklessly bringing the navy into the line of action. If these fears are justified, then most certainly should all other considerations be put on one side and the risk ensuing from the ruthless employment of the U-boats be accepted. Both Count Czernin and Count Tisza expressed their grave doubts in this connection.To meet the case, the Hungarian Prime Minister pointed out the necessity of immediately starting propagandist activities in the neutral countries and particularly in America, by which the

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Central Powers' political methods and aims would be presented to them in a proper light; and then later, after introducing unrestricted U-boat warfare, it would be seen that no other choice was left to the peaceful tendencies of the Quadruple Alliance as the means for a speedy ending of the struggle between the nations.

> The leaders of the foreign policy agreed to take the necessary steps in that direction, and remarked that certain arrangements had already been made.

Admiral Haus agreed *unreservedly* with the arguments of the German Navy, as he declared that *no great anxiety need be felt* as to the likelihood of America's joining in with military force, and finally pointed out that, on the part of the Entente, a ruthless torpedoing of hospital and transport ships had been practised for some time past in the Adriatic. The Admiral urged that this fact be properly recognised and dealt with, to which the Foreign Affairs leaders on both sides gave their consent.The Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs, in conclusion, said that the definite decision to be taken must be left to the conclusions arrived at by both sovereigns, whereupon the 26th inst. was fixed for a meeting to be held for that purpose.

After the general discussion, I had a private talk with the Emperor, and found that he still had the same aversion to that means of warfare and the same fears as to the result. We knew, however, that Germany had definitely made up her mind to start the campaign in any case, and that all our arguments would be of no practical value. It remained to be decided whether we should join them or not. Owing to the small number of our U-boats, our holding aside would not have had any great effect on the final issue of the experiment, and for a moment I entertained the idea of proposing to the Emperor that we should separate from Germany on that one point, although I was aware that it might lead to the ending of our alliance. But the difficulty was that the U-boat effort would also have to be carried on in the Mediterranean in order that it should not lose its effect in the North Sea. If the Mediterranean remained exempt, the transports would take that route and proceed by land via Italy, France, and Dover, and thus render the northern U-boat warfare of no effect. But in order to carry it on in the Mediterranean, Germany would need our support in the Adriatic from Trieste, Pola, and Cattaro. If we allowed her at those places it involved us in the campaign, and if we refused to let our few U-boats go out, it would be attacking Germany in the rear and we should become embroiled with her, which would lead to the definite severance of the Alliance.

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This was again one of those instances that prove that when a strong and a weak nation concert in war, the weak one cannot desist unless it changes sides entirely and enters into war with its former ally. None who were in the Government would hear of that, and with a heavy heart we gave our consent. Bulgaria, who was not affected by this phase of the war, and had kept up diplomatic relations with America, was differently situated, being able to stand aside without paralysing the German plans. Apart from this, I was already persuaded then that Bulgaria's not joining in would make a bad impression on the outside world, and would not help her in any way. Although her relations with America were maintained up to the last, they did not, as a matter of fact, make her fate easier.

Had we been able to make Germany desist from the unrestricted U-boat warfare, the advantage would have been very great; whether we joined in or not was a matter of indifference viewed from the standpoint of our treatment by the Entente, as is proved by the instance of Bulgaria. As soon as America had declared war on Germany, a conflict with us was inevitable in any case, as Austro-Hungarian troops and artillery were then on the Western front facing Americans. We were compelled to go to war with America, seeing that Germany was already at war with her.

It was not possible, therefore, for us to remain in a state of even nominally peaceful relations with America, such as existed between her and Bulgaria to the very end of the war.

It is not quite clear when Germany really recognised the fact that the unrestricted U-boat warfare had no effect, and was thus a terrible mistake. To the public, as well as to the Allied Cabinets, the German military authorities continued to profess the greatest optimism, and when I left my post in April, 1918, the standpoint held in Berlin was still that England would be defeated by the naval war. Writing on December 14, 1917, Hohenlohe reported that in competent German circles the feeling was thoroughly optimistic. I, however, certainly perceived definite signs of doubt beginning in some German minds, and Ludendorff in replying to the reproaches I made to him said: "Everything is risky in war; it is impossible before an operation to be sure of the results. I admit that the time limit was a mistake, but the final result will show that I was right." In order to exculpate themselves all the leaders in Germany declared that America would, in any case, have gone to war, and that the U-boat had merely given the last impetus. Whether this is quite true appears doubtful; it cannot either be asserted or denied positively.

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The world has become used to looking upon Hindenburg and Ludendorff as one; they belonged together. Together they rose to highest power, to be forcibly separated in their fall. In all business transactions Ludendorff was in the foreground. He was a great speaker, but always in a sharp tone, suggestive of the Prussian military system. It usually aroused a scene, but he seemed to take nothing amiss, and his anger vanished as rapidly as it broke out. Hindenburg's retiring modesty made him attractive. Once when we were speaking of the photographers who besieged every conference in Berlin, the old gentleman remarked: "I have lived to be seventy, and nobody ever thought there was anything wonderful about me; now they seem all at once to have discovered that I have such an interesting head." He was much more staid and quiet than Ludendorff, nor was he so sensitive to public opinion as the latter. I remember once how Ludendorff, when I exhorted him to yield on the peace question, rejoined with vigour: "The German people wishes for no peace of renunciation, and I do not intend to end by being pelted with stones. The dynasty would never survive such a peace." The dynasty has departed, the stones have been thrown, and the peace of renunciation has become a reality, and is certainly more terrible than the gloomiest pessimist could ever have believed!

2

The rupture between America and Germany occurred on February 3, 1917.

The Ambassador, Count Tarnowski, remained in Washington, but was not received by Wilson, and had intercourse with Lansing only. I still hoped to maintain these semi-official relations with America, in case America, in breaking off relations with Germany, might be content with that and not declare war on her. The German Government would have preferred our breaking off diplomatic relations simultaneously with them.

On February 12 Count Wedel called on me, and his request and my settlement of it appear in the following telegram to Hohenlohe:

Vienna, Feb. 12, 1917.

To notify Your Excellency.

Count Wedel has been instructed to submit to me the following three requests from his Government:

(1) Count Tarnowski is not to hand over his credentials until the situation between Germany and America is clear.

(2) Count Tarnowski must protest to Mr. Wilson against his having tried to make the neutrals turn against Germany.

(3) On the outbreak of war with Germany Count Tarnowski must be recalled.

I have refused the first two items and accepted the last.

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As we should not have been able to prevent Germany from beginning the U-boat warfare, the only alternative for us was to use all means in our power to maintain our relations with America, and thus enable us later to play the part of mediator, although this could only be for that period during which America, having broken off relations, had not yet declared war. My answer of March 5, 1917, to America's request for an explanation of our standpoint was sent with the object of preventing America from breaking off relations with us, and also to keep from the public the knowledge of our divergence from Germany. This will be found noted in the appendix.[6] It met with success so far that America continued diplomatic relations with us until April 9, 1917.

[Illustration: COUNT TISZA. *Photo: Stanley's Press Agency.*]

I had a very lively correspondence with Stephen Tisza in consequence of my answer. I received the following letter on March 3:

DEAR FRIEND,—In the interests of the cause I can only greatly regret that I had no opportunity of appreciating the definite sense of our *aide-memoire* before it was dispatched. Apart from other less important matters, I cannot conceal my painful surprise that we repeatedly and expressly admit having given a promise in our *Ancona* Note. I am afraid that we have placed ourselves in a very awkward position with Wilson, which so easily could have been avoided, as it was not in accordance with my views that we had given a promise.An expression of opinion is not a promise. Without wishing to detract from its moral value, it has nevertheless a different legal character, and from the point of view of a third person has no legal authority in favour of that person as a promise.By unnecessarily having admitted that we gave the Americans a promise we admit the existence of obligations on our side to them. In spite of the fine and clever argument in our Note, it will be easy for the Americans to prove that our present procedure cannot be reconciled with the previous statement; if the statement was a promise, then the American Government has the right to look for the fulfilment of it, and we will then be in an awkward predicament. I remarked in my notification that I would prefer to omit the admission that we had made any promise; there would have been the possibility of recurring to it. By placing this weapon in their hands we have exposed ourselves to the danger of a checkmate, and I very much fear that we shall greatly regret it.Naturally this remains between us. But I was constrained to pour out my heart to you and justify my request that the text of all such important State documents which involve such far-reaching consequences may be sent to me in time for me to study and comment on them. Believe me, it is really in the interest of the cause and in every respect can only be for the best. In sincere friendship, your devoted

TISZA.

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Enclosure.

It may be presumed with some semblance of truth that the peace wave in America is progressing, and that President Wilson, influenced thereby, may perhaps be able at any rate to postpone a decision of a warlike nature. Even though I may be wrong in my presumption, it lies in our interests to avoid for as long as possible the rupture of our diplomatic relations with America.Therefore the answer to the American *aide-memoire*, to be dispatched as late as possible, should be so composed as to give it the appearance of a meritorious handling of the theme put forward on the American side without falling into the trap of the question put forward in the *aide-memoire*.

If we answer yes, then President Wilson will hardly be able to avoid a breach with the Monarchy. If we give a negative answer we shall abandon Germany and the standpoint we took up on January 31.

The handle wherewith to grasp evasion of a clear answer is provided by the *aide-memoire* itself, as it identifies our statements in the *Ancona* and *Persia* question with the attitude of the German Note of May 4, 1916. We should, therefore, be quite consistent if we, as we did in our Note of December 14, 1915, were to declare that we should be governed by our own ideas of justice.In our correspondence with the American Government respecting the *Ancona*, *Persia* and *Petrolite* questions we treated the concrete case always without going deeper into the individual principles of legal questions. In our Note of December 29, 1915, which contains the expression of opinion cited in the *aide-memoire* (it may also be noted that our expression of opinion was no pledge, as we had promised nothing nor taken any obligation upon ourselves), the Austrian Government distinctly stated that they would refer later to the difficult international questions connected with the U-boat warfare.Present war conditions did not appear suited to such a discussion. In consequence, however, of the dealings of our enemies, events have occurred and a state of things been brought about which, on our side also, renders a more intense application of the U-boat question unavoidable. Our merchantmen in the Adriatic, whenever attainable, were constantly torpedoed without warning by the enemy. Our adversaries have thus adopted the standard of the most aggravated and unrestricted U-boat warfare without the neutrals offering any resistance.

The Entente when laying their minefields displayed the same ruthlessness towards free shipping and the lives of neutrals.

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Mines are considered as a recognised weapon for the definite protection of the home coast and ports, also as a means of blockading an enemy port. But the use made of them as an aggressive factor in this war is quite a new feature, for vast areas of open sea on the route of the world's traffic were converted into minefields impassable for the neutrals except at the greatest danger of their lives.There is no question but that that is a far greater check to the freedom of movement and a greater obstacle to neutral interests than establishing the unrestricted U-boat warfare within a limited and clearly marked-out zone, leaving open channels for neutral shipping, and by other measures giving due consideration to the interests of the neutrals.Just at the moment when the President's appeal to the entire belligerent world coincided with the spontaneous statement of our group, in which we gave a solemn proof of our willingness to conclude a just peace and one acceptable by our enemies, a fresh and larger minefield was laid down in the North Sea on the route of the world's traffic, and, casting ridicule on the noble initiative of the United States, a war of destruction against our groups of Powers was announced by the Entente.We urge the great aims that inspired the action of the American Government: the quickest possible cessation of the fearful slaughter of men and the founding of an honourable, lasting and blessed peace by combating with the greatest energy our enemies' furious war for conquest. The course we pursue leads to the common aims of ourselves and the American Government, and we cannot give up the hope of finding understanding in the people and the Government of the United States.

TISZA.

I answered as follows:

March 5.

DEAR FRIEND,—I cannot agree with you. After the first *Ancona* Note you veered round and declared in a second Note that "we agreed with the German standpoint in the main"—that was an obvious yielding and contained a hidden promise.

I do not think that any legal wiles will dupe the Americans, and if we were to deny the promise it would not advance us any further.

But, secondly and principally, it is altogether impossible with words to make the Americans desist from war if they wish it; either they will make straight for war and then no Notes will avail, or they will seek a pretext to escape the war danger and will find it in our Note.

So much for the merits of the matter.

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What you demand is technically impossible. The Note was not easy to compile. I had to alter it entirely as time went on; His Majesty then wished to see it, made some alterations and sanctioned it. Meanwhile Penfield[7] importuned me and telegraphed even a week ago to America to reassure his people; the Germans, too, had to be won over for that particular passage.

> You know how ready I am to discuss important matters with you, but *ultra posse nemo tenetur*—it was physically impossible to upset everything again and to expect His Majesty to alter his views.
>
> In true friendship, your
>
> CZERNIN.

I thereupon, on March 14, received the following answer from Tisza:

DEAR FRIEND,—I also note with genuine pleasure the success of your American *aide-memoire* (meaning thereby America's resolve not to break off relations with us). But it does not alter my opinion that it was a pity to admit that a pledge had been given. It may be requited at a later stage of the controversy, and it would have been easy not to broach the subject for the moment.

> Do you think me very obstinate? I have not suppressed the final word in our retrospective controversy so that you should not think me better than I am.
>
> Au revoir, in true friendship, your
>
> TISZA.

Tisza was strongly opposed to the U-boat warfare, and only tolerated it from reasons of *vis major*, because we could not prevent the German military leaders from adopting the measure, and because he, and I too, were convinced that "not joining in" would have been of no advantage to us.

Not until very much later—in fact, not until after the war—did I learn from a reliable source that Germany, with an incomprehensible misunderstanding of the situation, had restricted the building of more U-boats during the war. The Secretary of State, Capelle, was approached by competent naval technical experts, who told him that, by stopping the building of all other vessels, a fivefold number of U-boats could be built. Capelle rejected the proposal on the pretext "that nobody would know what to do with so many U-boats when the war was at an end." Germany had, as mentioned, 100 submarines; had she possessed 500, she might have achieved her aims.

I only heard this in the winter of 1918, but it was from a source from which I invariably gleaned correct information.

Seldom has any military action called forth such indignation as the sinking, without warning, of enemy ships. And yet the observer who judges from an objective point of view must admit that the waging war on women and children was not begun by us, but by our enemies when they enforced the blockade. Millions have perished in the domains of the Central Powers through the blockade, and chiefly the poorest and weakest people—the greater part women and children—were

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the victims. If, to meet the argument, it be asserted that the Central Powers were as a besieged fortress, and that in 1870 the Germans starved Paris in similar fashion, there is certainly some truth in the argument. But it is just as true—as stated in the Note of March 5—that in a war on land no regard is ever paid to civilians who venture into the war zone, and that no reason is apparent why a war at sea should be subject to different moral conditions. When a town or village is within the range of battle, the fact has never prevented the artillery from acting in spite of the danger to the women and children. But in the present instance, the non-combatants of the enemy States who are in danger can easily escape it by not undertaking a sea voyage.

Since the debacle in the winter of 1918, I have thoroughly discussed the matter with English friends of long standing, and found that their standpoint was—that it was not the U-boat warfare in itself that had roused the greatest indignation, but the cruel nature of the proceedings so opposed to international law. Also, the torpedoing of hospital ships by the Germans, and the firing on passengers seeking to escape, and so on. These accounts are flatly contradicted by the Germans, who, on their part, have terrible tales to tell of English brutality, as instanced by the *Baralong* episode.

There have, of course, been individual cases of shameful brutality in all the armies; but that such deeds were sanctioned or ordered by the German or English Supreme Commands I do not believe.

An inquiry by an international, but neutral, court would be the only means of bringing light to bear on the matter.

Atrocities such as mentioned are highly to be condemned, no matter who the perpetrators are; but in itself, the U-boat warfare was an allowable means of defence.

The blockade is now admitted to be a permissible and necessary proceeding; the unrestricted U-boat warfare is stigmatised as a crime against international law. That is the sentence passed by might but not by right. In days to come history will judge otherwise.

FOOTNOTES:

[5] The Ambassador, Gottfried, Prince Hohenlohe-Schillingsfurst.

[6] See p. 279.

[7] Mr. Penfield, American Ambassador to Vienna.

CHAPTER VI

ATTEMPTS AT PEACE

1

The constitutional procedure which prevails in every parliamentary state is ordered so that the minister is responsible to a body of representatives. He is obliged to account for what he has done. His action is subject to the judgment and criticism of the body of representatives. If the majority of that body are against the minister, he must go.

The control of foreign policy in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy was in the hands of the delegations.

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Besides which, however, there existed in the Hungarian Constitution a regulation to the effect that the Hungarian Prime Minister was responsible to the country for the foreign policy, and, consequently, the “foreign policy of the Monarchy had to be carried out, in conjunction, by the then Minister for Foreign Affairs in office and the Prime Minister.”

It depended entirely on the personality of the Hungarian Prime Minister how he observed the regulation. Under Burian’s regime it had become the custom for all telegrams and news, even of the most secret nature, to be communicated at once to Count Tisza, who then brought his influence to bear on all decisions and tactical events. Tisza possessed a most extraordinary capacity for work. He always found time to occupy himself very thoroughly with foreign policy, notwithstanding his own numerous departmental duties, and it was necessary, therefore, to gain his consent to every step taken. The control of our foreign policy was, therefore, twofold—both by the delegation and the Prime Minister.

Great as was my esteem and respect for Count Tisza and close the friendship between us, still his constant supervision and intervention put boundless difficulties in the way of the discharge of business. It was not easy, even in normal times, to contend with, on top of all the existing difficulties that confront a Minister for Foreign Affairs; in war, it became an impossibility. The unqualified presumption behind such twofold government would have been that the Hungarian Prime Minister should consider all questions from the standpoint of the entire Monarchy, and not from that of the Magyar centre, a presumption which Tisza ignored like all other Hungarians. He did not deny it. He has often told me that he knew no patriotism save the Hungarian, but that it was in the interests of Hungary to keep together with Austria; therefore, he saw most things with a crooked vision. Never would he have ceded one single square metre of Hungarian territory; but he raised no objection to the projected cession of Galicia. He would rather have let the whole world be ruined than give up Transylvania; but he took no interest whatever in the Tyrol.

Apart from that, he applied different rules for Austria than for Hungary. He would not allow of the slightest alteration in Hungary’s internal conditions, as they must not be effected through external pressure. When I, forced thereto by the distress due to lack of provisions, yielded to Ukrainian wishes and notified the Austrian Ministry of the Ukrainian desire to divide Galicia in two, Tisza was fully in accordance therewith. He went even further. He opposed any expansion of the Monarchy as it might weaken Hungary’s influence. All his life he was an opponent of the Austro-Polish solution, and a mortal enemy of the tripartist project; he intended that Poland at most should rank as an Austrian province, but would prefer to make her over to Germany. He did not

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even wish Roumania to be joined with Hungary, as that would weaken the Magyar influence in Hungary. He looked upon it as out of the question to grant the Serbians access to the sea, because he wanted the Serbian agricultural products when he was in need of them; nor would he leave an open door for the Serbian pigs, as he did not wish the price of the Hungarian to be lowered. Tisza went still further. He was a great stickler for equality in making appointments to foreign diplomatic posts, but I could not pay much heed to that. If I considered the Austrian X better fitted for the post of ambassador than the Hungarian Y, I selected him in spite of eventual disagreement.

This trait in the Hungarian, though legally well founded, was unbearable and not to be maintained in war, and led to various disputes between Tisza and myself; and now that he is dead, these scenes leave me only a feeling of the deepest regret for many a hasty word that escaped me. We afterwards made a compromise. Tisza promised never to interfere except in cases of the greatest urgency, and I promised to take no important step without his approval. Soon after this arrangement he was dismissed by the Emperor for very different reasons.

I greatly regretted his dismissal, in spite of the difficulties he had caused me. To begin with, the Magyar-central standpoint was not a speciality of Tisza's; all Magyar politicians upheld it. Secondly, Tisza had one great point in his favour: he had no wish to prolong the war for the purpose of conquest; he wished for a rectification of the Roumanian frontier and nothing beyond that. If it had come to peace negotiations, he would have supported me in taking as a basis the *status quo ante*. His support—and that was the third reason—was of great value, for he was a man who knew how to fight. He had become hard and old on the battlefield of parliamentary controversy. He stood in awe of nothing and nobody—and he was true as gold. Fourthly, this upright man was one of the few who openly told the Emperor the truth, and the Emperor made use of this, as we all did.

I was, therefore, convinced beforehand that a change would not improve the situation for me. Esterhazy, who succeeded Tisza, certainly never put obstacles in the way of my policy. At the same time, I missed the strong hand that had kept order in Hungary, and the stern voice that warned the Emperor, and I did not place the same reliance on Wekerle as on Tisza, perhaps because I was not on the same terms of friendship with him as with Tisza.

Although I had many disputes with Tisza, it is one of the dearest reminiscences of my time of office that, up to the death of this remarkable man, our friendship remained unchanged. For many years Hungary and Stephen Tisza were as one. Tisza was a man whose brave and manly character, stern and resolute nature, fearlessness and integrity raised him high above the average man. He was a thorough man,

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with brilliant qualities and great faults; a man whose like is rare in Europe, in spite of those faults. Great bodies cast long shadows; and he was great, and modelled out of the stuff from which the heroes of old were made—heroes who understood how to fight and die. How often did I reproach him with his unhappy "*puszta*" patriotism, that was digging a grave for him and all of us. It was impossible to change him; he was obstinate and unbending, and his greatest fault was that, all his life, he was under the ban of a petty ecclesiastical policy. Not a single square metre would he yield either to Roumania in her day, nor to the Czechs or the Southern Slavs. The career of this wonderful man contains a terrible tragedy. He fought and strove like none other for his people and his country; for years he filled the breach and protected his people and his Hungary with his powerful personality, and yet it was his obstinate, unyielding policy that was one of the chief reasons of Hungary's fall; the Hungary he so dearly loved; the fall that he saw when he died, killed by the accursed hand of some cowardly assassin.

Tisza once told me, with a laugh, that someone had said to him that his greatest fault was that he had come into the world as a Hungarian.

I consider this a most pertinent remark. As a human being and as a man, he was prominent; but all the prejudices and faults of the Magyar way of thinking spoilt him.

Hungary and her Constitution—dualism—were one of our misfortunes in the war.

Had the Archduke Franz Ferdinand had no other plan but that of doing away with dualism, he would on that account alone have merited love and admiration. In Aehrenthal's and Berchtold's time Hungarian policy settled the Serbian disputes; it made an alliance with Roumania an impossibility; it accomplished the food blockade in Austria during the war; prevented all internal reforms; and, finally, at the last moment, through Karolyi's petty shortsighted selfishness, the front was beaten. This severe judgment on Hungary's influence on the war remains true, in spite of the undoubtedly splendid deeds of the Magyar troops. The Hungarian is of a strong, courageous, and manly disposition; therefore, almost always an excellent soldier; but, unfortunately, in the course of the last fifty years, Hungarian policy has done more injury than the Hungarian soldier possibly could make good in the war. Once, during the war, a Hungarian met my reproaches with the rejoinder that we could be quite sure about the Hungarians, they were so firmly linked to Austria. "Yes," said I; "Hungary is firmly linked to us, but like a stone a drowning man has tied round his own neck."

If we had not lost the war a fight to the death with the Magyars would have been inevitable, because it is impossible to conceive that any sensible European *consortium* would consent to be brought into partnership with Magyar aspirations and plans for dominion.

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But, of course, during the war an open fight with Budapest was impossible.

Whether the nations that once composed the Habsburg Empire will ever be reunited is an open question; should it come to pass, may a kind fate preserve us from a return of dualism.

2

On December 26, 1916—four days after entering upon office—I received a letter from Tisza in which he imparted to me his views on the tactics to be observed:

All the European neutrals feel that they are more seriously threatened by England than by us. The events in Greece, Roumania, *etc*., as well as England's commercial tyranny, act in our favour, and the difference of our attitude to the peace plans as compared with that of the Entente—if consistently and cleverly carried out—will secure neutral sympathy for our group of Powers.From this point of view I see that the chief danger will be that our necessarily cautious attitude as regards revealing our war aims may give rise to the idea that we are merely trifling with a plan for peace for tactical reasons and do not really earnestly desire peace.We must therefore furnish our representatives accredited to neutrals (the most important being Spain and Holland) with the necessary instructions, so that they may be able to account for our cautious attitude and explain the reasons that keep us from making a premature or one-sided announcement of our conditions.An announcement of the conditions on both sides would expose the belligerent parties in both camps to unfavourable criticism and might easily make the situation more strained; *a one-sided announcement of the war aims would simply afford the leader of the belligerent enemy group the opportunity of undoing everything*.It is therefore in the interests of peace that a communication of the peace terms should only be made mutually and confidentially, but we might be able to give the individual neutral various hints concerning it, to show that our war aims coincide with the lasting interests of humanity and the peace of the world, that our chief aim, *the prevention of Russian world dominion on land and of the English at sea*, is in the interests of the entire world, and that our peace terms would not include anything that would endanger the future peace of the world or could be objected to on the neutral side.

I offer these views for your consideration, and remain in truest friendship, your devoted

TISZA.

My predecessor, Burian, shortly before he left, had drawn up a peace proposal together with Bethmann. The Entente's scornful refusal is still fresh in everyone's memory. Since hostilities have ceased and there have been opportunities of talking to members of the Entente, I have often heard the reproach made that the offer of peace could not have been accepted by the Entente, as it was couched in

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the terms of a conqueror who “grants” peace terms to the enemy. Although I will not attempt to deny that the tone of the peace proposal was very arrogant—an impression which must have been enhanced by Tisza’s speeches in the Hungarian Parliament—I think, nevertheless, that even had it been differently worded it had small prospect of success. However that may be, the stern refusal on the part of the Entente only strengthened the situation for the war-keen military party, who, with increased vehemence, maintained the point that all talk of peace was a mistake, and that the fighting must go on to the end.

In the winter of 1917, Italy made a slight advance. What territorial concessions was the Monarchy prepared to make? This did not proceed from the Italian Government, but was a step taken by a private individual which was communicated to me through a friendly Government. It is extremely difficult to judge of the true value of such a step. A Government can make use of a private individual to take the first step—it will probably do so when intercourse is desired; but it may also be that a private person, without instructions from, or the knowledge of, his Government, might do the same. Instances of the latter occurred frequently during my term of office.

I always held the standpoint that any such tentative steps for peace, even when a ministerial source could not be proved *a priori*, should be treated with prudence, but in a friendly spirit. In the above-mentioned case, however, the fact was that Italy neither could separate from her Allies, nor did she wish to do so. Had that been her purpose, it would have involved her in a conflict with England, whose aim in war was the conquest of Germany and not any Italian aspirations. A separate peace with Italy—her separation from her Allies—was entirely out of the question, but a general peace would have been possible if the Western Powers could have come to an understanding with Germany.

The only object gained by that appeal would have been to confirm the extent of our exhaustion from the war. Had I answered that I was ready to give up this or that province, it would have been interpreted as a conclusive symptom of our increasing weakness, and would not have brought peace any nearer, but rather kept it at a greater distance.

I answered, therefore, in friendly tone that the Monarchy did not aim at conquests, and that I was ready to negotiate on the basis of pre-war conditions of possession. No answer was sent.

After the downfall I was told by a person, certainly not competent to judge, that my tactics had been mistaken, as Italy would have separated from her Allies and concluded a separate peace. Further accounts given in this chapter prove the injustice of the reproof. But it is easy now to confirm the impression that there was not a single moment while the war lasted when Italy ever thought of leaving her Allies.

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An extraordinary incident occurred at the end of February, 1917. A person came to me on February 26 who was in a position to give credentials showing him to be a recognised representative of a neutral Power, and informed me on behalf of his Government that he had been instructed to let me know that our enemies—or at least one of them—were ready to conclude peace with us, and that the conditions would be favourable for us. In particular, there was to be no question of separating Hungary or Bohemia from the Empire. I was asked, if agreeable to the proposition, to communicate my conditions through the same agency, my attention being called, however, to the proviso that *these proposals made by the enemy Government would become null and void from the moment that another Government friendly to us or to the hostile country heard of the step*.

The bearer of this message knew nothing beyond its contents. The final sentence made it obvious that one of the enemy Powers was anxious to negotiate unknown to the others.

I did not for a moment doubt that it was a question of Russia, and my authority confirmed my conviction by stating distinctly that he could not say so positively. I answered at once by telegram on February 27 through the agency of the intervening neutral Power that Austria-Hungary was, of course, ready to put an end to further bloodshed, and did not look for any gains from the peace, because, as stated several times, we were engaged in a war of defence only. But I drew attention to the rather obscure sense of the application, not being able to understand whether the State applying to us wished for peace *with us only*, or with the entire *group of Powers*, and I was constrained to emphasise the fact that we did not intend to separate from our Allies. I was ready, however, to offer my services as mediator if, as presumed, the State making the advance was ready to conclude peace with our entire group of Powers. I would guarantee secrecy, as I, first of all, considered it superfluous to notify our Allies. The moment for that would only be when the situation was made clear.

This was followed on March 9 by a reply accepting, though not giving a direct answer to the point of whether the proposal was for a peace with us alone or together with our Allies. In order to have it made clear as quickly as possible, and not to lose further time, I answered at once requesting the hostile Power to send a confidential person to a neutral country, whither I also would send a delegate, adding that I hoped that the meeting would have a favourable result.

I never received any answer to this second telegram. A week later, on March 16, the Tsar abdicated. Obviously, it was a last attempt on his part to save the situation which, had it occurred a few weeks earlier, would not only have altered the fate of Russia, but that of the whole world.

The Russian Revolution placed us in an entirely new situation. After all, there was no doubt that the East presented an obvious possibility of concluding peace, and all our

efforts were turned in that direction, for we were anxious to seize the first available moment to make peace with the Russian Revolutionary Party, a peace which the Tsar, faced by his coming downfall, had not been able to achieve.

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If the spring of 1917 was noted for the beginning of the unrestricted U-boat warfare and all the hopes centred on its success and the altered situation anticipated on the part of the Germans, the summer of the same year proved that the proceeding did not fulfil all expectations, though causing great anxiety to England. At that time there were great fears in England as to whether, and how, the U-boat could be paralysed. No one in London knew whether the new means to counteract it would suffice before they had been tried, and it was only in the course of the summer that the success of the anti-submarine weapons and the convoy principle was confirmed.

In the early summer of 1917 very favourable news was received relative to English and French conditions. Information was sent from Madrid, which was always a reliable source, that some Spanish officers returning to Madrid from England reported that the situation there during the last few weeks had become very much worse, and that there was no longer any confidence in victory. The authorities seized all the provisions that arrived for the troops and the munition workers; potatoes and flour were not to be obtained by the poorer classes; the majority of sailors fit for service had been enrolled in the navy, so that only inefficient crews were left in the merchant service, and they were difficult to secure, owing to their dread of U-boats, and, therefore, many British merchantmen were lying idle, as there was no one to man them.

This was the tenor of the Spanish reports coming from different sources. Similar accounts, though in slightly different form, came from France. It was stated that in Paris great war-weariness was noticeable. All hope of definite victory was as good as given up; an end must certainly come before the beginning of winter, and many of the leading authorities were convinced that, if war were carried on into the winter, the result would be as in Russia—a revolution.

At the same time, news came from Constantinople that one of the enemy Powers in that quarter had made advances for a separate peace. The Turkish Government replied that they would not separate from their Allies, but were prepared to discuss a general peace on a basis of non-annexation. Talaat Pasha notified me at once of the request and his answer. Thereupon nothing more was heard from the enemy Power. At the same time news came from Roumania evincing great anxiety concerning the increasing break-up in Russia, and acknowledging that she considered the game was lost. The revolution and the collapse of the army in Russia still continued.

Taken altogether, the outlook presented a more hopeful picture for us, and justified the views of those who had always held that a little more “endurance”—to use a word since become ominous—would lead to a decision.

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During a war every Minister of Foreign Affairs must attach an important and adequately estimated significance to confidential reports. The hermetic isolation which during the world war divided Europe into two separate worlds made this doubly urgent. But it is inevitable in regard to confidential reports that they must be accepted, for various reasons, with a certain amount of scepticism. Those persons who write and talk, not from any material, but from political interests, from political devotion and sympathy, are, from the nature of the case, above suspicion of reporting, for their own personal reasons, more optimistically than is justified. But they are apt to be deceived. Nations, too, are subject to feelings, and the feelings of the masses must not be taken as expressing the tendencies of the leading influences. France was tired of war, but how far the leading statesmen were influenced by that condition, not to be compared to our own war-weariness, was not proved.

In persons who make this *metier* their profession, the wish is often present, alongside the comprehensible mistakes they make, to give pleasure and satisfaction by their reports, and not run any risk of losing a lucrative post. I think it will be always well to estimate confidential reports, no matter from what source they proceed, as being 50 per cent. less optimistic than they appear. The more pessimistic opinion that prevailed in Vienna, compared with Berlin, was due, first and foremost, to the reliance placed on news coming from the enemy countries. Berlin, too, was quite certain that we were losing time, although Bethmann once thought fit in the Reichstag to assert the contrary; but the German military leaders and the politicians looked at the situation *among our opponents* differently from us.

When the Emperor William was at Laxenburg in the summer of 1917 he related to me some instances of the rapidly increasing food trouble in England, and was genuinely surprised when I replied that, though I was convinced that the U-boats were causing great distress, there was no question of a famine. I told the Emperor that the great problem was whether the U-boats would actually interfere with the transport of American troops, as the German military authorities asserted, or not, but counselled him not to accept as very serious facts a few passing incidents that might have occurred.

After the beginning of the unrestricted U-boat warfare, I repeat that many grave fears were entertained in England. It is a well-known fact. But it was a question of fears, not actualities. A person who knew how matters stood, and who came to me from a neutral country in the summer of 1917, said: “If the half only of the fears entertained in England be realised, then the war will be over in the autumn”; but a wide difference existed between London’s fears and Berlin’s hopes on the one hand, and subsequent events on the other, which had not been taken into account by German opinion.

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However that may be, I consider there is no doubt that, in spite of the announced intervention of America, the summer of 1917 represented a more hopeful phase for us. We were carried along by the tide, and it was essential to make the most of the situation. Germany must be brought to see that peace must be made, in case the peace wave became stronger.

I resolved, therefore, to propose to the Emperor that he should make the first sacrifice and prove to Berlin that it was not only by words that he sought for peace. I asked him to authorise me to state in Berlin that, in the event of Germany coming to an agreement with France on the Alsace-Lorraine question, Austria would be ready to cede Galicia to Poland, which was about to be reorganised, and to make efforts to ensure that this Great-Polish State should be attached to Germany—not *incorporated*, but, say, some form of personal union.

The Emperor and I went to Kreuznach, where I first of all made the proposal to Bethmann and Zimmermann, and subsequently, in the presence of the Emperor Charles and Bethmann, laid it before the Emperor William. It was not accepted unconditionally, nor yet refused, and the conference terminated with a request from the Germans for consideration of the question.

In making this proposal, I was fully aware of all that it involved. If Germany accepted the offer, and we in our consequent negotiations with the Entente did not secure any noteworthy alterations in the Pact of London, we could count on war only. In that case, we should have to satisfy not only Italy, Roumania, and Serbia, but would also lose the hoped-for compensation in the annexation of Poland. The Emperor Charles saw the situation very clearly, but resolved at once, nevertheless, to take the proposed step.

I, however, thoroughly believed then—though wrongly—that in the circumstances London and Paris would have been able to effect an amendment in the Pact of London. It was not until much later that a definite refusal of our offer was sent by Germany.

In April, before a decision had been arrived at, I sent a report to the Emperor Charles explaining the situation to him, and requesting that he would submit it to the Emperor William.

The report was as follows:—

> Will Your Majesty permit me, with the frankness granted me from the first day of my appointment, to submit to Your Majesty my responsible opinion of the situation?
>
> It is quite obvious that our military strength is coming to an end. To enter into lengthy details in this connection would be to take up Your Majesty's time needlessly.

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I allude only to the decrease in raw materials for the production of munitions, to the thoroughly exhausted human material, and, above all, to the dull despair that pervades all classes owing to under-nourishment and renders impossible any further endurance of the sufferings from the war.Though I trust we shall succeed in holding out during the next few months and carry out a successful defence, I am nevertheless quite convinced that another winter campaign would be absolutely out of the question; in other words, that in the late summer or in the autumn an end must be put to the war at all costs.Without a doubt, it will be most important to begin peace negotiations at a moment when the enemy has not yet grasped the fact of our waning strength. If we approach the Entente at a moment when disturbances in the interior of the Empire reveal the coming breakdown every step will have been in vain, and the Entente will agree to no terms except such as would mean the absolute destruction of the Central Powers. To begin at the right time is, therefore, of extreme importance.I cannot here ignore the subject on which lies the crux of the whole argument. That is, the danger of revolution which is rising on the horizon of all Europe and which, supported by England, is demonstrating a new mode of fighting. Five monarchs have been dethroned in this war, and the amazing facility with which the strongest Monarchy in the world was overthrown may help to make us feel anxious and call to our memory the saying: *exempla trahunt*. Let it not be said that in Germany or Austria-Hungary the conditions are different; let it not be contested that the firmly rooted monarchist tendencies in Berlin and Vienna exclude the possibility of such an event. This war has opened a new era in the history of the world; it is without example and without precedent. The world is no longer what it was three years ago, and it will be vain to seek in the history of the world a parallel to the happenings that have now become daily occurrences.The statesman who is neither blind nor deaf must be aware how the dull despair of the population increases day by day; he is bound to hear the sullen grumbling of the great masses, and if he be conscious of his own responsibility he must pay due regard to that factor.Your Majesty has seen the secret reports from the governor of the town. Two things are obvious. The Russian Revolution affects our Slavs more than it does the Germans, and the responsibility for the continuation of the war is a far greater one for the Monarch whose country is only united through the dynasty than for the one where the people themselves are fighting for their national independence. Your Majesty knows that the burden laid upon the population has assumed proportions that are unbearable; Your Majesty knows that the bow is strained to such a

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point that any day it may be expected to snap. But should serious disturbances occur, either here or in Germany, it will be impossible to conceal the fact from the Entente, and from that moment all further efforts to secure peace will be defeated.I do not think that the internal situation in Germany is widely different from what it is here. I am only afraid that the military circles in Berlin are deceiving themselves in certain matters. I am firmly convinced that Germany, too, like ourselves, has reached the limit of her strength, and the responsible political leaders in Berlin do not seek to deny it.I am firmly persuaded that, if Germany were to attempt to embark on another winter campaign, there would be an upheaval in the interior of the country which, to my mind, would be far worse than a peace concluded by the Monarchs. If the Monarchs of the Central Powers are not able to conclude peace within the next few months, it will be done for them by their people, and then will the tide of revolution sweep away all that for which our sons and brothers fought and died.I do not wish to make any *oratio pro domo*, but I beg Your Majesty graciously to remember that I, the only one to predict the Roumanian war two years before, spoke to deaf ears, and that when I, two months before the war broke out, prophesied almost the very day when it would begin, nobody would believe me. I am just as convinced of my present diagnosis as I was of the former one, and I cannot too insistently urge you not to estimate too lightly the dangers that I see ahead.Without a doubt, the American declaration of war has greatly aggravated the situation. It may be many months before America can throw any noteworthy forces into the field, but the moral fact, the fact that the Entente has the hope of fresh forces, brings the situation to an unfavourable stage for us, because our enemies have more time before them than we have and can afford to wait longer than we, unfortunately, are able to do. It cannot yet be said what course events will take in Russia. I hope—and this is the vital point of my whole argument—that Russia has lost her motive power for a long time to come, perhaps for ever, and that this important factor will be made use of. I expect, nevertheless, that a Franco-English, probably also an Italian, offensive will be launched at the first opportunity, though I hope and trust that we shall be able to repulse both attacks. If this succeeds—and I reckon it can be done in two or three months—we must then, before America takes any further military action to our disadvantage, make a more comprehensive and detailed peace proposal and not shrink from the probably great and heavy sacrifices we may have to make.Germany places great hopes on the U-boat warfare. I consider such hopes are deceptive. I do not for a moment disparage the fabulous deeds

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of the German sea heroes; I admit admiringly that the tonnage sunk per month is phenomenal, but I assert that the success anticipated and predicted by the Germans has not been achieved.Your Majesty will remember that Admiral Holtzendorff, when last in Vienna, told us positively that the unrestricted U-boat warfare would bring England to her knees within six months. Your Majesty will also remember how we combated the prediction and declared that, though we did not doubt the U-boat campaign would seriously affect England, yet the looked-for success would be discounted by the anticipated entry of America into the war. It is now two and a half months (almost half the time stated) since the U-boat warfare started, and all the information that we get from England is to the effect that the downfall of this, our most powerful and most dangerous adversary, is not to be thought of. If, in, spite of many scruples, Your Majesty yielded to Germany's wish and consented to allow the Austro-Hungarian Navy to take part in the U-boat warfare, it was not because we were converted by the German arguments, but because Your Majesty deemed it to be absolutely necessary to act with Germany in loyal concert in all quarters and because we were firmly persuaded that Germany, unfortunately, would never desist from her resolve to begin the unrestricted U-boat warfare.To-day, however, in Germany the most enthusiastic advocates of the U-boat warfare are beginning to see that this means to victory will not be decisive, and I trust that the mistaken idea that England within a few months will be forced to sue for peace will lose ground in Berlin too. Nothing is more dangerous in politics than to believe the things one wishes to believe; nothing is more fatal than the principle not to wish to see the truth and to fall a prey to Utopian illusions from which sooner or later a terrible awakening will follow.England, the motive power in the war, will not be compelled to lay down her arms in a few months' time, but perhaps—and here I concede a limited success to the U-boat scheme—perhaps England in a few months will ask herself whether it is wise and sensible to continue this war *a l'outrance*, or whether it would not be more statesmanlike to set foot upon the golden bridges the Central Powers must build for her, and then the moment will have come for great and painful sacrifices on the part of the Central Powers.Your Majesty has rejected the repeated attempts of our enemies to separate us from our Allies, in which step I took the responsibility because Your Majesty is incapable of any dishonourable action. But at the same time, Your Majesty instructed me to notify the statesmen of the German Empire that our strength is at an end, and that after the close of the summer Germany must not reckon on us any longer. I carried out these commands and the German statesmen left me in no doubt that for Germany,

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too, another winter campaign would be impossible. In this one sentence may be summed up all that I have to say: We can still wait some weeks and try if there is any possibility of dealing with Paris or Petersburg. If that does not succeed, then we must —and at the right time—play our last card and make the extreme proposals I have already hinted at. Your Majesty has proved that you have no selfish plans and that you do not expect from your German Ally sacrifices that Your Majesty would not be ready to make yourself. More than that cannot be expected.Your Majesty, nevertheless, owes it to God and to your peoples to make every effort to avert the catastrophe of a collapse of the Monarchy; it is your sacred duty to God and to your peoples to defend those peoples, the dynastic principle and your throne with all the means in your power and to your very last breath.

On May 11 there came the following official answer from the Imperial Chancellor, which was sent by the German Emperor to the Emperor Charles, and then to me:—

> In accordance with Your Majesty's commands I beg most humbly to submit the following in answer to the enclosed *expose* from the Imperial and Royal Minister for Foreign Affairs of 12th ult.

Since the *expose* was drawn up, the French and English on the Western front have carried out the predicted great offensive on a wide front, ruthlessly sacrificing masses of men and an enormous quantity of war material. The German army checked the advance of the numerically superior enemy; further attacks, as we have every reason to believe, will also be shattered by the heroism of the men and the iron will of their leaders.

> Judging from all our experiences hitherto in the war, we may consider the situation of the Allied armies on the Isonzo with the same confidence.

The Eastern front has been greatly reduced owing to the political upheaval in Russia. There can be no question of an offensive on a large scale on the part of Russia. A further easing of the situation would release more men even if it were considered necessary to have a strong barrier on the Russian frontier to guard against local disturbances owing to the revolutionary movement. With the additional forces, the conditions in the West would become more favourable for us. The withdrawal of men would also provide more troops for the Austrian-Hungarian Monarchy for the successful carrying out of the fighting on the Italian front until the end of the war is reached.In both Allied Monarchies there is an ample supply of raw material for the manufacture of munitions. Our situation as regards provisions is such that with the greatest economy we can hold out until the new harvest. The same applies to Austria-Hungary, especially if her share of the supplies from Roumania are taken into consideration.

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The deeds of our navy rank beside the successes of the army. When Admiral von Holtzendorff was permitted to lay before His Apostolic Majesty the plans for the U-boat warfare, the prospects of success for this stringent measure had been thoroughly tested here and the expected military advantages weighed against the political risk. We did not conceal from ourselves that the infliction of a blockade of the coasts of England and France would bring about the entry into war of the United States and, consequently, a falling off of other neutral states. We were fully aware that our enemies would thus gain a moral and economic renewal of strength, but we were, and still are, convinced that the disadvantages of the U-boat warfare are far surpassed by its advantages. The largest share in the world struggle which began in the East has now been transferred to the West in ever increasing dimensions, where English tenacity and endurance promote and strengthen the resistance of our enemies by varied means. A definite and favourable result for us could only be achieved by a determined attack on the vital spot in the hostile forces; that is, England.The success obtained and the effect already produced by the U-boat warfare far exceed all calculations and expectations. The latest statements of leading men in England concerning the increasing difficulty in obtaining provisions and the stoppage of supplies, as well as corresponding comments in the Press, not only include urgent appeals to the people to put forth their utmost strength, but bear also the stamp of grave anxiety and testify to the distress that England is suffering.The Secretary of State, Helfferich, at a meeting of the Head Committee of the Reichstag on the 28th ult., gave a detailed account of the effects of the U-boat warfare on England. The review was published in the *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* of the 1st inst. I beg herewith to refer to the enclosed.[8]According to the latest news the Food Controller, Lord Rhondda, owing to the inadequate supply of corn, has been compelled to specify a new allotment of cargo space. This is already so restricted that more room for corn can only be secured by hindering the conduct of the war in other ways. Apart from abandoning overseas traffic, vessels could only be released by cutting down such imports as absorbed much space. England requires not only great transport facilities for provisions but also for the import of ore to keep up war industries, and also pit props to enable the coal output to be kept at a high level. In the case of the ore needed for England and the wood available in the country, it is not possible to restrict the cargo space in these two instances. Already, after three months of the U-boat warfare, it is a fact that the shortage of cargo space caused by the U-boats reduces the living conditions of the population to an unbearable extent, and paralyses all war industries,

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so much so that the hope of defeating Germany by superior stores of munitions and a greater number of guns has had to be given up. The lack of transport facilities will also prevent the larger output of war industries in America making up for the lesser output in England. The speed with which the U-boat warfare has destroyed vessels excludes the possibility of building new vessels to furnish adequate cargo space. More vessels have been destroyed in a month of U-boat warfare than the English dockyards have turned out in the last year. Even the thousand much-talked-of American wooden vessels, if they were there, would only cover the losses of four months. But they will not come before it is too late. English experts on the subject have already said quite openly that there are only two ways of counteracting the effect of the U-boats: either to build vessels quicker than the Germans destroy them, or else to destroy the U-boats quicker than the Germans can build them. The first has proved to be impossible, and the U-boat losses are far less than the new vessels building.

> England will also have to reckon on a progressive rise in the loss of tonnage.
>
> The effects of the U-boat warfare on the people's provisions and on all private and Government activities will be felt more and more.
>
> I anticipate, therefore, the final results of the U-boat warfare with the greatest confidence.

According to secret but reliable information, the Prime Minister Ribot recently stated to the Italian Ambassador in Paris that France was faced with exhaustion. This opinion was expressed before the beginning of the last Franco-English offensive. Since then, France has sacrificed life to a terrible extent by keeping up the intensity of the fighting until the offensive ceased.The French nation is certainly doing marvellous things in this war, but the Government cannot sustain the enormous burden after it reaches a certain limit. A reaction in the temper of France, which is kept up by artificial means, is inevitable.As regards our own internal situation, I do not under-estimate the difficulties presented by the inevitable results of the severe fighting and the exclusion from the seas. But I firmly believe that we shall succeed in overcoming these difficulties without permanently endangering the nation's strength and general welfare, without any further crises and without menace to Government organisation.Although we are justified in viewing the total situation in a favourable light, I am nevertheless in complete agreement with Count Czernin in pursuing the aim of bringing about as speedily as possible an honourable and, in the interests of the Empire and of our Allies, just peace. I also share his opinion that the important factor of the weakening of Russia must be exploited, and that a fresh tentative

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offer for peace must be put forward at a time when both political and military initiative are still in our hands. Count Czernin estimates a suitable time will be in two or three months, when the enemy offensive will be at an end. As a matter of fact, in view of the French and English expectations of the decisive success for their offensive, and the Entente not having lost all hopes of Russia resuming her activities, any too pronounced preparations for peace would not only be doomed to failure, but would put new life into the enemy by revealing the hopeless exhaustion of the Central Powers' forces. At the present moment a general peace could only be bought by our submission to the will of the enemy. A peace of that nature would not be tolerated by the people and would lead to fatal dangers for the Monarchy. It appears to me that quiet determination and caution as regards the outer world are more than ever an imperative necessity. The development of affairs in Russia has hitherto been favourable for us. Party disputes are kept more and more within the narrow limits of peace and war questions by political, economic and social exigencies, and the impression grows every day that the party which makes for peace with the Central Powers will be the one to remain in power. It is our solemn duty carefully to follow and encourage the process of development and disruption in Russia and to sound the country, not with too obvious haste, but yet with sufficient expert skill to lead to practical peace negotiations. The probability is that Russia will avoid any appearance of treachery towards her Allies, and will endeavour to find a method which will practically lead to a state of peace between herself and the Central Powers, but outwardly will have the appearance of the union of both parties as a prelude to the general peace.As in July, 1914, we entered regardlessly into a loyal alliance with Austria-Hungary, in like manner when the world war is at an end will a basis be found for terms which will guarantee a prosperous peace to the two closely united Monarchies.

This optimistic reply of Bethmann's was obviously not only based on the idea of infusing more confidence in the future in us, but was also the true expression of a more favourable atmosphere prevailing, as Berlin naturally received the same reports from the enemy countries as we did.

I received about that time a letter from Tisza which contained the following passage:—

The varied information received from the enemy countries leaves no doubt that the war is drawing to a close. It is now above all essential to keep a steady nerve and play the game to the end with *sangfroid*. Let there be no signs of weakness. It is not from a love of humanity in general that our enemies have become more peacefully inclined, but because they realise that we cannot be crushed.I beg of you no longer to give vent to

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the sentiments in your report of April 12. A pessimistic tendency evinced now by the leader of our foreign affairs would ruin everything. I know that you are prudent, but I beg you to use your influence so that both His Majesty and his entourage may show a confident front to the world. And again, no one will have anything to say to us if they cease to believe in our powers of resistance—and are not persuaded that our Alliance rests on a solid foundation.

It was evident that the only right tactics were to make the supremest efforts at the front and throughout the country, on the one hand, in order to hold the situation a little longer, and, on the other, to persuade the enemy that, in spite of the favourable situation, we were prepared for peace without conquest. To appoint Hebel to the German military Commission to carry out this last procedure seemed devoid of sense. Neither did I expect to gain much from recent intervention in the Wilhelmstrasse, and endeavoured therefore to put myself in direct touch with the German Reichstag.

One of my political friends who had numerous and excellent connections with the German Reichstag put himself into communication with different leaders in Berlin and explained to them the situation in the Monarchy. It was understood that this gentleman was not acting for the Ministry, but presenting his own impressions and views. He was enjoined to be very cautious, as any indiscretion might have incalculable consequences. If the Entente were to imagine that we were thinking of ending the war, not for love of peace but because we simply could not hold out any longer, all efforts would have been vain. In that respect, Tisza was perfectly right. It was, therefore, absolutely necessary that the person to whom this delicate mission had been entrusted should act in such a manner as would keep it a secret from the Entente, a manner devoid of weakness and uniting confidence with reasonable war aims, but also in a manner which would enable the Ministry eventually to disavow the advances.

My friend undertook the task with just as great zeal as efficiency and, in brief, this is what he told the Berlin leaders, Erzberger[9] and Suedekum in particular. As far as he could judge, we had now reached a turning point. The next few weeks would decide whether it was to be peace or war *a l'outrance*. France was tired and not anxious for America's entry into the war if it was not to be the latter. If Germany forced the Entente to continue the war the situation would be very grave. Neither Austria-Hungary nor Turkey could do more. Germany, by herself, could not bring the war to a successful end. Austria-Hungary's position was obvious to the whole world. She was ready to make peace without annexations and without war compensation, and to devote all her energies to preventing the recurrence of a war. (Austria-Hungary's standpoint was that a universal, equal, but extensive disarmament on sea and on land offered the only means to restore the financial situation in Europe after the war.)

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Germany must publicly notify her position just as clearly as Austria-Hungary had done and must declare the following:

(1) No annexations, no indemnities.

(2) Particularly the unconditional and total release of Belgium (politically and economically).

(3) All territories occupied by Germany and Austria-Hungary to be evacuated as soon as both those States had had their territories restored to them (including the German colonies).

(4) Germany, as well as Austria-Hungary, to work for a general disarmament and guarantee that no further war be possible.

Such declaration to be a joint one from the German Government and the Reichstag, and to be made public.

The peace resolution of July 19, 1917, was the result of this step. The Imperial Chancellor Bethmann was the first victim. The Supreme Military Command, by whom he always had been persecuted, now trying to secure his dismissal, declared such resolution to be unacceptable. When Bethmann had gone and Michaelis had been appointed, they were satisfied.

Although the resolution in itself was satisfactory, it had one fault at the start. It was no secret that everyone connected with Pan-Germanism, especially the German generals, disagreed with the decision, and would not accept the resolution as coming from the entire country. Certainly the great majority in Germany, counting them per head, supported the resolution but the leading men, together with a considerable following, were opposed to it. The “Starvation Peace,” the “Peace of Renunciation,” and the “Scheidemann Peace” were the subjects of articles in the papers expressing the greatest disapproval of the resolution. Neither did the German Government take up any decided attitude. On July 19 the Imperial Chancellor Michaelis made a speech approving the resolution, but adding “as I understand it.”

The Imperial Chancellor wrote a letter to me in August confirming his very optimistic views of the situation, and defining Germany’s views regarding Belgium. The phrase, “as I understand it,” above alluded to in his approval of the resolution, was explained in his letter, at any rate, as to the Belgium question: “As Germany wishes to reserve to herself the right to exercise a far-reaching military and economic influence on Belgium.” He wrote as follows:—

Berlin, August 17, 1917.

DEAR COUNT CZERNIN,—According to our agreement, I take the liberty briefly to lay before you my views of our discussions of the 14th and 15th inst., and would be extremely grateful if Your Excellency would be so kind as to advise me of your views on my activities.The internal economic and political situation in Germany justifies me in the firm belief that Germany herself would be able to stand a fourth year of war. The bread-corn harvest promises better

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than we thought five or six weeks ago, and will be better than that of the previous year. The potato harvest promises a considerably higher yield than in 1916-17. Fodder is estimated to be much less than last year; by observing a unified and well-thought-out economic plan for Germany herself and the occupied territories, including Roumania, we shall be in a position to hold out with regard to fodder, as was also possible in the very dry year 1915.There is no doubt that the political situation is grave. The people are suffering from the war, and the longing for peace is very great; however, there is no trace of any general and really morbid exhaustion, and when food is controlled any work done will be no worse than it was last year.This economic and political prospect can only be altered if the condition of the Allies, or of the neutrals, under pressure from the Entente, should become very much worse. It would be a change for the worse for us if our Allies or the neutral states, contrary to our expectations and hopes, were to experience such shortage as would cause them to turn to us. To a certain extent, this is already the case; a further increase of their claims would greatly prejudice our economic position and in certain cases endanger it. It must be admitted that the situation in the fourth year of war in general is more difficult than in the third year. The most earnest endeavours, therefore, will be made to bring about a peace as soon as possible.Nevertheless, our genuine desire for peace must not lead us to come forward with a fresh peace proposal. That, in my opinion, would be a great tactical error. Our *demarche* for peace last December found sympathy in the neutral states, but it was answered by our adversaries raising their demands. A fresh step of the kind would be put down to our weakness and would prolong the war; any peace advances must come now from the enemy.The leading motive in my foreign policy will always be the watchful care of our Alliance with Austria-Hungary that the storm of war has made still stronger, and a trusting, friendly and loyal co-operation with the leading men of the Allied Monarchy. If the spirit of the Alliance—and in this I know Your Excellency agrees—-remains on the same high level as heretofore, even our enemies would see that it was impossible for one of the Allies to agree to any separate negotiations offered to him, unless he states beforehand that the discussion would only be entered into if the object were a general peace. If this were clearly laid down there could be no reason why one of the Allies should not listen to such proposal from the enemy and with him discuss preparations for peace.At present no decided line of action can be specified for such a proceeding. Your Excellency was good enough to ask me whether the reinstatement of the *status quo* would be a suitable basis

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on which to start negotiations. My standpoint in this matter is as follows: I have already stated in the Reichstag that Germany is not striving for any great changes in power after the war, and is ready to negotiate provided the enemy does not demand the cession of any German territory; with such a conception of the term “reinstatement of the *status quo*,” that form would be a very suitable basis for negotiations. This would not exclude the desired possibility of retaining the present frontiers, and by negotiating bring former enemy economic territory into close economic and military conjunction with Germany—-this would refer to Courland, Lithuania and Poland—and thus secure Germany’s frontiers and give a guarantee for her vital needs on the continent and overseas.Germany is ready to evacuate the occupied French territory, but must reserve to herself the right, *by means of the peace negotiations, to the economic exploitation of the territory of Longwy and Briey*, if not through direct incorporation, by a legal grant to exploit. We are not in a position to cede to France any noteworthy districts in Alsace-Lorraine.I should wish to have a free hand in the negotiations in the matter of *connecting Belgium with Germany in a military and economic sense*. The terms that I read out, taken from notes at the Kreuznach negotiations—the military control of Belgium until the conclusion of a defensive and offensive Alliance with Germany, the acquisition of Liege (or a long-term rental thereof)—were the maximum claims of the Supreme Military and Naval Command. The Supreme Military Command agrees with me that these terms or similar ones can only be secured if peace can be enforced on England. But we are of opinion that a vast amount of economic and military influence must be brought to bear in Belgium in the matter of the negotiations and would perhaps not meet with much resistance, because Belgium, from economic distress, will come to see that her being joined to Germany is the best guarantee for a prosperous future.As regards Poland, I note that the confidential hint from Your Excellency to give up Galicia and enrol it in the new Polish State is subject to the ceding of portions of Alsace-Lorraine to France, which was to be as a counter-sacrifice, but must be considered as out of the question. The development of Poland as an independent State must be carried out in the sense of the proclamation of November 5, 1916. Whether this development will prove to be an actual advantage for Germany or will become a great danger for the future will be tested later. There are already many signs of danger, and what is particularly to be feared is that the Austro-Hungarian Government cannot notify us now during the war of her complete indifference to Poland and leave us a free hand in the administration of the whole state.It will also remain to be seen whether,

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in view of the danger caused to Germany and also to her relations with Austria-Hungary through Poland's unwillingness to accept the situation, it would not be more desirable politically for Germany, while retaining the frontier territory as being necessary for military protection, to grant to Poland full right of self-determination, also with the possibility of being joined to Russia.The question of the annexation of Roumania, according to the Kreuznach debate of May 1, must be treated further and solved in connection with the questions that are of interest to Germany respecting Courland, Lithuania and Poland.It was a special pleasure to me to meet you, dear Count Czernin, here in Berlin and to discuss openly and frankly with you the questions that occupy us at present. I hope in days to come there may be an opportunity for a further exchange of thoughts enabling us to solve problems that may arise, and carry them out in full agreement.

With the expression of my highest esteem, I remain your very devoted

MICHAELIS.

I replied to the Chancellor that I welcomed, as a matter of course, the agreement to maintain complete frankness, but remarked that I could not share his optimism. I explained that the increasing war-weariness, both in Germany and in Austria-Hungary, rendered it imperative to secure peace in good time, that is, before any revolutionary signs appeared, for any beginning of disturbances would spoil the chance of peace. The German point of view in the case of Belgium seemed to me quite mistaken, as neither the Entente nor Belgium would ever consent to the terms. I could not, therefore, conceal from him that his point of view was a serious obstacle to peace; that it was also in direct opposition to the Reichstag view, and I failed to understand it.

I then spoke of the necessity of coming to an understanding as to the minimum of the war aims in which an important part is played by the question whether and how we can achieve a voluntary and peaceable annexation of Poland and Roumania by the Central Powers.

I finally again pointed out that I interpreted the views of the German Reichstag as demanding a peace without annexation or indemnity, and that it would be out of the question for the German Government to ignore the unanimous decision of the Reichstag. It was not a question of whether we *wished* to go on fighting, but whether we *could*, and it was my duty to impress upon him in time that we were bound to end the war.

Dr. Michaelis was more given to Pan-Germanism than his predecessor.

It was astonishing to what degree the Pan-Germans misunderstood the situation. They disliked me so intensely that they avoided me, and I had very few dealings with them. They were not to be converted. I remember one instance, when a representative of that Party called on me in Vienna to explain to me the conditions under which his group was prepared to conclude peace: the annexation of Belgium, of a part of east France (Longwy and Briey), of Courland and Lithuania, the cession of the English Fleet to Germany, and I forget how many milliards in war indemnity, *etc*. I received this gentleman in the presence of the Ambassador von Wiesner, and we both agreed that it was purely a case for a doctor.

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There was a wide breach between the Imperial Chancellor Michaelis's ideas and our own. It was impossible to bridge it over. Soon after he left office to make way for the statesmanlike Count Hertling.

About this time very far-reaching events were being enacted behind the scenes which had a very pronounced influence on the course of affairs.

Acts of great indiscretion and interference occurred on the part of persons who, without being in any important position, had access to diplomatic affairs. There is no object here in mentioning names, especially as the responsible political leaders themselves only heard the details of what had happened much later, and then in a very unsatisfactory way—at a time when the pacifist tendencies of the Entente were slackening.[10]

It was impossible then to see clearly in such a labyrinth of confused and contradictory facts. The truth is that in the spring or early summer of 1917 leading statesmen in the countries of the Allies and of the Entente gathered the impression that the existence of the Quadruple Alliance was at an end. At the very moment when it was of the utmost importance to maintain secrecy concerning the conditions of our Alliance the impression prevailed, and, naturally, the Entente welcomed the first signs of disruption in the Quadruple Alliance.

I do not know if the opportunity will ever occur of throwing a clear light on all the proceedings of those days. To explain the further development it will suffice to confirm what follows here. This is what happened. In the spring of 1917 connecting links were established with Paris and London. The first impressions received were that the Western Powers were ready to make use of us as a bridge to Germany and to a general peace. At a somewhat later stage the wind veered and the Entente endeavoured to make a separate peace with us.

Several important details only came to my knowledge later, some at the time of my resignation in the spring of 1918, and some not until the collapse in the winter of 1918-19. There was no lack of voices to blame me for a supposed double policy, which the public also suspected, and to accuse me of having made different statements to Berlin from those I made in Paris. These charges were brought by personal enemies who deliberately slandered me, which tales were repeated by others who knew nothing about the affair. The fact is that when I heard of the episode I immediately *possessed myself of documents proving that not only did I know nothing whatever about the matter*, but could not possibly have known.

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Astronomical causes sometimes give rise to disturbances in the universe, the reason of which cannot be understood by the observer. I felt in the same way, without being able to prove anything definite, from certain signs that I noticed, that in those worlds on the other side of the trenches events were happening that were inexplicable to me. I felt the effect, but could not discover the cause. In the spirit of the Entente, now more favourably disposed for peace, an undertone was distinctly audible. There was anxiety and a greater inclination for peace than formerly, but again probably only in view of the alleged laxity of our Alliance conditions and the hopes of the downfall of the Quadruple Alliance. A friend of mine, a subject of a neutral state, wrote to me from Paris in the summer and told me he had heard from a reliable source that apparently at the Quai d'Orsay they expected the Monarchy to separate from Germany, which, as a matter of course, would alter the entire military situation.

Soon afterwards very secret information was received from a neutral country that a Bulgarian group was negotiating with the Entente behind the back and without the knowledge of Radoslawoff. As soon as suspicion of a breach in the Alliance had been aroused in our Allies, the Bulgarian party hastened to forestall the event. We felt as safe about Radoslawoff as about Talaat Pasha; but in both countries other forces were at work.

The suspicions aroused in our friends concerning our plans were a further disadvantage, certainly only of a technical nature, but yet not to be underestimated. Our various agents worked splendidly, but it lay in the nature of the case that their dealings were more protracted than those carried out by the Foreign Minister himself. According to the course taken by the conversations, they were obliged to seek fresh instructions; they were more tied, and therefore forced to assume a more halting attitude than a responsible leader would have to do. In the summer of 1917, therefore, I suggested going to Switzerland myself, where negotiations were proceeding. But my journey could not have been kept secret, and if an effort had been made to do so it would have been all the more certain to arouse suspicion, owing to the mistrust already awakened. But not in Berlin. I believe I still held the confidence of the leading men in Berlin sufficiently to avert that. I should have explained the situation to the Imperial Chancellor, and that would have sufficed. In Turkey and Bulgaria the case was different.

One party in Bulgaria favoured the Entente. If Bulgaria was under the impression that our group was falling asunder she would have staked everything to try and save herself by a separate peace. In Constantinople, too, there was an Entente group. Talaat and Enver were as reliable as they were strong. But a journey undertaken by me to Switzerland in the conditions described might prove to be the alarm signal for a general *sauve qui peut*. But the very suggestion that the two Balkan countries would act as they supposed we should do would have sufficed to destroy any attempt at peace in Paris and London.

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The willingness to prepare for peace on the part of the enemy declined visibly during the summer. It was evident from many trifling signs, separately of small import, collectively of much. In the summer of 1917, too, the first horror of the U-boat warfare began to grow less. It was seen by the enemy that it could not accomplish what he had first feared, and that again put life into the desire for a final military victory.

These two facts together probably contributed to fan back the peace wind blowing from the West. Among other things, the Armand-Revertera negotiations were proceeding the whole time. It is not yet the moment to speak of the negotiations which in the spring of 1918, together with the letters of the Emperor to Prince Sixtus, created such a sensation. But this much must be stated: that Revertera in the negotiations proved himself to be an equally correct as efficient agent who acted exactly according to the instructions he received from the Ballplatz. Our various attempts to take up the threads of peace when emanating from the Ballplatz were always intended for our entire group of Powers.

Naturally, it was not in the interests of the Entente to *prevent* us from separating from Germany, and when the impression was produced in London and Paris unofficially that we were giving Germany up, we ourselves thus used *sabotage* in the striving for a general peace; for it would, of course, have been pleasing to the Entente to see Germany, her chief enemy, isolated.

There was a twofold and terrible mistake in thus trifling with the idea of a separate peace. First of all, it could not release us from the terms of the Pact of London, and yet it spoiled the atmosphere for negotiating a general peace. At the time when these events were being enacted, I presumed, but only knew for certain later, that Italy, in any case, would claim the promises made to her.

In the spring of 1917 Ribot and Lloyd George conferred with Orlando on the subject, when at St. Jean de Maurienne, and endeavoured to modify the terms in case of our separating from Germany. Orlando refused, and insisted on his view that, even in the event of a separate peace, we should still have to yield up Trieste and the Tyrol as far as the Brenner Pass to Italy, and thus have to pay an impossible price. And secondly, these separatist tactics would break up our forces, and had already begun to do so.

When a person starts running away in a fight he but too easily drags others with him. I do not doubt that the Bulgarian negotiations, opened with the purpose of taking soundings, were connected with the foregoing events.

The effect of this well-meant but secret and dilettante policy was that we suggested to the Entente a willingness to separate from our Allies, and lost our position in the struggle for a separate peace. For we saw that in separating from Germany we could not escape being crippled; that, therefore, a separate peace was impossible, and that we had dealt a death-blow at the still intact Quadruple Alliance.

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Later I had information from England relating to the official view of the situation there, which differed very much from the optimistic confidential reports, and proved that the desire for peace was not so strong. It will easily be understood that for us the English policy was always the most interesting. England's entry into the war had made the situation so dangerous that an understanding arrived at with her—that is, an understanding between England and Germany through our intervention—would have put an end to the war.

This information was to the effect that England was less than ever inclined to confer with Germany until the two cardinal points had been guaranteed—the cession of Alsace-Lorraine and the abolition of German militarism. The former was a French claim, and England must and would support France in this to her very utmost; the second claim was necessary in the interests of the future peace of the world. Germany's military strength was always estimated very highly in England, but the army's deeds in this war had surpassed all expectations. The military successes had encouraged the growth of the military spirit. The peace resolution passed in the Reichstag proved nothing, or at any rate, not enough, for the Reichstag is not the real exponent of the Empire in the outside world; it became paralysed through an unofficial collateral Government, the generals, who possessed the greater power. Certain statements made by General Ludendorff—so the Entente said—proved that Germany did not wish for an honourable peace of understanding. Besides this the Wilhelmstrasse did not associate itself with the majority in the Reichstag. The war was not being waged against the German nation, but against its militarism, and to conclude peace with the latter would be impossible. It appeared, further, that in no circumstances would England restore Germany's colonies. So far as the Monarchy was concerned, England appeared to be ready to conclude a separate peace with her, though subject to the promises made to her own Allies. According to the latter there was much territory to be given up to Italy, Serbia and Roumania. But in exchange we might reckon on a sort of annexation of newly made states like Poland.

This information left no doubt that England was not then thinking of making advances to Germany; the fear of Prussian militarism was at the bottom of her reasons for refusing. My impression was that, through a more favourable continuous development, a settlement and understanding might be feasible on the territorial but not on the military questions. On the contrary, the stronger Germany's military power proved itself to be, the more did the Entente fear that their enemy's power of defence would be invincible unless it was broken then.

Not only the period preceding war and the outbreak of war, but the actual course of the war has been full of many and disturbing misunderstandings. For long it was not understood here what England meant by the term militarism. It was pointed out that the English Navy was jealously defending the dominion of the seas, that France and Russia stood ready armed for the attack, and that Germany was only in a similar position to any

other state; that every state strengthened and equipped its defensive forces as thoroughly as possible.

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By the term “Prussian militarism” England did not only mean the strength of the German army. She understood it to be a combination of a warlike spirit bent on oppressing others, and supported by the best and strongest army in the world. The first would have been innocuous without the second; and the splendid German army was in England’s eyes the instrument of a domineering and conquest-loving autocrat. According to England’s view, Germany was exactly the counterpart of France under Bonaparte—if for Napoleon be substituted a many-headed being called “Emperor, Crown Prince, Hindenburg, Ludendorff”—and just as little as England would treat with Napoleon would she have any dealings with the individual who to her was the personification of the lust for conquest and the policy of violence.

The notion of the existence of German militarism seems to be quite justified, although the Emperor and the Crown Prince played the smallest part in it. But it seems to me an altogether wrong conception that militarism is a speciality of Germany. The negotiations at Versailles must now have convinced the general public that it is not only on the banks of the Spree that militarism reigns.

Germany in former days was never able to understand that on the enemy continent, by the side of morally unjustified envy, fear and anxiety as to Germany’s plans practically reigned, and that the talk about the “hard” and “German” peace, about “victory and triumph” was like throwing oil on the flames of their fears; that in England and France, too, at one time, there was a current of feeling urging for a peace of settlement, and that such expressions as the foregoing were highly detrimental to all pacifist tendencies.

In my opinion the air raids on England may be ranked in the same category as these expressions. They were carried out with the greatest heroism by the German fliers, but no other object was gained but to irritate and anger England and rouse to the utmost resistance all who otherwise had pacifist tendencies. I said this to Ludendorff when he called on me at the Ballplatz in the summer of 1917, but it made not the slightest impression on him.

The *demarche* for peace made by the Pope and our reply have been published in the European Press. We accepted the noble proposals made by the Holy Father. I have therefore nothing to add on that matter.

In the early part of the summer of 1917 the Socialist Conference at Stockholm had become a practical question. I issued passports to the representatives of our Social Democrats, and had several difficulties to overcome in connection therewith. My own standpoint is made clear by the following letter to Tisza.

(*Not dated.*)

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DEAR FRIEND,—I hear that you do not approve of the delegation of Socialists for Stockholm. To begin with, it is not a delegation. The men came to me of their own accord and applied for permission to travel, which I granted. Adler, Ellenbogen and Seitz were there, Renner as well. The two first are capable men, and I value them in spite of the differences that exist between us. The two last are not well known to me. But all are genuinely desirous of peace, and Adler in particular does not wish the downfall of the Empire.If they secure peace it will be a socialistic one, and the Emperor will have to pay out of his own pocket; I am sure too, dear friend, that if it is not possible to end the war, the Emperor will have to pay still more; you may be sure of that.Or, as may be expected, if they do not secure peace, then my prediction was all the more correct, for then I shall have proved to them that it is not the inefficiency of the Diplomatic Service but the conditions surrounding it that must be blamed for the war not coming to an end.

> If I had refused to grant permission for them to travel, they would have continued to the last declaring that, if they had been allowed to proceed, they would have secured peace.

Everyone is indignant with me here, particularly in the Herrenhaus. They even go so far that they imagine I had tried to “buy” the Socialists by promising to lower the Customs dues if they returned with peace. I do not want the dues, as you know, but that has no connection with Stockholm, “Sozie” and peace.I was at an Austrian Cabinet Council lately and gave the death-blow to the Customs dues—but I felt rather like Daniel in the lions’ den when I did it; N. and E. in particular were very indignant. The only one who entirely shares my standpoint beside Trnka is the Prime Minister Clam.

> Consequently, this contention that they have been deprived of the octroi owing to my love for the “Sozies” angers them still more, but the contention is false.

You, my dear friend, are doubly wrong. In the first place, we shall be forced to have Socialist policy after the war whether it is welcome or not, and I consider it extremely important to prepare the Social Democrats for it. Socialist policy is the valve we are bound to open in order to let off the superfluous steam, otherwise the boiler will burst. In the second place, none of us Ministers can take upon ourselves the false pretence of using *sabotage* with regard to peace. The nations may perhaps tolerate the tortures of war for a while, but only if they understand and have the conviction that it cannot be otherwise—that a *vis major* predominates; in other words, that peace can fail owing to circumstances, but not owing to the ill will or stupidity of the Ministers.The German-Bohemian Deputy, K.H.

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Wolf, made a scene when the speech from the throne was read in the “Burg”; he declared that we were mad and would have to account for it to the delegation, and made many other equally pleasant remarks, but he had also come to a wrong conclusion about the Customs dues and Stockholm.You are quite right in saying that it is no concern of Germany’s what we do in the interior. But they have not attempted the slightest interference with the dues. If they are afraid of an anti-German rate of exchange and, therefore, are in favour of the dues, we are to a certain extent to blame. The Berlin people are always afraid of treachery. When a vessel answers the starboard helm it means she turns to the right, and in order to check this movement the steersman must put the helm to larboard as the only way to keep a straight course—he must hold out. Such is the case of statecraft in Vienna—it is always carried out of the course of the Alliance.It is possible to turn and steer the Entente course if thought feasible; but then courage would be needed to make the turn fully. Nothing is more stupid than trifling with treachery and not carrying it out; we lose all ground in Berlin and gain nothing either in London or Paris. But why should I write all this—*you* share my opinions; I do not need to convert you. We will talk about Stockholm again.—In true friendship, your old

CZERNIN.

As a matter of fact, Tisza in this instance allowed himself to be quite converted, and raised no objections as to the Hungarian Social Democrats. The negative result of the Stockholm Congress is known.

As already mentioned, it is at present still impossible to discuss in detail the various negotiations and attempts at peace. Besides the negotiations between Revertera and Armand, other tentative efforts were made. For instance, the interviews already alluded to between the Ambassador Mennsdorff and General Smuts, which were referred to in the English Parliament. I do not consider it right to say more about the matter here. But I can and will repeat the point of view which was at the bottom of all our peace efforts since the summer of 1917, and which finally wrecked them all.

The last report cited reflected the views of the Entente quite correctly. With Germany there was at present no possibility of intercourse. France insisted on the restoration of Alsace-Lorraine, and the entire Entente demanded the abolition of German militarism. Neither would Germany be allowed to retain her colonies. But Germany was not yet “ripe” for this demand to be made. In the opinion of the Entente, therefore, any debate on the subject would be useless. For us the case was different. The impression prevailed that we could conclude a separate peace providing we were ready to make sacrifices. The London terms had created a situation which must be accepted. Concessions to Roumania, the cession

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of Trieste and the Trentino, as well as the German South Tyrol, to Italy, and concessions to the Southern Slav state would be unavoidable, besides reforms in the Monarchy on a federal basis. Our answer was that a one-sided concession of Austro-Hungarian and German territory in that form was, naturally, not possible. But still we thought that, under certain premises in the territorial questions, an agreement might perhaps not meet with insurmountable difficulties. As a matter of course, however, the Entente were not in a position to make terms such as could only be laid down by the victor to the vanquished, as we were anything but beaten, but, in spite of that, we did not cling so firmly to the frontier posts in the Monarchy.

It might be thought, therefore, that, the Entente being willing, a settlement of the various interests would be possible; but proposals such as the giving up of Trieste, Bozen, and Meran were impossible, as was also the suggestion to make peace behind Germany's back. I referred to the military situation and the impossibility of anyone accepting these views of the Entente. I was full of confidence in the future, and even if that were not the case I could not conclude a peace in the present situation which the Entente could not dictate in other terms, even if we were beaten. To lose Trieste and access to the Adriatic was a totally unacceptable condition, just as much as the unconditional surrender of Alsace-Lorraine.

Neutral statesmen agreed with my views that the Entente demands were not couched in the terms of a peace of understanding, but of victory. Opinion in neutral countries was quite clear on the subject. But in England especially there were various currents of thought; not everyone shared Lloyd George's views. The main point was, however, to lead up to a debate which would tend to clear up many matters, and I seized the idea eagerly. The greatest difficulty, I was assured by some, lay in the Entente's assertion that Germany had shown remarkable military strength, but yet had not been adequately prepared for war; she had not had sufficient stores either of raw materials or provisions, and had not built sufficient U-boats. The Entente's idea was that if peace were made now, Germany might perhaps accept even unfavourable conditions, but it would only be to gain time and make use of the peace to draw breath before beginning a fresh war. She would make up for loss of time and "hit out again." The Entente, therefore, considered the preliminary condition of any peace, or even of a discussion of terms, to be the certainty of the abolition of German militarism. I replied that nobody wished for more war, and that I agreed with the Entente that a guarantee in that connection must be secured, but that a one-sided disarmament and disbanding of men by Austria-Hungary and Germany was an impossibility. It might be imagined what it would be like if one fine day an army, far advanced in the enemy country, full of confidence

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and hope and certain of victory, had to lay down arms and disappear. No one could accept such a proposal. Meanwhile, a general disarmament of all the Powers was both possible and necessary. Disarmament, the establishment of courts of arbitration under international control: that, according to my idea, would present an acceptable basis. I mentioned my fears that the Entente rulers in this, as in the territorial question, would not mete out the same measure to themselves as they intended for us, and unless I had some guarantee in the matter I should not be in a position to carry the plan through here and with our Allies; anyhow, it would be worth a trial.

Long and frequent were the debates on the Central European question, which was the Entente's terror, as it implied an unlimited increase in Germany's power. In Paris and London it would presumably be preferred that the Monarchy should be made independent of Germany, and any further advances to Berlin on the part of Vienna checked. We rejoined that to us this was not a new Entente standpoint, but that the mutilation caused by the resolutions of the Pact of London forced us to investigate the matter. Apart from the question of honour and duty to the Alliance, as matters now stood, Germany was fighting almost more for us than for herself. If Germany to-day, and we knew it, concluded peace, she would lose Alsace-Lorraine and her military superiority on land; but we, with our territory, would have to pay the Italians, Serbians, and Roumanians for their part in the war.

I heard it said on many sides that there were men in the Entente who readily understood this point of view, but that the Entente nations would do what they had intended. Italy had based her entry into the war on promises from London. Roumania also had been given very solid assurances, and heroic Serbia must be compensated by Bosnia and Herzegovina. Many, both in Paris and London, regretted the situation that had arisen through the conference in London, but a treaty is a treaty, and neither London nor Paris could forsake their Allies. Meanwhile, it was thought likely in Entente circles that both the new Serbian and Polish states, probably Roumania as well, would have certain relations with the Monarchy. Further details respecting such relations were still unknown. Our reply was: we would not give up Galicia to Poland, Transylvania and the Bukovina to Roumania, and Bosnia together with Herzegovina to Serbia, in return for a vague promise of the closer relations of those states with the pitiful remains left to us of the Monarchy. We were not impelled thereto by dynastic interests. I myself had persuaded the Emperor to sacrifice Galicia to Poland; but in Transylvania there lived so many Germans and Magyars who simply could not be made a present of, and above all the concessions, to Italy! I once asked a neutral statesman if he could understand what was meant by making Austria voluntarily give up the arch-German

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Tyrol as far as the Brenner Pass. The storm that would be let loose by such a peace would uproot more than merely the Minister who had made the peace. I told my visitor that there were certain sacrifices which on no conditions could be expected of any living being. I would not give up German Tyrol, not even though we were still more unfavourably situated. I reminded him of a picture that represented wolves chasing a sledge. One by one the driver threw out fur, coat, and whatever else he had to the pack to check them and save himself—but he could not throw his own child to them: rather would he suffer to the last gasp. That was how I felt about Trieste and the German Tyrol. We were not in the position of the man in the sledge, for, thank God, we had our arms and could beat off the wolves; but even in the extremest emergency, never would I accept a peace that deprived us of Bozen and Meran.

My listener did not disagree with my argument, but could see no end to the war in that way. England was ready to carry on the war for another ten years and, in any case, would crush Germany. Not the German people, for whom no hatred was felt—always the same repetition of that deceptive argument—but German militarism. England was in a condition of constraint. Repeatedly it had been said that if Germany were not defeated in this war she would continue with still more extensive armaments. That was the firm belief in London; she would then, in a few years, have not 100, but 1,000, U-boats, and then England would be lost. Then England was also fighting for her own existence, and her will was iron. She knew the task would be a hard one, but it would not crush her. In London they cite again the example of the wars of Napoleon, and conclude with: "What man has done man can do again."

This fear of Prussian militarism was noticeable on all occasions, and the suggestion constantly was put forward that if we were to declare ourselves satisfied with a general disarmament, that in itself would be a great advantage and an important step towards peace.

My speech on October 2, 1917, at Budapest, on the necessity of securing a reorganised world was prompted by the argument that militarism was the greatest obstacle in the way of any advance in that direction.

At Budapest on that occasion I was addressing an audience of party leaders. I had to take into consideration that too pacifist a tone would have an effect at home and abroad contrary to my purpose. At home the lesser powers of resistance would be still further paralysed, and abroad it would be taken as the end of our capacity for fighting, and would further check all friendly intentions.

The passage in my speech relating to the securing of a new world organisation is as follows:—

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The great French statesman, Talleyrand, is supposed to have said: words are merely to conceal thoughts. It may be that it was true respecting the diplomacy of his century, but I cannot imagine a maxim less suited to the present day. The millions who are fighting, whether in the trenches or behind the lines, wish to know why and wherefore they are fighting. They have a right to know why peace, which all the world is longing for, has not yet been made.When I entered upon office I seized the first opportunity openly to state that we should commit no violence, but that we should tolerate none, and that we were ready to enter into peace negotiations as soon as our enemies accepted the point of view of a peace of understanding. I think I have thus clearly explained, though on broad lines only, the peace idea of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. Many at home and also in friendly countries abroad have reproached me for speaking so openly. The arguments of the said critical gentlemen have only confirmed my belief in the justness of my views. I take nothing back of what I said, convinced as I am that the great majority of people here and in Austria approve my attitude. Following on these introductory remarks, I feel called upon to-day to tell the public how the Imperial and Royal Government will deal with the further development of the utterly distorted European conditions.Our programme for the reconstruction of the world organisation, preferably to be called the building of a new world organisation, is given in our answer to the peace Note of the Holy Father. It, therefore, only remains for me to-day to complete the programme and, above all, to state what were the considerations that decided us to accept the principles that overthrow the former system. It will come as a surprise to many, and perhaps appear incomprehensible, that the Central Powers, and especially Austria-Hungary, should be willing to desist from future military armament, as it is only their military power that has protected them through these trying years against vastly superior forces.Not only has the war created new factors and conditions, but it has also led to new conceptions which have shattered the foundations of former European policy. Among many other political theses, the one which held that Austria-Hungary was an expiring state has vanished. The dogma of the impending collapse of the Monarchy was what made our position in Europe more difficult and caused all the misunderstanding concerning our vital needs. But having shown ourselves in this war to be thoroughly sound and, at any rate, of equal standing, it follows that we can reckon now on a proper understanding of our vital needs in Europe and that no hopes are left of being able to beat us down by force of arms. Until the moment had arrived when this could be proved, we could not do without the protection of armaments nor expose ourselves to unfavourable treatment in

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the matters vital to us produced by the legend of our impending collapse. But from that moment, we have been in the position simultaneously with our enemies to lay down arms and settle our difficulties peacefully and by arbitration. This being recognised by the world affords us the possibility of not only accepting the plan of disarmament and a court of arbitration, but, as you, gentlemen, are aware, of working with all our energy for its realisation, as we have for some time past.

> After this war Europe must without doubt be placed on a new political basis, the permanency of which can be guaranteed. This basis will, I believe, be of a fourfold nature:

In the first place, it must furnish a guarantee that there shall be no war of revenge on any side; we must make sure that we can bequeath to our children's children the knowledge that they will be spared the horrors of a time similar to that which we have undergone. No shifting of power in the belligerent states can achieve that. The only manner by which it can be attained is international disarmament throughout the world and acceptance of the principle of arbitration. It is needless to say that these measures for disarmament must not be confined to one separate state or to a single group of Powers, and that they apply equally to land, water and air. War as a factor in policy must be combated. A general, uniform and progressive disarmament of all states in the world must be established on an international basis and under international control, and the defensive forces limited to the utmost. I am well aware that this object will be difficult to achieve and that the path that leads thereto is long and thorny and full of difficulties. And yet I am firmly convinced it is a path that must be trodden and will be trodden, no matter whether it is approved of individuals or not. It is a great mistake to imagine that after such a war the world can begin from where it left off in 1914. A catastrophe such as this war does not pass by and leave no trace, and the most terrible misfortune that could happen to us would be if the race for armaments were to continue after the conclusion of peace, for it would mean the economic ruin of all states. Before the war began the military burdens to be borne were heavy—though we specially note that Austria-Hungary was far from being on a high level of military preparedness when we were surprised by the outbreak of war, and it was only during the war that she resumed her armaments—but after this war an open competition in armaments would render state burdens all round simply intolerable. In order to keep a high standard of armaments in open competition all the states would have to secure a tenfold supply of everything—ten times the artillery, munition factories, vessels and U-boats of former days, and also many more soldiers to work the machinery. The annual military budget of all the Great Powers would comprise many milliards—it

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would be impossible with all the other burdens which the belligerent states will have to bear after peace is concluded. This expense, I repeat, would mean the ruin of the nations. To return, however, to the relatively limited armaments in existence previous to 1914 would be quite impossible for any individual state, which would be so far behind that its military strength would not count. The expense incurred would be futile. But were it possible to return to the relatively low level of armaments in 1914, that in itself would signify an international lowering of armaments. But then there would be no sense in not going further and practically disarming altogether.There is but one egress from this narrow defile: the absolute international disarmament of the world. There is no longer any object in such colossal fleets if the states of the world guarantee the freedom of the seas, and armies must be reduced to the lowest limit requisite for the maintenance of order in the interior. This will only be possible on an international basis; that is, under international control. Every state will have to cede some of its independence to ensure a world peace. The present generation will probably not live to see this great pacifist movement fully completed. It cannot be carried out rapidly, but I consider it our duty to put ourselves at the head of the movement and do all that lies in human power to hasten its achievement. The conclusion of peace will establish the fundamental principles.If the first principle be laid down as the compulsory international arbitration system as well as general disarmament on land, the second one must be that of the freedom of the high seas and disarmament at sea. I purposely say the high seas, as I do not extend the idea to straits or channels, and I readily allow that special rules and regulations must be laid down for the connecting sea routes. If these first two factors have been settled and assured, any reason for territorial adjustments on the plea of ensuring national safety is done away with, and this forms the third fundamental principle of the new international basis. This idea is the gist of the beautiful and sublime Note that His Holiness the Pope addressed to the whole world. We have not gone to war to make conquests, and we have no aggressive plans. If the international disarmament that we so heartily are longing for be adopted by our present enemies and becomes a fact, then we are in no need of assurances of territorial safety; in that case, we can give up the idea of expanding the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, provided, of course, that the enemy has entirely evacuated our own territory.The fourth principle to enforce in order to ensure a free and peaceful development of the world after the hard times we have experienced is the free economic participation by everyone and the unconditional avoidance of an economic war; a war

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of that nature must be excluded from all future contingencies. Before we conclude peace we must have the positive assurance that our present enemies have given up that idea.Those, my honourable friends, are the principles of the new world organisation as it presents itself to me, and they are all based on general disarmament. Germany, in her answer to the Papal Note, has also positively recognised the idea of a general disarmament. Our present enemies have likewise, partly at any rate, adopted these principles. I differ from Lloyd George in most points, but agree thoroughly on one—that there nevermore should be a war of revenge.

The impression made by my speech on the Entente surpassed the most pessimistic expectations. In order not to approach too closely the subject of their own disarmament, my propositions were said to be hypocritical and a peace trap. This needs no comment.

Had the Entente replied that I must obtain the support of and secure a guarantee from Germany that she would disarm, it would have been an opportunity for me, with the help of the nations, to exercise the greatest possible pressure on Germany's leaders. But the sword was knocked out of my hand by the Entente themselves, for the retort came from Berlin: Here is the proof that the Entente rejects our offer of disarmament as they reject everything coming from us. There is only one way out of it—a fight to the end and then victory.

Again did the Entente force the peoples of the Central Powers to side unconditionally with the generals.

Never in the whole term of my office did I receive so many letters as after my speech—-both for and against, with both sides equally impetuous. "Death sentences" from Germany were showered on me; scorn and contempt alternated with genuine sympathy and agreement.

In the autumn of 1917 the peace movement diminished visibly. The U-boat fiasco was very obvious. England saw that she was able to overcome the danger. The German military leaders still spoke of the positively expected successes of their submarines, but the tenor of their predictions became very different. There was no longer any talk of the downfall of England within a few months. A new winter campaign was almost a certainty, and yet the Germans insisted that though mistakes occurred in the term fixed, this was not so respecting the ultimate effect of the U-boats and that England would collapse. The U-boat warfare had achieved this amount of success, that the Western front remained intact, though it would otherwise have fallen.

The military situation underwent a change in the autumn. The end of the war in the East was within sight, and the possibility of being able to fling the enormous masses of

troops from the East into the line in the West, and at last break through there, greatly improved the situation.

It was not on the sea that the U-boat campaign had brought about a decision, but it enabled a final decision on land to be made; such was the new military opinion. Paris and Calais could not be taken.

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In these different phases of military hopes and expectation we floated like a boat on a stormy sea. In order to land in the haven of peace, we needed a military wave to carry us nearer to the land; then only could we unfurl the sail of understanding that would help us to reach the saving shores. As long as the enemy persisted only in dealing with the crushed and depopulated Central Powers all was in vain.

I never believed in the success of the U-boat warfare. I believed in a break-through on the Western front, and during the winter of 1917-1918 lived in the hope that by such means we might break the obstinate love of destruction in our enemies.

As long as our adversaries' peace terms remained the same peace was impossible, as was also the bringing of any outside pressure to bear on Germany, for it was true that "the German army was fighting more to support Austria-Hungary than it was for its own existence."

Threatening and breathing disaster, the decisions of the Pact of London confronted us. They forced us always to take up arms again, and drove us back into the field.

* * * * *

At the time of writing these lines, in June, 1919, Austria has long ceased to exist. There is only left now a small, impoverished, wretched land called German-Austria, a country without army or money; helpless, starving, and wellnigh in despair. This country has been told of the peace terms at St. Germain. It has been told it must give up the Tyrol as to be handed over to Italy. And defenceless and helpless as it is, it sends up a cry of despair and frantic grief. One voice only is heard—such peace is impossible!

How could an Austrian Government accept the dictates of London at a time when our armies stood far advanced in enemy country, unvanquished and unbroken, when we had for Ally the strongest land Power in the world, and when the greatest generals of the war so firmly believed in the break-through and in final victory?

To demand that in 1917 or 1918 I should have accepted peace terms which in 1919 were rejected by the whole of the German-Austrian people is sheer madness. But it may be there is method in such madness. The method of using every means to discredit the "old regime."

* * * * *

In the beginning of August, 1917, an effort was made at a *rapprochement* between England and Germany which, unfortunately, almost immediately broke down.

At the suggestion of England a neutral Power had sounded Germany with regard to Belgium. Germany replied that she was ready for direct verbal negotiations with England on the Belgian question. In transmitting this favourable answer, Germany did

not entrust it to the same neutral Power that had brought the message, but for some unknown reason confided it to a trusted messenger from another neutral country. This latter appears to have been guilty of some indiscreet dealings, and when rumours of the affair reached Paris it caused some anxiety. It was probably thought there that England was more interested in the Belgian than in the Alsace-Lorraine question.

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The messenger sent from Berlin thought that his task had failed, and sent word to Berlin that, owing to his errand having been made known, the opinion among the Entente was that every step taken by Germany was condemned beforehand to failure.

The Government which had employed the messenger took up the case on its own initiative, and transmitted the German reply to London. No answer was ever received from England.

This is the account as given to me *post festum* by Berlin, and doubtless reflects Berlin's views. Whether the incident in detail was exactly as described, or whether many more hitherto unknown events took place, has not been proved.

During the war all happenings on the other side of the trenches were looked upon with dim and gloomy eyes as through a veil, and, according to news received by me later, it was not clear whether England had sent an answer. Whether it was dispatched and held up on the way, or what became of it I never knew. It is said never to have reached Berlin.

A warlike speech by Asquith on September 27 appears to be connected with this unsuccessful attempt, and served to calm the Allies.

It appears extremely doubtful to me, however, whether this advance would have led to anything, had the occasion been more favourable. The previously mentioned letter of the Imperial Chancellor Michaelis dates from those August days, a letter referring to Belgian projects which were very far removed from the English ideas on the subject. And even if it had been possible to settle the Belgian question, there would have been that of Alsace-Lorraine, which linked France and England together, and, first and foremost, the question of disarmament. The chasm that divided the two camps would have grown so wide that no bridge could possibly have spanned it.

Not until January, 1918, did I learn the English version. According to that, the Germans are said to have taken the first steps, and the English were not disinclined to listen, but heard nothing further. It was stated in *Vorwaerts* that the suggestion was made at the instigation of the Cabinet Council, but that subsequently military influence gained the upper hand. The episode did not tend to improve the frame of mind of the leading men in England.

In the early summer of 1917 conditions seemed favourable for peace and the hope of arriving at an understanding, though still far distant, was not exactly a Utopian dream. How far the hope of splitting our group and the failure of the U-boat warfare may have contributed to stiffen the desire for war in the Entente countries cannot definitely be stated. Both factors had a share in it. Before we came to a deadlock in the negotiations, the position was such that even in case of a separate peace we should have been compelled to accept the terms of the conference of London. Whether the

Entente would have abandoned that basis if we had not veered from the straight course, and

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by unofficial cross-purposes become caught in the toils of separatist desires, but had quickly and consistently carried out our task, is not proved, and never will be. After the debacle in the winter of 1918-19 it was intimated to me as a fact that when Clemenceau came into power a peace of understanding with Germany became out of the question. His standpoint was that Germany must be definitely vanquished and crushed. Our negotiations, however, had begun under Briand, and Clemenceau only came into power when the peace negotiations had become entangled and were beginning to falter.

With regard to Austria-Hungary, both France and England would have welcomed a separate peace on our part, even during Clemenceau's period of office; but in that case we should have had to accept the terms of the London conference.

Such was the peace question then. How it would have developed if no misleading policy had come into being naturally cannot be stated.

I am not putting forward suppositions but confirming facts. And the fact remains that the failure of the U-boat campaign on the one hand, and a policy carried on behind the backs of the responsible men on the other hand, were the reasons why the favourable moment passed and the peace efforts were checked. And I herewith repeat that this fact does not in itself prove that peace negotiations would not also have failed later if the two reasons mentioned above had not existed.

It became quite clear in the autumn that the war would have to continue. In my speeches to delegations I endeavoured to leave no doubt that we were faithful to our Allies. When I said "I see no difference between Strassburg and Trieste," I said it chiefly for Sofia and Constantinople, for the overthrow of the Quadruple Alliance was the greatest danger. I still hoped to be able to prop the trembling foundations of the Alliance policy, and either to secure a general peace in the East, where the military opposition was giving way, or to see it draw nearer through the anticipated German break-through on the Western front.

Several months after my dismissal in the summer of 1918 I spoke in the Herrenhaus on foreign policy, and warned everyone present against trying to undermine the Quadruple Alliance. When I declared that "honour, duty to the Alliance, and the call for self-preservation compel us to fight by the side of Germany," I was misunderstood. It did not seem as though the public realised that the moment the Entente thought the Quadruple Alliance was about to break up, from that moment our cause was lost. Had the public no knowledge of the London agreement? Did they not know that a separate peace would hand us over totally defenceless to those cruel conditions? Did they not realise that the German army was the shield that afforded us the last and only possibility of escaping the fate of being broken up?

My successor steered the same course as I had done, doubtless from the same reasons of honour and the call for self-preservation. I have no particulars as to what occurred in the summer of 1918.

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Afterwards events followed in rapid succession. First came our terrible defeat in Italy, then the Entente break-through on the Western front, and finally the Bulgarian secession, which had gradually been approaching since the summer of 1917.

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As is the case in all countries, among the Entente during the war there were many and varied currents of thought. When Clemenceau came into office the definite destruction of Germany was the dominant war aim.

To those who neither see nor hear the secret information which a Foreign Minister naturally has at his disposal, it may appear as though the Entente, in the question of crushing Germany's military strength, had sometimes been ready to make concessions. I think that this may have been the case in the spring of 1917, but not later, when any such hope was deceptive. Lansdowne in particular spoke and wrote in a somewhat friendly tone, but Lloyd George was the determining influence in England.

When sounding England on different occasions, I endeavoured to discover by what means the dissolution of the military power in Germany was to be or could be guaranteed—and I invariably came to an *impasse*. It was never explained how England intended to carry out the proposal.

The truth is that there is no way of disarming a strong and determined people except by defeating them, but such an aim was not to be openly admitted to us in the preliminary dealings. The delegates could not suggest any suitable mode of discussion, and no other proposals could lead to a decision.

Lansdowne, and perhaps Asquith as well, would have been content with a parliamentary regime which would have deprived the Emperor of power and given it to the Reichstag. Not so Lloyd George; at least, not later. The English Prime Minister's well-known speech, "A disarmament treaty with Germany would be a treaty between a fox and many geese," conveyed what he really thought.

After my Budapest speech, which was treated with such scorn and contempt in the Press and by public opinion on the other side of the Channel, word was sent to me from an English source that it was said the "Czernin scheme" might settle the question. But again it was not Lloyd George who said that.

Owing to the extreme distrust that Clemenceau, the English Prime Minister, and with them the great majority in France and England, had of Germany's intentions, no measure could be devised that would have given London and Paris a sufficient guarantee for a future peaceful policy. From the summer of 1917, no matter what Germany had proposed, Lloyd George would always have rejected it as inadequate.

In consequence of this it was quite immaterial later to the course of the war that Germany not only did nothing whatever to allay English fears, but, on the contrary, poured oil in the fire and fanned the flames.

Germany, the leading military Power in the war, never for one moment thought of agreeing to disarmament under international control. After my speech in Budapest I was received in Berlin not in an unfriendly manner, but with a sort of pity, as some poor insane person might be treated. The subject was avoided as much as possible. Erzberger alone told me of his complete agreement with me.

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Had Germany been victorious her militarism would have increased enormously. In the summer of 1917 I spoke to several generals of high standing on the Western front, who unanimously declared that after the war armaments must be maintained, but on a very much greater scale. They compared this war with the first Punic War. It would be continued and its continuation be prepared for; in short, the tactics of Versailles. The standard of violence must be planted, and would be the banner of the generals, the Pan-Germans, the Fatherland Party, *etc*. *etc*. They thought as little about a reconciliation of the nations after the war as did the Supreme Council of Four at Versailles, and Emperor, Government and Reichstag floundered helplessly in this torrent of violent purpose.

The military spirit flourished on the Spree as it is doing now on the Seine and the Thames. Lloyd George and Unter den Linden in Berlin. The only difference between Foch and Ludendorff is that the one is a Frenchman and the other a German; as men they are as like as two peas.

The Entente is victorious, and many millions are delighted and declare that the policy of Might is justified. The future only can show whether this is not a terrible mistake. The lives of hundreds of thousands of young, hopeful men who have fallen might have been saved if in 1917 peace had been made possible for us. The triumph of victory cannot call them back to life again. It appears to me that the Entente has conquered too much, too thoroughly. The madness of expiring militarism, in spite of all its orgies, has perhaps celebrated its last triumph at Versailles.

Postscript.

Taking it altogether, the real historical truth concerning the peace movement is that, in general, neither the Entente nor the ruling, all-powerful military party in Germany wished for a peace of understanding. They both wished to be victorious and to enforce a peace of violence on the defeated adversary. The leading men in Germany—Ludendorff above all—never had a genuine intention of releasing Belgium in an economic and political sense; neither would they agree to any sacrifices. They wished to conquer in the East and the West, and their arbitrary tendencies counteracted the pacifist leaning of the Entente as soon as there were the slightest indications of it. On the other hand, the leading men in the Entente—Clemenceau from the first and Lloyd George later—were firmly resolved to crush Germany, and therefore profited by the continuous German threats to suppress all pacifist movements in their own countries, always ready to prove that a peace of understanding with Berlin would be a “pact between the fox and the geese.”

Thanks to the attitude of the leading Ministers in Germany, the Entente was fully persuaded that an understanding with Germany was quite out of the question, and insisted obstinately on peace terms which could not be accepted by a Germany still unbeaten. This closes the *circular vitiosus* which paralysed all negotiating activities.

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We were wedged in between these two movements and unable to strike out for ourselves, because the Entente, bound by their promises to their Allies, had already disposed of us by the Pact of London and the undertakings to Roumania and Serbia. We therefore *could* not exercise extreme pressure on Germany, as we were unable to effect the annulment of those treaties.

In the early summer of 1917 the possibility of an understanding *seemed* to show itself on the horizon, but it was wrecked by the previously mentioned events.

FOOTNOTES:

[8] Helfferich's *expose* is reproduced in the Appendix. (See p. 288.)

[9] At this time I did not know that my secret report to the Emperor was handed over to Herr Erzberger and not kept secret by him. (Later it was made public through the revelations of Count Wedel.)

[10] The disclosures made by Count Wedel and Helfferich concerning Erzberger are only a link in the chain.

CHAPTER VII

WILSON

Through the dwindling away of the inclination for peace in the enemy camp we were faced in the autumn of 1917 by the prospect either of concluding separate peace and accepting the many complicated consequences of a war with Germany and the ensuing mutilation of the Monarchy under the terms of the Pact of London, or else fighting on and, aided by our Allies, breaking the will for destruction of our enemies.

If Russia was the one to let loose war, it was Italy who perpetually stood in the way of a peace of understanding, insisting upon obtaining under all circumstances the whole of the Austrian territory promised to her in 1915. The Entente during the war assigned the several parts to be enacted. France was to shed the most blood; England, besides her fabulous military action, to finance the war, together with America, and diplomatic affairs to be in Italy's hands. Far too little is known as yet, and will only later be public knowledge, as to the extent to which Italian diplomacy dominated affairs during the war. Our victories in Italy would only have changed the situation if the defeats that were suffered had led to an Italian revolution and a complete overthrow of the regime existing there. In other words, the Royal Government would not be influenced in its attitude by our victories. Even had our armies advanced much farther than they did, it would have held to its standpoint in the expectation that, perhaps not Italy herself, but her Allies, would secure final victory.

Such was the situation in the autumn of 1917 when Wilson came forward with his Fourteen Points.

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The advantage of the Wilson programme in the eyes of the whole world was its violent contrast to the terms of the Pact of London. The right of self-determination for the nations had been utterly ignored in London by the allotment of German Tyrol to Italy. Wilson forbade this and declared that nations could not be treated against their will and moved hither and thither like the pieces in a game of chess. Wilson said that every solution of a territorial question arising out of this war must be arrived at in the interests and in favour of the peoples concerned, and not as a mere balancing or compromise of claims from rival sources; and further, that all clearly stated national claims would receive the utmost satisfaction that could be afforded them, without admitting new factors or the perpetuation of old disputes or oppositions, which in all probability would soon again disturb the peace of Europe and the whole world. A general peace, established on such a basis could be discussed—and more in the same strain.

The publication of this clear and absolutely acceptable programme seemed from day to day to render possible a peaceful solution of the world conflict. In the eyes of millions of people this programme opened up a world of hope. A new star had risen on the other side of the ocean, and all eyes were turned in that direction. A mighty man had come forward and with one powerful act had upset the London resolutions and, in so doing, had reopened the gates for a peace of understanding.

From the first moment the main question was, so it seemed, what hopes were there of Wilson's programme being carried out in London, Paris and, above all, in Rome?

Secret information sent to me from the Entente countries seemed to suggest that the Fourteen Points were decidedly not drawn up in agreement with England, France and Italy. On the other hand I was, and still am, fully persuaded that Wilson had spoken honestly and sincerely and, as a matter of fact, believed that his programme could be carried out.

Wilson's great miscalculation was his mistaken estimate of the actual distribution of power in the Entente on the one hand, and his surprising ignorance of national relationships in Europe, and especially in Austria-Hungary, on the other hand, which would greatly weaken his position and his influence on his Allies. There would be no difficulty in the Entente's cleverly introducing Wilson into the international labyrinth and there bewildering him with wrong directions, so that he could not find his way out again. To begin with, therefore, Wilson's theory brought us not a step further.

The '67 settlement was proposed by a leading German-Magyar magnate in Austria-Hungary. Fifty years ago nationalism was much less developed than it is now. Nations were still sleeping—the Czechs, Slovaks and Southern Slavs, the Roumanians and Ruthenians had barely awakened to national life. Fifty years ago it was possible to distinguish between what was deceptive and what gave promise of lasting. The union between Italians and Germans only took effect with the coming of—or was perhaps the

first sign of—the world-movement. At all events it was in the second half of the last century that we came within the radius of international politics.

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The world's racial problems found a centre in Austria-Hungary, whose affairs, therefore, became very prominent. A chemist can enclose in his retorts different substances and observe how, following the eternal laws of nature, the processes of nature take place. In a similar way during past decades the effect of unsolved racial antagonisms might have been studied within the Habsburg Monarchy and the inevitable explosion anticipated, instead of its being allowed to culminate in the world war.

In putting forward his Fourteen Points Mr. Wilson obviously felt the necessity of settling the world problem of nationality and recognised that the Habsburg Monarchy, once arranged and settled, could serve as a model to the world, as hitherto it had afforded a terrifying example. But to begin with, he overlooked the fact that in the settling of national questions there must be neither adversary nor ally, as those reflect passing differences, whereas the problem of nationality is a permanent one. He also ignored the fact that what applies to the Czechs applies also to Ireland, that the Armenians as well as the Ukrainians desire to live their own national life, and that the coloured peoples of Africa and India are human beings with the same rights as white people. He also failed to see that good will and the desire for justice are far from being sufficient in themselves to solve the problem of nationality. Thus it was that under his patronage, and presumably on the basis of the Fourteen Points, the question of nationality was not solved but simply turned round where not actually left untouched. If Germans and Magyars had hitherto been the dominating races they would now become the oppressed. By the terms settled at Versailles they were to be handed over to states of other nationality. Ten years hence, perhaps sooner, both groups of Powers as they exist at present will have fallen. Other constellations will have appeared and become dominant. The explosive power of unsolved questions will continue to take effect and within a measurable space of time again blow up the world.

Mr. Wilson, who evidently was acquainted with the programme of the Pact of London, though not attaching sufficient importance to the national difficulties, probably hoped to be able to effect a compromise between the Italian policy of conquest and his own ideal policy. In this connection, however, no bridge existed between Rome and Washington. Conquests are made by right of the conqueror—such was Clemenceau's and Orlando's policy—or else the world is ruled on the principles of national justice, as Wilson wished it to be. This ideal, however, will not be attained—no ideal is attainable; but it will be brought very much nearer. Might or Right, the one alone can conquer. But Czechs, Poles and others cannot be freed while at the same time Tyrolese-Germans, Alsatian-Germans and Transylvanian-Hungarians are handed over to foreign states. It cannot be done from the point of view of justice or with any hope of its being permanent. Versailles and St. Germain have proved that it can be done by might, and as a temporary measure.

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The solution of the question of nationality was the point round which all Franz Ferdinand's political interests were centred during his lifetime. Whether he would have succeeded is another question, but he certainly did try. The Emperor Charles, too, was not averse to the movement. The Emperor Francis Joseph was too old and too conservative to make the experiment. His idea was *quieta non movere*. Without powerful help from outside any attempt during the war against the German-Magyar opposition would not have been feasible. Therefore, when Wilson came forward with his Fourteen Points, and in spite of the scepticism with which the message from Washington was received by the German public and here too, I at once resolved to take up the thread.

I repeat that I never doubted the honourable and sincere intentions entertained by Wilson—nor do I doubt them now—but my doubts as to his powers of carrying them out were from the first very pronounced. It was obvious that Wilson, when conducting the war, was much stronger than when he took part in the Peace Conference. As long as fighting proceeded Wilson was master of the world. He had only to call back his troops from the European theatre of war and the Entente would be placed in a most difficult position. It has always been incomprehensible to me why the President of the United States did not have recourse to this strong pressure during this time in order to preserve his own war aims.

The secret information that I received soon after the publication of the Fourteen Points led me to fear that Wilson, not understanding the situation, would fail to take any practical measures to secure respect for the regulations he had laid down, and that he underestimated France's, and particularly Italy's, opposition. The logical and practical consequences of the Wilson programme would have been the public annulment of the Pact of London; it must have been so for us to understand the principles on which we could enter upon peace negotiations. Nothing of that nature occurred, and the gap between Wilson's and Orlando's ideas of peace remained open.

On January 24, 1918, in the Committee of the Austrian Delegation, I spoke publicly on the subject of the Fourteen Points and declared them to be—in so far as they applied to us and not to our Allies—a suitable basis for negotiations. Almost simultaneously we took steps to enlighten ourselves on the problem of how in a practical way the fourteen theoretical ideas of Wilson could be carried out. The negotiations were then by no means hopeless.

Meanwhile the Brest negotiations were proceeding. Although that episode, which represented a victory for German militarism, cannot have been very encouraging for Wilson, he was wise enough to recognise that we were in an awkward position and that the charge brought against Germany that she was making hidden annexations did not apply to Vienna. On February 12—thus, *after* the conclusion of the Brest peace—the President, in his speech to Congress, said:

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Count Czernin appears to have a clear understanding of the peace foundations and does not obscure their sense. He sees that an independent Poland composed of all the undeniably Polish inhabitants, the one bordering on the other, is a matter for European settlement and must be granted; further, that Belgium must be evacuated and restored, no matter what sacrifices and concessions it may involve; also that national desires must be satisfied, even in his own Empire, in the common interests of Europe and humanity.Though he is silent on certain matters more closely connected with the interests of his Allies than with Austria-Hungary, that is only natural, because he feels compelled under the circumstances to defer to Germany and Turkey. Recognising and agreeing with the important principles in question and the necessity of converting them into action, he naturally feels that Austria-Hungary, more easily than Germany, can concur with the war aims as expressed by the United States. He would probably have gone even further had he not been constrained to consider the Austro-Hungarian Alliance and the country's dependence on Germany.

In the same speech the President goes on to say:

Count Czernin's answer referring mainly to my speech of January 8 is couched in very friendly terms. He sees in my statements a sufficiently encouraging approach to the views of his own Government to justify his belief that they afford a basis for a thorough discussion by both Governments of the aims.

And again:

I must say Count Hertling's answer is very undecided and most confusing, full of equivocal sentences, and it is difficult to say what it aims at. It certainly is written in a very different tone from that of Count Czernin's speech and obviously with a very different object in view.

There can be no doubt that when the head of a State at war with us speaks in such friendly terms of the Minister for Foreign Affairs, he has the best intentions of coming to an understanding. My efforts in this connection were interrupted by my dismissal.

In these last weeks during which I remained in office the Emperor had definitely lost faith in me. This was not due to the Wilson question, nor yet was it the direct consequence of my general policy. A difference of opinion between certain persons in the Emperor's entourage and myself was the real reason. The situation became so strained as to make it unbearable. The forces that conspired against me convinced me that it would be impossible for me to gain my objective which, being of a very difficult nature, could not be obtained unless the Emperor gave me his full confidence.

In spite of all the rumours and stories spread about me I do not intend to go into details unless I should be compelled to do so by accounts derived from reliable sources. I am still convinced to this day that morally I was perfectly right. I was wrong as to form,

because I was neither clever nor patient enough to *bend* the opposition, but would have *broken* it, by reducing the situation to a case of “either—or”.

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CHAPTER VIII

IMPRESSIONS AND REFLECTIONS

1

In the autumn of 1917 I had a visit from a subject of a neutral state, who is a pronounced upholder of general disarmament and world pacifism. We began, of course, to discuss the theme of free competition in armaments, of militarism, which in England prevails on the sea and in Germany on land, and my visitor entered upon the various possibilities likely to occur when the war was at an end. He had no faith in the destruction of England, nor had I; but he thought it possible that France and Italy might collapse. The French and Italians could not possibly bear any heavier burdens than already were laid on them; in Paris and Rome, he thought, revolution was not far distant, and a fresh phase of the war would then ensue. England and America would continue to fight on alone, for ten, perhaps even twenty, years. England was not to be considered just a little island, but comprised Australia, India, Canada, and the sea. "*L'Angleterre est imbattable*," he repeated, and America likewise. On the other hand, the German army was also invincible. The secession of France and Italy would greatly hinder the cruel blockade, for the resources of those two countries—once they were conquered by the Central Powers—were very vast, and in that case he could not see any end to the war. Finally, the world would collapse from the general state of exhaustion. My visitor cited the fable in which two goats met on a narrow bridge; neither would give way to the other, and they fought until they both fell into the water and were drowned. The victory of one group as in previous wars, he continued, where the conqueror gleaned a rich harvest of gains and the vanquished had to bear all the losses, was out of the question in this present war. *Tout le monde perdra, et a la fin il n'y aura que des vaincus.*

I often recalled that interview later. Much that was false and yet, as it seemed to me, much that was true lay in my friend's words. France and Italy did not break down; the end of the war came quicker than he thought; and the invincible Germany was defeated. And still I think that the conclusions he arrived at came very near the truth.

The conquerors' finances are in a very precarious state, particularly in Italy and France; unrest prevails; wages are exorbitant; discontent is general; the phantom of Bolshevism leers at them; and they live in the hope that the defeated Central Powers will have to pay, and they will thus be saved. It was set forth in the peace terms, but *ultra posse nemo tenetur*, and the future will show to what extent the Central Powers can fulfil the conditions dictated to them.

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Since the opening of the Peace Congress at Versailles continuous war in Europe has been seen: Russians against the whole world, Czechs against Hungarians, Roumanians against Hungarians, Poles against Ukrainians, Southern Slavs against Germans, Communists against Socialists. Three-fourths of Europe is turned into a witch's cauldron where everything is concocted except work and production, and it is futile to ask how this self-lacerated Europe will be able to find the war expenses laid upon her. According to human reckoning, the conquerors cannot extract even approximate compensation for their losses from the defeated states, and their victory will terminate with a considerable deficit. If that be the case, then my visitor will be right—there will only be the vanquished.

If our plan in 1917, namely, Germany to cede Alsace-Lorraine to France in exchange for the annexation of all Poland, together with Galicia, and all states to disarm; if that plan had been accepted in Berlin and sanctioned by the Entente—unless the *non possumus* in Berlin and opposition in Rome to a change in the Pact of London had hindered any action—it seems to me the advantage would not only have been on the side of the Central Powers.

Pyrrhus also conquered at Asculum.

* * * * *

My visitor was astonished at Vienna. The psychology of no city that he had seen during the war could compare with that of Vienna. An amazing apathy prevailed. In Paris there was a passionate demand for Alsace-Lorraine; in Berlin the contrary was demanded just as eagerly; in England the destruction of Germany was the objective; in Sofia the conquest of the Dobrudsha; in Rome they clamoured for all possible and impossible things; in Vienna nothing at all was demanded. In Cracow they called for a Great Poland; in Budapest for an unmolested Hungary; in Prague for a united Czech State; and in Innsbruck the descendants of Andreas Hofer were fighting as they did in his day for their sacred land, Tyrol. In Vienna they asked only for peace and quiet.

Old men and children would fight the arch-enemy in Tyrol, but if the Italians were to enter Vienna and bring bread with them they would be received with shouts of enthusiasm. And yet Berlin and Innsbruck were just as hungry as Vienna. *C'est une ville sans ame.*

My visitor compared the Viennese to a pretty, gay, and frivolous woman, whose aim in life is pleasure and only pleasure. She must dance, sing, and enjoy life, and will do so under any circumstances—*sans ame*.

This pleasure-loving good nature of the Viennese has its admirable points. For instance, all enemy aliens were better treated in Vienna than anywhere else. Not the

slightest trace of enmity was shown to those who were the first to attack and then starve the city.

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Stronger than anything else in Vienna was the desire for sensation, pleasure, and a gay life. My friend once saw a piece acted at one of the theatres in Vienna called, I believe, *Der Junge Medardus*. The scene is laid during the occupation of Vienna by Napoleon. Viennese citizens condemned to death for intriguing with the enemy are led away by the French. In a most thrilling scene weeping women and children bid them farewell. A vast crowd witnesses the affair. A boy suddenly rushes in shouting: "Napoleon is coming." The crowd hurries away to see him, and cries of "Long live Napoleon" are heard in the distance.

Such was Vienna a hundred years ago, and it is still the same. *Une ville sans ame.*

I pass on the criticism without comment.

2

In different circles which justly and unjustly intervened in politics during my time of office, the plan was suggested of driving a wedge between North and South Germany, and converting the latter to the peaceful policy of Vienna in contradistinction to Prussian militarism.

The plan was a faulty one from the very first. To begin with, as already stated, the most pronounced obstacle to peace was not only the Prussian spirit, but the Entente programme for our disruption, which a closer connection with Bavaria and Saxony would not have altered. Secondly, Austria-Hungary, obviously falling more and more to pieces, formed no point of attraction for Munich and Dresden, who, though not Prussian, yet were German to the very backbone. The vague and irresponsible plan of returning to the conditions of the period before 1866 was an anachronism. Thirdly and chiefly, all experiments were dangerous which might create the impression in the Entente that the Quadruple Alliance was about to be dissolved. In a policy of that nature executive ability was of supreme importance, and that was exactly what was usually lacking.

The plan was not without good features. The appointment of the Bavarian Count Hertling to be Imperial Chancellor was not due to Viennese influence, though a source of the greatest pleasure to us, and the fact of making a choice that satisfied Vienna played a great part with the Emperor William. Two Bavarians, Hertling and Kuehlmann, had taken over the leadership of the German Empire, and they, apart from their great personal qualities, presented a certain natural counter-balance to Prussian hegemony through their Bavarian origin; but only so far as it was still possible in general administration which then was in a disturbed state. But farther they could not go without causing injury.

Count Hertling and I were on very good terms. This wise and clear-sighted old man, whose only fault was that he was too old and physically incapable of offering resistance, would have saved Germany, if she possibly could have been saved, in 1917. In the

rushing torrent that whirled her away to her fall, he found no pillar to which he could cling.

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Latterly his sight began to fail and give way. He suffered from fatigue, and the conferences and councils lasting often for hours and hours were beyond his strength.

CHAPTER IX

POLAND

1

By letters patent November 5, 1916, both the Emperors declared Poland's existence as a Kingdom.

When I came into office, I found the situation to be that the Poles were annoyed with my predecessor because, they declared, Germany had wanted to cede the newly created kingdom of Poland to us, and Count Burian had rejected the offer. Apparently there is some misunderstanding in this version of the case, as Burian says it is not correctly rendered.

There were three reasons that made the handling of the Polish question one of the greatest difficulty. The first was the totally different views of the case held by competent individuals of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. While the Austrian Ministry was in favour of the so-called Austro-Polish solution, Count Tisza was strongly opposed to it. His standpoint was that the political structure of the Monarchy ought not to undergo any change through the annexation of Poland, and that Poland eventually might be joined to the Monarchy as an Austrian province, but never as a partner in a tripartite Monarchy.

A letter that he wrote to me from Budapest on February 22, 1917, was characteristic of his train of thought. It was as follows:

YOUR EXCELLENCY,—Far be it from me to raise a discussion on questions which to-day are without actual value and most probably will not assume any when peace is signed. On the other hand, I wish to avoid the danger that might arise from mistaken conclusions drawn from the fact that I accepted without protest certain statements that appeared in the correspondence of our diplomatic representatives.Guided exclusively by this consideration, I beg to draw the attention of Your Excellency to the fact that the so-called Austro-Polish solution of the Polish question has repeatedly (as in telegram Nr. 63 from Herr von Ugron) been referred to as the "tripartite solution."With reference to this appellation I am compelled to point out the fact that in the first period of the war, at a time when the Austro-Polish solution was in the foreground, all competent circles in the Monarchy were agreed that the annexation of Poland to the Monarchy must on no account affect its *dualistic structure*.This principle was distinctly recognised by the then leaders in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, as also by both Prime Ministers; it was also recognised and sanctioned by His late Majesty the Emperor and King Francis Joseph. I

trust I may assume that this view is shared by Your Excellency; in any case, and to avoid misunderstanding, I must state that the Royal Hungarian Government considers

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this to be the ground-pillar of its entire political system, from which, in no circumstances, would it be in a position to deviate.It would, in our opinion, be fatal for the whole Monarchy. The uncertainty of the situation lies in the Austrian State, where the German element, after the separation of Galicia, would be in a very unsafe position, confronted by powerful tendencies that easily might gain the upper hand should a relatively small number of the Germans, whether from social-democratic, political-reactionary or doctrinary reasons, separate from the other German parties. The establishment of the new Polish element as a third factor with Austria-Hungary in our constitutional organism would represent an element so unsafe, and would be combined with such risks for the further development of the policy of the Habsburg Great Power, that, in view of the position of the Monarchy as such, I should feel the greatest anxiety lest the new and unreliable Russian-Polish element, so different from us in many respects, should play too predominant a part.The firm retention of dualism, according to which half the political influence on general subjects rests with Hungary, and *the Hungarian and German element in common furnish a safe majority* in the delegation, alone can secure for the dynasty and the two States under its sceptre an adequate guarantee for the future.There is no other factor in the Monarchy whose every vital interest is so bound up in the dynasty and in the position of the Monarchy as a Great Power, as Hungary. The few people whose clear perception of that fact may have become dulled during the last peaceful decade must have been brought to a keener realisation of it by the present war.The preservation of the Danube Monarchy as a vigorous and active Great Power is in the truest sense of the word a vital condition for the existence of the Hungarian State. It was fatal for all of us that this willing people, endowed with so many administrative qualities, ready to sacrifice themselves for all State and national aims, have for centuries past not been able to devote themselves to the common cause. The striving for a solution of the world racial problem and the necessity of combining the responsibilities of a Great Power with the independence of the Hungarian State have caused heavy trials and century-long friction and fighting.Hungary’s longing for independence did not take the form of efforts for dissolution. The great leaders in our struggle for liberty did not attack the continuance of the Habsburg Empire as a Great Power. And even during the bitter trials of the struggle they never followed any further aim than to obtain from the Crown a guarantee for their chartered rights.Hungary, free and independent, wished to remain under the sceptre of the Habsburgs; she did not wish to come under any foreign rule, but

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to be a free nation governed by her own king and her own laws and not subordinate to any other ruler. This principle was repeatedly put forward in solemn form (in the years 1723 and 1791), and finally, in the agreement of 1867, a solution was found which endowed it with life and ensured its being carried out in a manner favourable for the position of a great nation.In the period of preparation for the agreement of 1867 Hungary was a poor and, comparatively speaking, small part of the then Monarchy, and the great statesmen of Hungary based their administrative plan on dualism and equality as being the only possible way for ensuring that Hungarian independence, recognised and appealed to on many occasions, should materialise in a framework of modern constitutional practice.A political structure for the Monarchy which would make it possible for Hungary to be outvoted on the most important questions of State affairs, and therefore subject to a foreign will, would again have nullified all that had been achieved after so much striving and suffering, so much futile waste of strength for the benefit of us all, which even in this war, too, would have brought its blessings. All those, therefore, who have always stood up firmly and loyally for the agreement of 1867 must put their whole strength into resisting any tripartite experiments.I would very much regret if, in connection with this question, differences of opinion should occur among the present responsible leaders of the Monarchy. In view of this I considered it unnecessary to give publicity to a question that is not pressing. At all events, in dealing with the Poles, all expressions must be avoided which, in the improbable, although not impossible, event of a resumption of the Austro-Polish solution, might awaken expectations in them which could only lead to the most complicated consequences.The more moderate Poles had made up their minds that the dualistic structure of the Monarchy would have to remain intact, and that the annexation of Poland by way of a junction with the Austrian State, with far-reaching autonomy to follow, would have to be the consequence. It would therefore be extremely imprudent and injurious to awaken fresh aspirations, the realisation of which seems very doubtful, not only from a Hungarian point of view but from that which concerns the future of the Monarchy.

I beg Your Excellency to accept the expression of my highest esteem.

TISZA.

Budapest, February 22, 1917.

The question as to what was to be Poland’s future position with regard to the Monarchy remained still unsolved. I continued to press the point that Poland should be annexed as an independent state. Tisza wanted it to be a province. When the Emperor dismissed him, although he was favoured by the majority of the Parliament, it did not alter the situation in regard to the Polish question, as Wekerle, in this as in almost all other questions, had to adopt Tisza’s views; otherwise, he would have been in the minority.

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The actual reason of Tisza's dismissal was not the question of electoral reforms, as his successors could only act according to Tisza's instructions. For, as leader of the majority, which he continued to be even after his dismissal, no electoral reforms could be carried out in opposition to his will. Tisza thought that the Emperor meditated putting in a coalition majority against him, which he considered quite logical, though not agreeable.

The next difficulty was the attitude of the Germans towards Poland. At the occupation of Poland we were already unfairly treated, and the Germans had appropriated the greater part of the country. Always and everywhere, they were the stronger on the battlefield, and the consequence was that they claimed the lion's share of all the successes gained. This was in reality quite natural, but it greatly added to all diplomatic and political activities, which were invariably prejudiced and hindered by military facts. When I entered upon office, Germany's standpoint was that she had a far superior right to Poland, and that the simplest solution would be for us to evacuate the territory we had occupied. It was, of course, obvious that I could not accept such a proposal, and we held firmly to the point that under no circumstances would our troops leave Lublin. After much controversy, the Germans agreed, *tant bien que mal*, to this solution. The further development of the affair showed that the German standpoint went through many changes. In general, it fluctuated between two extremes: either Poland must unite herself to Germany—the German-Polish solution, or else vast portions of her territory must be ceded to Germany to be called frontier adjustments, and what remained would be either for us or for Poland herself. Neither solution could be accepted by us. The first one for this reason, that the Polish question being in the foreground made that of Galicia very acute, as it would have been quite impossible to retain Galicia in the Monarchy when separated from the rest of Poland. We were obliged to oppose the German-Polish solution, not from any desire for conquest, but to prevent the sacrifice of Galicia for no purpose.

The second German suggestion was just as impossible to carry out, because Poland, crippled beyond recognition by the frontier readjustment, even though united with Galicia, would have been so unsatisfactory a factor that there would never have been any prospect of harmonious dealings with her.

The third difficulty was presented by the Poles themselves, as they naturally wished to secure the greatest possible profit out of their release by the Central Powers, even though it did not contribute much to their future happiness so far as military support was concerned. There were many different parties among them: first of all, one for the Entente; a second, Bilinski's party; above all, one for the Central Powers, especially when we gained military successes.

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On the whole, Polish policy was to show their hand as little as possible to any particular group, and in the end range themselves on the side of the conquerors. It must be admitted that these tactics were successful.

In addition to these difficulties, there prevailed almost always in Polish political circles a certain nervous excitement, which made it extremely difficult to enter into any calm and essential negotiations. At the very beginning, misunderstandings occurred between the Polish leaders and myself with regard to what I proposed to do; misunderstandings which, toward the end of my term of office, developed into the most bitter enmity towards me on the part of the Poles. On February 10, 1917, a whole year before Brest-Litovsk, I received the news from Warsaw that Herr von Bilinski, apparently misunderstanding my standpoint, evolved from the facts, considered that hopes represented promises, and in so doing raised Polish expectations to an unwarranted degree. I telegraphed thereupon to our representative as follows:

February 16, 1917.

I have informed Herr von Bilinski, together with other Poles, that it is impossible in the present unsettled European situation to make, on the whole, any plans for the future of Poland. I have told them that I sympathise with the Austro-Polish solution longed for by all our Poles, but that I am not in the position to say whether this solution will be attainable, though I am equally unable to foretell the opposite. Finally, I have also declared that our whole policy where Poland is concerned can only consist in our leaving a door open for all future transactions.

I added that our representative must quote my direct orders in settling the matter.

In January, 1917, a conference was held respecting the Polish question: a conference which aimed at laying down a broad line of action for the policy to be adopted. I first of all referred to the circumstances connected with the previously-mentioned German request for us to evacuate Lublin, and explained my reasons for not agreeing to the demand. I pointed out that it did not seem probable to me that the war would end with a dictated peace on our side, and that, with reference to Poland, we should not be able to solve the Polish question without the co-operation of the Entente, and that there was not much object so long as the war lasted in endeavouring to secure *faits accomplis*. The main point was that we remain in the country, and on the conclusion of peace enter into negotiations with the Entente and the Allies to secure a solution of the Austro-Polish question. That should be the gist of our policy. Count Tisza spoke after me and agreed with me that we must not yield to the German demand for our evacuation of Lublin. As regards the future, the Hungarian Prime Minister stated that he had always held the view that we should cede to Germany our claim to Poland in exchange for economic and financial compensation;

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but that, at the present time, he did not feel so confident about it. The conditions then prevailing were unbearable, chiefly owing to the variableness of German policy, and he, Count Tisza, returned to his former, oft-repeated opinion that we should strive as soon as possible to withdraw with honour out of the affair; impose no conditions that would lead to further friction, but the surrendering to Germany of our share in Poland in exchange for economic compensation.

The Austrian Prime Minister, Count Clam, opposed this from the Austrian point of view, which supported the union of all the Poles under the Habsburg sceptre as being the one and only desirable solution.

The feeling during the debate was that the door must be closed against the Austro-Polish proposals, and that, in view of the impossibility of an immediate definite solution, we must adhere firmly to the policy that rendered possible the union of all the Poles under the Habsburg rule.

After Germany's refusal of the proposal to accept Galicia as compensation for Alsace-Lorraine, this programme was adhered to through various phases and vicissitudes until the ever-increasing German desire for frontier readjustment created a situation which made the achievement of the Austro-Polish project very doubtful. Unless we could secure a Poland which, thanks to the unanimity of the great majority of all Poles, would willingly and cheerfully join the Monarchy, the Austro-Polish solution would not have been a happy one, as in that case we should only have increased the number of discontented elements in the Monarchy, already very high, by adding fresh ones to them. As it proved impossible to break the resistance put up by General Ludendorff, the idea presented itself at a later stage to strive for the annexation of Roumania instead of Poland. It was a return to the original idea of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand, the union of Roumania with Transylvania, closely linked to the Monarchy. In that case we should have lost Galicia to Poland, but a certain compensation would have been conceded to us in Roumania with her corn and oil springs, and for the Monarchy, as for the Poles, it appeared better to unite the latter collectively with Germany rather than to divide them, as suggested in the Vienna-Berlin dispute.

The plan for the annexation of Roumania presented wellnigh insurmountable internal difficulties. Owing to her geographical position, Roumania ought naturally to be annexed to Hungary. Tisza, who was not in favour of the plan, would, nevertheless, have agreed to it if the annexed country had been administered from Budapest and in the Magyar spirit, which meant that it would be incorporated in Hungary. This, for obvious reasons, would involve the failure of the plan, for the Roumanians would gain no advantage from the annexation if it was to be at the sacrifice of their national independence. On the other hand, the Austrian Ministry raised quite justifiable

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objections to the suggestion of a future combination that would add a rich and vast country to Hungary, while Austria would be reduced in proportion, and compensation in one or other form was demanded. Another, but tentative, plan was to make over Bosnia and the Herzegovina definitely by way of compensation to Austria. All these ideas and plans, however, were of a transitory nature, evoked by the constantly recurring difficulties in Berlin and Warsaw, and they invariably fell through when it was seen that the obstacles arising from dualism were not to be overcome. The original Austro-Polish solution was taken up again, although it was impossible to extort from the Germans a definite statement as to a reasonable western frontier for Poland. In the very last term of my office the Roumanian plan again came up, partly owing to the bitter feelings of the Poles on the Cholm question, and partly owing to the claims made by Germany, which rendered the Austro-Polish solution impossible.

Simultaneously with these efforts, a plan for the future organisation of the Monarchy was being considered. The Emperor adhered to the correct standpoint, as I still consider it to be, that the structure of the Monarchy, after an endurable issue from the war, would have to be altered, and reconstruction on a far more pronounced national basis be necessary. As applied to the Poles, this project would entail the dividing of East and West Galicia, and an independent position for the Ruthenian Poles.

When at Brest-Litovsk, under the pressure of the hunger riots that were beginning, I refused to agree to the Ukrainian demands, but consented to submit the question of the division of Galicia to the Austrian Crown Council. I was impelled thereto by the conviction that we were adhering strictly to the programme as it had been planned for the Monarchy.

I will give fuller details respecting this question in the next chapter, but will merely relate the following incident as an example to show the degree of hostile persecution to which I was exposed. The rumour was spread on all sides that the Emperor had told the Poles that “I had concluded peace with the Ukraine without his knowledge and against his will.” It is quite out of the question that the Emperor can have made such a statement, as the peace conditions at Kieff were a result of a council convoked *ad hoc*, where—as the protocol proves—the Emperor and Dr. von Seidler were responsible for the terms.

The great indignation of the Poles at my conduct at Brest-Litovsk was quite unfounded. I never promised the Poles that they were to have the Cholm district, and never alluded to any definite frontiers. Had I done so the capable political leaders in Poland would never have listened to me, as they knew very well that the frontiers, only in a very slight degree, depended on the decisions at Vienna. If we lost the war we had nothing more to say in the matter; if a peace of agreement was concluded, then Berlin would be the

strongest side, having occupied the largest portion of the country; the question would then have to be decided at the general Conference.

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I always told the Polish leaders that I hoped to secure a Poland thoroughly satisfied, also with respect to her frontier claims, and there were times when we seemed to be very near the accomplishment of such an aim; but I never concealed the fact that there were many influences at work restricting my wishes and keeping them very much subdued.

The partition of Galicia was an internal Austrian question. Dr. von Seidler took up the matter most warmly, and at the Council expressed the hope of being able to carry out these measures by parliamentary procedure and against the opposition of the Poles.

I will allude to this question also in my next chapter.

Closely connected with the Polish question was the so-called Central-European project.

For obvious and very comprehensible reasons Germany was keenly interested in a scheme for closer union. I was always full of the idea of turning these important concessions to account at the right moment as compensation for prospective German sacrifices, and thus promoting a peace of understanding.

During the first period of my official activity, I still hoped to secure a revision of the Pact of London. I hoped, as already mentioned, that the Entente would not keep to the resolution adopted for the mutilation of the Monarchy, and I did not, therefore, approach the Central-European question closer; had I raised it, it would greatly have complicated our position with regard to Paris and London. When I was compelled later to admit that the Entente kept firmly to the decision that we were to be divided in any case, and that any change in their purpose would only be effected, if at all, by military force, I endeavoured to work out the Central-European plan in detail, and to reserve the concessions ready to be made to Germany until the right moment had arrived to make the offer.

In this connection it seemed to me that the Customs Union was unfeasible, at any rate at first; but on the other hand, a new and closer commercial treaty would be desirable, and a closer union of the armies would offer no danger; it was hoped greatly to reduce them after the war. I was convinced that a peace of understanding would bring about disarmament, and that the importance of military settlements would be influenced thereby. Also, that the conclusion of peace would bring with it different relations between all states, and that, therefore, the political and military decisions to be determined in the settlement with Germany were not of such importance as those relating to economic questions.

The drawing up of this programme was met, however, by the most violent opposition on the part of the Emperor. He was particularly opposed to all military *rapprochement*.

When the attempt to approach the question failed through the resistance from the crown, I arranged on my own initiative for a debate on the economic question. The Emperor then wrote me a letter in which he forbade any further dealings in the matter. I answered his letter by a business report, pointing out the necessity of continuing the negotiations.

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The question then became a sore point between the Emperor and myself. He did not give his permission for further negotiations, but I continued them notwithstanding. The Emperor knew of it, but did not make further allusion to the matter. The vast claims put forward by the Germans made the negotiations extremely difficult, and with long intervals and at a very slow pace they dragged on until I left office.

Afterwards the Emperor went with Burian to the German Headquarters. Following that, the Salzburg negotiations were proceeded with and, apparently, at greater speed.

CHAPTER X

BREST-LITOVSK

1

In the summer of 1917 we received information which seemed to suggest a likelihood of realising the contemplated peace with Russia. A report dated June 13, 1917, which came to me from a neutral country, ran as follows:

> The Russian Press, bourgeois and socialistic, reveals the following state of affairs:

At the front and at home bitter differences of opinion are rife as to the offensive against the Central Powers demanded by the Allies and now also energetically advocated by Kerenski in speeches throughout the country. The Bolsheviks, as also the Socialists under the leadership of Lenin, with their Press, are taking a definite stand against any such offensive. But a great part of the Mensheviks as well, *i.e.* Tscheidse's party, to which the present Ministers Tseretelli and Skobeleff belong, is likewise opposed to the offensive, and the lack of unanimity on this question is threatening the unity of the party, which has only been maintained with difficulty up to now. A section of the Mensheviks, styled Internationalists from their trying to re-establish the old *Internationale*, also called *Zimmerwalder* or *Kienthaler*, and led by Trotski, or, more properly, Bronstein, who has returned from America, with Larin, Martow, Martynoz, *etc*., returned from Switzerland, are on this point, as with regard to the entry of Menshevik Social Democrats into the Provisional Government, decidedly opposed to the majority of the party. And for this reason Leo Deutsch, one of the founders of the Marxian Social Democracy, has publicly withdrawn from the party, as being too little patriotic for his views and not insisting on final victory. He is, with Georgei Plechanow, one of the chief supporters of the Russian "Social Patriots," which group is termed, after their Press organ, the "Echinstvo" group, but is of no importance either as regards numbers or influence. Thus it comes about that the official organ of the Mensheviks, the *Rabocaja Gazeta*, is forced to take up an intermediate position, and publishes, for instance, frequent articles against the

offensive.There is then the Social Revolutionary party, represented in the Cabinet by the Minister of Agriculture, Tschernow. This is, perhaps,

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the strongest of all the Russian parties, having succeeded in leading the whole of the peasant movement into its course—at the Pan-Russian Congress the great majority of the peasants' deputies were Social Revolutionaries, and no Social Democrat was elected to the executive committee of the Peasants' Deputies' Council. A section of this party, and, it would seem, the greater and more influential portion, is definitely opposed to any offensive. This is plainly stated in the leading organs of the party, *Delo Naroda* and *Zemlja i Wolja*. Only a small and apparently uninfluential portion, grouped round the organ *Volja Naroda*, faces the bourgeois Press with unconditional demands for an offensive to relieve the Allies, as does the Plechanow group. Kerenski's party, the Trudoviks, as also the related People's Socialists, represented in the Cabinet by the Minister of Food, Peschechonow, are still undecided whether to follow Kerenski here or not. Verbal information, and utterances in the Russian Press, as, for instance, the *Retch*, assert that Kerenski's health gives grounds for fearing a fatal catastrophe in a short time. The official organ of the Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies' Council, the *Isvestia*, on the other hand, frequently asserts with great emphasis that an offensive must unquestionably be made. It is characteristic that a speech made by the Minister of Agriculture, Tschernow, to the Peasants' Congress, was interpreted as meaning that he was opposed to the offensive, so that he was obliged to justify himself to his colleagues in the Ministry and deny that such had been his meaning.While, then, people at home are seriously divided on the question of an offensive, the men at the front appear but little inclined to undertake any offensive. This is stated by all parties in the Russian Press, the symptoms being regarded either with satisfaction or with regret. The infantry in particular are against the offensive; the only enthusiasm is to be found among the officers, in the cavalry or a part of it, and the artillery. It is characteristic also that the Cossacks are in favour of war. These, at any rate, have an ulterior motive, in that they hope by success at the front to be able ultimately to overthrow the revolutionary regime. For there is this to be borne in mind: that while most of the Russian peasants have no landed property exceeding five deshatin, and three millions have no land at all, every Cossack owns forty deshatin, an unfair distinction which is constantly being referred to in all discussion of the land question. This is a sufficient ground for the isolated position of the Cossacks in the Revolution, and it was for this reason also that they were formerly always among the most loyal supporters of the Tsar.

Extremely characteristic of the feeling at the front are the following details:

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At the sitting on May 30 of the Pan-Russian Congress, Officers' Delegates, a representative of the officers of the 3rd Elizabethengrad Hussars is stated, according to the *Retch* of May 1, to have given, in a speech for the offensive, the following characteristic statement: "You all know to what extremes the disorder at the front has reached. The infantry cut the wires connecting them with their batteries and declare that the soldiers will not remain *more than one month* at the front, but will go home."It is very instructive also to read the report of a delegate from the front, who had accompanied the French and English majority Socialists at the front. This report was printed in the *Rabocaja Gazeta*, May 18 and 19—this is the organ of the Mensheviks, *i.e*. that of Tscheidse, Tseretelli and Skobeleff. These Entente Socialists at the front were told with all possible distinctness that the Russian army could not and would not fight for the imperialistic aims of England and France. The state of the transport, provisions and forage supplies, as also the danger to the achievements of the Revolution by further war, demanded a speedy cessation of hostilities. The English and French Socialist delegates were said to be not altogether pleased at this state of feeling at the front. And it was further demanded of them that they should undertake to make known the result of their experience in Russia on the Western front, *i.e*. in France. There was some very plain speaking, too, with regard to America: representatives from the Russian front spoke openly of America's policy of exploitation towards Europe and the Allies. It was urged then that an international Socialist conference should be convened at the earliest possible moment, and supported by the English and French majority Socialists. At one of the meetings at the front, the French and English Socialists were given the following reply: "Tell your comrades that we await definite declarations from your Governments and peoples renouncing conquest and indemnities. We will shed no drop of blood for Imperialists, whether they be Russians, Germans or English. We await the speediest agreement between the workers of all countries for the termination of the war, which is a thing shameful in itself, and will, if continued, prove disastrous to the Russian Revolution. We will not conclude any separate peace, but tell your people to let us know their aims as soon as possible."According to the report, the French Socialists were altogether converted to this point of view. This also appears to be the case, from the statements with regard to the attitude of Cachin and Moutet at the French Socialist Congress. The English, on the other hand, were immovable, with the exception of Sanders, who inclined somewhat toward the Russian point of view.Private information reaching the Ministry

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of Foreign Affairs in this country states that shots were fired at M. Thomas, the Minister of Munitions, in the course of one of his war speeches at the Russian front.

The disorganisation at the front is described by an officer or soldier at the front in the same organ, the *Rabocaja Gazeta* for May 26, as follows:

"The passionate desire for peace, peace of whatever kind, aye, even a peace costing the loss of ten governments (i.e. districts), is growing ever more plainly evident. Men dream of it passionately, even though it is not yet spoken of at meetings and in revolutions, even though all conscious elements of the army fight against this party that long for peace." And to paralyse this, there can be but one way: let the soldiers see the democracy fighting emphatically for peace and the end of the war.The Pan-Russian Congress of Workers' and Soldiers' Delegates' Councils and the Army Organisation at the front in St. Petersburg June 1-14 took for its first point in the order of the day the following: "The War, questions of defence and the struggle for peace." At this time the Government would doubtless have to give a declaration with regard to the answer already received at the beginning of June from the Allies as to their war aims. This congress will also probably decide definitely upon the nomination for the Stockholm Conference and appoint delegates. Point 4 deals with the question of nationality. An open conflict had broken out between the Petersburg Workers' and Soldiers' Deputy Councils and the Ukrainian Soldiers' Congress, sitting at Kieff, on account of the formation of an Ukrainian army. The appointment of an "Ukrainian Army General Committee" further aggravated the conflict.With regard to the increasing internal confusion, the growing seriousness of the nationality dispute, the further troubles in connection with agricultural and industrial questions, a detailed report dealing separately with these heads will be forwarded later.

Towards the end of November I wrote to one of my friends the following letter, which I have given *in extenso*, as it shows faithfully my estimate of the situation at the time:

Vienna, November 17, 1917.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—After many days, full of trouble, annoyance and toil, I write to you once more in order to answer your very noteworthy observations; to be in contact with you again turns my thoughts into other channels, and enables me, for the time at least, to forget the wretchedness of every day.You have heard, you say, that matters are not going so well between the Emperor and myself, and you are sorry for this. I am sorry myself, if for no other reason than that it increases the friction of the daily working machine to an insupportable degree. As soon as a thing of this sort leaks out—and it does so fast enough—all

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enemies, male and female, rush in with renewed strength, making for the vulnerable point, in the hope of securing my overthrow. These good people are like carrion vultures—I myself am the carrion—they can scent from afar that there is something for them to do, and come flying to the spot. And the lies they invent and the intrigues they contrive, with a view to increasing existing differences—really, they are worthy of admiration. You ask, who are these inveterate enemies of mine?

Well, first of all, those whom you yourself conjecture.

And, secondly, the enemies whom every Minister has, the numbers of those who would fain be in his place. Finally, a crowd of political mountebanks from the Jockey Club, who are disgusted because they had hoped for some personal advantage through my influence, and I have ignored them. No. 3 is a comfortingly negligible quantity, No. 2 are dangerous, but No. 1 are deadly.In any case, then, my days are numbered. Heaven be thanked, relief is not far off. If only I could now settle things with Russia quickly, and thus perhaps secure the possibility of a peace all round. All reports from Russia seem to point to the fact that the Government there is determined on peace, and peace as speedily as possible. But the Germans are now full of confidence. If they can throw their massed forces against the West, they have no doubt of being able to break through, take Paris and Calais, and directly threaten England. Such a success, however, could only lead to peace if Germany could be persuaded to renounce all plans of conquest. I at any rate cannot believe that the Entente, after losing Paris and Calais, would refuse to treat for peace as *inter pares*—it would at least be necessary to make every endeavour in that direction. Up to now Hindenburg has done all that he promised, so much we must admit, and the whole of Germany believes in his forthcoming success in the West—always taking for granted, of course, the freeing of the Eastern front; that is to say, peace with Russia. The Russian peace, then, *may* prove the first step on the way to the peace of the world.I have during the last few days received reliable information about the Bolsheviks. Their leaders are almost all of them Jews, with altogether fantastic ideas, and I do not envy the country that is governed by them. From our point of view, however, the most interesting thing about them is that they are anxious to make peace, and in this respect they do not seem likely to change, for they cannot carry on the war.In the Ministry here, three groups are represented: one declines to take Lenin seriously, regarding him as an ephemeral personage, the second does not take this view at all, but is nevertheless unwilling to treat with a revolutionary of this sort, and the third consists, as far as I am aware, of myself alone, and I *will* treat with him,

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despite the possibly ephemeral character of his position and the certainty of revolution. The briefer Lenin's period of power the more need to act speedily, for no subsequent Russian Government will recommence the war—and I cannot take a Russian Metternich as my partner when there is none to be had.The Germans are hesitating—-they do not altogether like the idea of having any dealings with Lenin, possibly also from the reasons already mentioned; they are inconsistent in this, as is often the case. The German military party—which, as everyone knows, holds the reins of policy in Germany entirely—have, as far as I can see, done all they could to overthrow Kerenski and set up "something else" in his place. Now, the something else is there, and is ready to make peace; obviously, then, one must act, even though the party concerned is not such as one would have chosen for oneself.It is impossible to get any exact information about these Bolsheviks; that is to say, there is plenty of information available, but it is contradictory. The way they begin is this: everything in the least reminiscent of work, wealth, and culture must be destroyed, and the bourgeoisie exterminated. Freedom and equality seem no longer to have any place on their programme; only a bestial suppression of all but the proletariat itself. The Russian bourgeois class, too, seems almost as stupid and cowardly as our own, and its members let themselves be slaughtered like sheep.True, this Russian Bolshevism is a peril to Europe, and if we had the power, besides securing a tolerable peace for ourselves, to force other countries into a state of law and order, then it would be better to have nothing to do with such people as these, but to march on Petersburg and arrange matters there. But we have not the power; peace at the earliest possible moment is necessary for our own salvation, and we cannot obtain peace unless the Germans get to Paris—and they cannot get to Paris unless their Eastern front is freed. That is the circle complete. All this the German military leaders themselves maintain, and it is altogether illogical of them now apparently to object to Lenin on personal grounds.I was unable to finish this letter yesterday, and now add this to-day. Yesterday another attempt was made, from a quarter which you will guess, to point out to me the advantage of a separate peace. I spoke to the Emperor about it, and told him that this would simply be shooting oneself for fear of death; that I could not take such a step myself, but would be willing to resign under some pretext or other, when he would certainly find men ready to make the attempt. The conference of London has determined on a division of the Monarchy, and no separate peace on our part would avail to alter that. The Roumanians, Serbians and Italians are to receive enormous compensation, we are to lose Trieste, and the remainder is to be broken

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up into separate states—Czechish, Polish, Hungarian and German. There will be very slight contact between these new states; in other words, a separate peace would mean that the Monarchy, having first been mutilated, would then be hacked to pieces. But until we arrive at this result, we must fight on, and that, moreover, *against* Germany, which will, of course, make peace with Russia at once and occupy the Monarchy. The German generals will not be so foolish as to wait until the Entente has invaded Germany through Austria, but will take care to make *Austria itself the theatre of war*. So that instead of bringing the war to an end, we should be merely changing one opponent for another and delivering up provinces hitherto spared—such as Bohemia and Tyrol—-to the fury of battle, only to be wrecked completely in the end.On the other hand, we might perhaps, in a few months' time, secure peace all round, with Germany as well—a tolerable peace of mutual understanding—always provided the German offensive turns out successful. The Emperor was more silent then. Among his entourage, one pulls this way, another that—and we gain nothing in that manner among the Entente, while we are constantly losing the confidence of Berlin. If a man wishes to go over to the enemy, then let him do it—*le remede sera pire que le mal*—but to be for ever dallying with the idea of treachery and adopting the pose without carrying it out in reality—this I cannot regard as prudent policy.I believe we could arrive at a tolerable peace of understanding; we should lose something to Italy, and should, of course, gain nothing in exchange. Furthermore, we should have to alter the entire structure of the Monarchy—-after the fashion of the *federation Danubienne* proposed in France—and I am certainly rather at a loss to see how this can be done in face of the Germans and Hungarians. But I hope we may survive the war, and I hope also that they will ultimately revise the conditions of the London conference. Let but old Hindenburg once make his entry into Paris, and then the Entente *must* utter the decisive word that they are willing to treat. But when that moment comes, I am firmly determined to do the utmost possible, to appeal publicly to the *peoples* of the Central Powers and ask them if they prefer to fight on for conquest or if they will have peace.To settle with Russia as speedily as possible, then break through the determination of the Entente to exterminate us, and then to make peace—even at a loss—that is my plan and the hope for which I live. Naturally, after the capture of Paris, all "leading" men—with the exception of the Emperor Karl—-will demand a "good" peace, and that we shall never get in any case. The odium of having "spoiled the peace" I will take upon myself.So, I hope, we may come out of it at last, albeit rather mauled. But the old days will

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never return. A new order will be born in throes and convulsions. I said so publicly some time back, in my Budapest speech, and it was received with disapproval practically on all sides.

This has made a long letter after all, and it is late. *Lebe wohl*, and let me hear from you again soon.—In friendship as of old, yours

(Signed) CZERNIN.

With regard to the peace negotiations in Brest-Litovsk, I will leave my diary to speak for itself. Despite many erroneous views that may appear in the following notes, and various unimportant details, I have not abbreviated it at all, since it gives, in its present form, what I believe will be a clear picture of the development.

"*December 19, 1917.*—Departure from Vienna, Wednesday, 19th.

"Four o'clock, Nordbahnhof. Found the party already assembled there: Gratz and Wiesner, Colloredo, Gautsch and Andrian, also Lieut. Field-Marshal Csicserics, and Major Fleck, Baden.

"I took the opportunity on the journey to give Csicserics an idea of my intentions and the tactics to be pursued. I told him that in my opinion Russia would propose a *general* peace, and that we must of course accept this proposal. I hoped that the first steps for a general peace would be taken at Brest, and not given up for a long time. Should the Entente not accept, then at least the way would be open for a separate peace. After that I had long discussions with Gratz and Wiesner, which took up more or less the whole day.

"*December 20, 1917.*—Arrived at Brest a few minutes past five. At the station were the Chief of Staff, General Hoffmann, with some ten of his suite, also the emissary Rosenberg and Merey with my party. I greeted them on the platform, and after a few words Merey went into the train with me to tell me what had happened during the past few days. On the whole, Merey takes a not unfavourable view of the situation, and believes that, unless something unforeseen crops up, we should succeed within a reasonable time in arranging matters satisfactorily.

"At six o'clock I went to pay my visit to General Hoffmann; he gave me some interesting details as to the mentality of the Russian delegates, and the nature of the armistice he had so fortunately concluded. I had the impression that the General combined expert knowledge and energy with a good deal of calm and ability, but also not a little Prussian brutality, whereby he had succeeded in persuading the Russians, despite opposition at

first, to agree to very favourable terms of truce. A little later, as arranged, Prince Leopold of Bavaria came in, and I had some talk with him on matters of no importance.

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“We then went to dinner, all together, including the whole staff of nearly 100 persons. The dinner presented one of the most remarkable pictures ever seen. The Prince of Bavaria presided. Next to the Prince sat the leader of the Russian delegation, a Jew called Joffe, recently liberated from Siberia; then came the generals and the other delegates. Apart from this Joffe, the most striking personality in the delegation is the brother-in-law of the Russian Foreign Minister, Trotski, a man named Kameneff, who, likewise liberated from prison during the Revolution, now plays a prominent part. The third delegate is Madame Bizenko, a woman with a comprehensive past. Her husband is a minor official; she herself took an early part in the revolutionary movement. Twelve years ago she murdered General Sacharow, the governor of some Russian city, who had been condemned to death by the Socialists for his energy. She appeared before the general with a petition, holding a revolver under her petticoat. When the general began to read she fired four bullets into his body, killing him on the spot. She was sent to Siberia, where she lived for twelve years, at first in solitary confinement, afterwards under somewhat easier conditions; she also owes her freedom to the Revolution. This remarkable woman learned French and German in Siberia well enough to read them, though she cannot speak them, not knowing how the words should be pronounced. She is the type of the educated Russian proletariat. Extremely quiet and reserved, with a curious determined set of the mouth, and eyes that flare up passionately at times. All that is taking place around her here she seems to regard with indifference. Only when mention is made of the great principles of the International Revolution does she suddenly awake, her whole expression alters; she reminds one of a beast of prey seeing its victim at hand and preparing to fall upon it and rend it.

“After dinner I had my first long conversation with Hr. Joffe. His whole theory is based on the idea of establishing the right of self-determination of peoples on the broadest basis throughout the world, and trusting to the peoples thus freed to continue in mutual love. Joffe does not deny that the process would involve civil war throughout the world to begin with, but he believes that such a war, as realising the ideals of humanity, would be justified, and its end worth all it would cost. I contented myself with telling him that he must let Russia give proof that Bolshevism was the way to a happier age; when he had shown this to be so, the rest of the world would be won over to his ideals. But until his theory had been proved by example he would hardly succeed in convincing people generally to adopt his views. We were ready to conclude a general peace without indemnities or annexations, and were thoroughly agreed to leave the development of affairs in Russia thereafter to the judgment of the Russian Government itself. We should also be willing to learn something

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from Russia, and if his revolution succeeded he would force Europe to follow him, whether we would or not. But meanwhile there was a great deal of scepticism about, and I pointed out to him that we should not ourselves undertake any imitation of the Russian methods, and did not wish for any interference with our own internal affairs: this we must strictly forbid. If he persisted in endeavouring to carry out this Utopian plan of grafting his ideas on ourselves, he had better go back home by the next train, for there could be no question of making peace. Hr. Joffe looked at me in astonishment with his soft eyes, was silent for a while, and then, in a kindly, almost imploring tone that I shall never forget, he said: 'Still, I hope we may yet be able to raise the revolution in your country too.'

"We shall hardly need any assistance from the good Joffe, I fancy, in bringing about a revolution among ourselves; the people will manage that, if the Entente persist in refusing to come to terms.

"They are strange creatures, these Bolsheviks. They talk of freedom and the reconciliation of the peoples of the world, of peace and unity, and withal they are said to be the most cruel tyrants history has ever known. They are simply exterminating the bourgeoisie, and their arguments are machine guns and the gallows. My talk to-day with Joffe has shown me that these people are not honest, and in falsity surpass all that cunning diplomacy has been accused of, for to oppress decent citizens in this fashion and then talk at the same time of the universal blessing of freedom—it is sheer lying.

"*December 21, 1917.*—I went with all my party to lunch at noon with the Prince of Bavaria. He lives in a little bit of a palace half an hour by car from Brest. He seems to be much occupied with military matters, and is very busy.

"I spent the first night in the train, and while we were at breakfast our people moved in with the luggage to our residence. We are in a small house, where I live with all the Austro-Hungarian party, quite close to the officers' casino, and there is every comfort that could be wished for here. I spent the afternoon at work with my people, and in the evening there was a meeting of the delegates of the three Powers. This evening I had the first talk with Kuehlmann alone, and at once declared positively that the Russians would propose a *general* peace, and that we must accept it. Kuehlmann is half disposed to take my view himself; the formula, of course, will be 'no party to demand annexations or indemnities'; then, if the Entente agree, we shall have an end of all this suffering. But, alas! it is hardly likely that they will.

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"*December 22, 1917.*—The forenoon was devoted to the first discussion among the Allies, the principles just referred to as discussed with Kuehlmann being then academically laid down. In the afternoon the first plenary sitting took place, the proceedings being opened by the Prince of Bavaria and then led by Dr. Kuehlmann. It was decided that the Powers should take it in turns to preside, in order of the Latin alphabet as to their names, *i.e*. Allemagne, Autriche, *etc*. Dr. Kuehlmann requested Hr. Joffe to tell us the principles on which he considered a future peace should be based, and the Russian delegate then went through the six main tenets already familiar from the newspapers. The proposal was noted, and we undertook to give a reply as early as possible after having discussed the matter among ourselves. These, then, were the proceedings of the first brief sitting of the peace congress.

"*December 23, 1917.*—Kuehlmann and I prepared our answer early. It will be generally known from the newspaper reports. It cost us much heavy work to get it done. Kuehlmann is personally an advocate of general peace, but fears the influence of the military party, who do not wish to make peace until definitely victorious. But at last it is done. Then there were further difficulties with the Turks. They declared that they must insist on one thing, to wit, that the Russian troops should be withdrawn from the Caucasus immediately on the conclusion of peace, a proposal to which the Germans would not agree, as this would obviously mean that they would have to evacuate Poland, Courland, and Lithuania at the same time, to which Germany would never consent. After a hard struggle and repeated efforts, we at last succeeded in persuading the Turks to give up this demand. The second Turkish objection was that Russia had not sufficiently clearly declared its intention of refraining from all interference in internal affairs. But the Turkish Foreign Minister agreed that internal affairs in Austria-Hungary were an even more perilous sphere for Russian intrigues than were the Turkish; if I had no hesitation in accepting, he also could be content.

"The Bulgarians, who are represented by Popow, the Minister of Justice, as their chief, and some of whom cannot speak German at all, some hardly any French, did not get any proper idea of the whole proceedings until later on, and postponed their decision until the 24th.

"*December 24, 1917.*—Morning and afternoon, long conferences with the Bulgarians, in the course of which Kuehlmann and I on the one hand and the Bulgarian representatives on the other, were engaged with considerable heat. The Bulgarian delegates demanded that a clause should be inserted exempting Bulgaria from the no-annexation principle, and providing that the taking over by Bulgaria of Roumanian and Serbian territory should not be regarded as annexation. Such a clause would, of course, have rendered all

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our efforts null and void, and could not under any circumstances be agreed to. The discussion was attended with considerable excitement at times, and the Bulgarian delegates even threatened to withdraw altogether if we did not give way. Kuehlmann and my humble self remained perfectly firm, and told them we had no objection to their withdrawing if they pleased; they could also, if they pleased, send their own answer separately to the proposal, but no further alteration would be made in the draft which we, Kuehlmann and I, had drawn up. As no settlement could be arrived at, the plenary sitting was postponed to the 25th, and the Bulgarian delegates wired to Sofia for fresh instructions.

"The Bulgarians received a negative reply, and presumably the snub we had expected. They were very dejected, and made no further difficulty about agreeing to the common action. So the matter is settled as far as that goes.

"In the afternoon I had more trouble with the Germans. The German military party 'fear' that the Entente may, perhaps, be inclined to agree to a general peace, and could not think of ending the war in this 'unprofitable' fashion. It is intolerable to have to listen to such twaddle.

"If the great victories which the German generals are hoping for on the Western front should be realised, there will be no bounds to their demands, and the difficulty of all negotiations will be still further increased.

"*December 25, 1917.*—The plenary sitting took place to-day, when we gave the Russians our answer to their peace proposals. I was presiding, and delivered the answer, and Joffe replied. *The general offer of peace is thus to be made, and we must await the result.* In order to lose no time, however, the negotiations on matters concerning Russia are being continued meanwhile. We have thus made a good step forward, and *perhaps* got over the worst. It is impossible to say whether yesterday may not have been a decisive turning point in the history of the world.

"*December 26, 1917.*—The special negotiations began at 9 A.M. The programme drawn up by Kuehlmann, chiefly questions of economical matters and representation, were dealt with so rapidly and smoothly that by 11 o'clock the sitting terminated, for lack of further matter to discuss. This is perhaps a good omen. Our people are using to-day to enter the results of the discussion in a report of proceedings, as the sitting is to be continued to-morrow, when territorial questions will be brought up.

"*December 26, 1917.*—I have been out for a long walk alone.

“On the way back, I met an old Jew. He was sitting in the gutter, weeping bitterly. He did not beg, did not even look at me, only wept and wept, and could not speak at first for sobs. And then he told me his story—Russian, Polish, and German, all mixed together.

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“Well, he had a store—heaven knows where, but somewhere in the war zone. First came the Cossacks. They took all he had—his goats and his clothes, and everything in the place—and then they beat him. Then the Russians retired, beat him again, *en passant* as it were, and then came the Germans. They fired his house with their guns, pulled off his boots, and beat him. Then he entered the service of the Germans, carrying water and wood, and received his food and beatings in return. But to-day he had got into trouble with them in some incomprehensible fashion; no food after that, only the beatings; and was thrown into the street.

“The beatings he referred to as something altogether natural. They were for him the natural accompaniment to any sort of action—but he could not live on beatings alone.

“I gave him what I had on me—money and cigars—told him the number of my house, and said he could come to-morrow, when I could get him a pass to go off somewhere where there were no Germans and no Russians, and try to get him a place of some sort where he would be fed and not beaten. He took the money and cigars thankfully enough; the story of the railway pass and the place he did not seem to believe. Railway travelling was for soldiers, and an existence without beatings seemed an incredible idea.

“He kept on thanking me till I was out of sight, waving his hand, and thanking me in his German-Russian gibberish.

“A terrible thing is war. Terrible at all times, but worst of all in one’s own country. We at home suffer hunger and cold, but at least we have been spared up to now the presence of the enemy hordes.

“This is a curious place—melancholy, yet with a beauty of its own. An endless flat, with just a slight swelling of the ground, like an ocean set fast, wave behind wave as far as the eye can see. And all things grey, dead grey, to where this dead sea meets the grey horizon. Clouds race across the sky, the wind lashing them on.

“This evening, before supper, Hoffmann informed the Russians of the German plans with regard to the outer provinces. The position is this: As long as the war in the West continues, the Germans cannot evacuate Courland and Lithuania, since, apart from the fact that they must be held as security for the general peace negotiations, these countries form part of the German munition establishment. The railway material, the factories, and, most of all, the grain are indispensable as long as the war lasts. That they cannot now withdraw from there at once is clear enough. If peace is signed, then the self-determination of the people in the occupied territory will decide. But here arises the great difficulty: how this right of self-determination is to be exercised.

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“The Russians naturally do not want the vote to be taken while the German bayonets are still in the country, and the Germans reply that the unexampled terrorism of the Bolsheviks would falsify any election result, since the ‘bourgeois,’ according to Bolshevist ideas, are not human beings at all. My idea of having the proceedings controlled by a *neutral* Power was not altogether acceptable to anyone. During the war no neutral Power would undertake the task, and the German occupation could not be allowed to last until the ultimate end. In point of fact, both sides are afraid of terrorisation by the opposing party, and each wishes to apply the same itself.

“*December 26, 1917.*—There is no hurry apparently in this place. Now it is the Turks who are not ready, now the Bulgarians, then it is the Russians’ turn—and the sitting is again postponed or broken off almost as soon as commenced.

“I am reading some memoirs from the French Revolution. A most appropriate reading at the present time, in view of what is happening in Russia and may perhaps come throughout Europe. There were no Bolsheviks then, but men who tyrannised the world under the battle-cry of freedom were to be found in Paris then as well as now in St. Petersburg. Charlotte Corday said: ’It was not a man, but a wild beast I killed.’ These Bolsheviks in their turn will disappear, and who can say if there will be a Corday ready for Trotski?

“Joffe told me about the Tsar and his family, and the state of things said to exist there. He spoke with great respect of Nicolai Nicolaievitch as a thorough man, full of energy and courage, one to be respected even as an enemy. The Tsar, on the other hand, he considered cowardly, false, and despicable. It was a proof of the incapacity of the bourgeois that they had tolerated such a Tsar. Monarchs were all of them more or less degenerate; he could not understand how anyone could accept a form of government which involved the risk of having a degenerate ruler. I answered him as to this, that a monarchy had first of all one advantage, that there was at least one place in the state beyond the sphere of personal ambition and intrigues, and as to degeneration, that was often a matter of opinion: there were also degenerates to be found among the uncrowned rulers of states. Joffe considered that there would be no such risk when the people could choose for themselves. I pointed out that Hr. Lenin, for instance, had not been ‘chosen,’ and I considered it doubtful whether an impartial election would have brought him into power. Possibly there might be some in Russia who would consider him also degenerate.

“*December 27, 1917.*—The Russians are in despair, and some of them even talked of withdrawing altogether. They had thought the Germans would renounce all occupied territory without further parley, or hand it over to the Bolsheviks. Long sittings between the Russians, Kuehlmann, and myself, part of the time with Hoffmann. I drew up the following:—

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“1. As long as general peace is not yet declared, we cannot give up the occupied areas; they form part of our great munition works (factories, railways, sites with buildings, *etc*.).

“2. After the general peace, a plebiscite in Poland, Courland, and Lithuania is to decide the fate of the people there; as to the form in which the vote is to be taken, this remains to be further discussed, in order that the Russians may have surety that no coercion is used. Apparently, this suits neither party. Situation much worse.

“*Afternoon.*—Matters still getting worse. Furious wire from Hindenburg about “renunciation” of everything; Ludendorff telephoning every minute; more furious outbursts, Hoffmann very excited, Kuehlmann true to his name and ‘cool’ as ever. The Russians declare they cannot accept the vague formulas of the Germans with regard to freedom of choice.

“I told Kuehlmann and Hoffmann I would go as far as possible with them; but should their endeavours fail, then I would enter into separate negotiations with the Russians, since Berlin and Petersburg were really both opposed to an uninfluenced vote. Austria-Hungary, on the other hand, desired nothing but final peace. Kuehlmann understands my position, and says he himself would rather *go* than let it fail. Asked me to give him my point of view in writing, as it ’would strengthen his position.’ Have done so. He has telegraphed it to the Kaiser.

“*Evening.*—Kuehlmann believes matters will be settled—or broken off altogether—by to-morrow.

“*December 28, 1917.*—General feeling, dull. Fresh outbursts of violence from Kreuznach. But at noon a wire from Bussche: Hertling had spoken with the Kaiser, who is perfectly satisfied. Kuehlmann said to me: ‘The Kaiser is the only sensible man in the whole of Germany.’

“We have at last agreed about the form of the committee; that is, a committee *ad hoc* is to be formed in Brest, to work out a plan for the evacuation and voting in detail. *Tant bien que mal*, a provisional expedient. All home to report; next sitting to be held January 5, 1918.

“Russians again somewhat more cheerful.

“This evening at dinner I rose to express thanks on the part of the Russians and the four Allies to Prince Leopold. He answered at once, and very neatly, but told me immediately afterwards that I had taken him by surprise. As a matter of fact, I had been taken by surprise myself; no notice had been given; it was only during the dinner itself that the Germans asked me to speak.

“Left at 10 P.M. for Vienna.

“From the 29th to the morning of the 3rd I was in Vienna. Two long audiences with the Emperor gave me the opportunity of telling him what had passed at Brest. He fully approves, of course, the point of view that peace must be made, if at all possible.

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“I have dispatched a trustworthy agent to the outer provinces in order to ascertain the exact state of feeling there. He reports that *all* are against the Bolsheviks except the Bolsheviks themselves. The entire body of citizens, peasants—in a word, everyone with any possessions at all—trembles at the thought of these red robbers, and wishes to go over to Germany. The terrorism of Lenin is said to be indescribable, and in Petersburg all are absolutely *longing* for the entry of the German troops to deliver them.

“*January 3, 1918.*—Return to Brest.

“On the way, at 6 P.M., I received, at a station, the following telegram, in code, from Baron Gautsch, who had remained at Brest:

“’Russian delegation received following telegram from Petersburg this morning: To General Hoffmann. For the representatives of the German, Austro-Hungarian, Bulgarian and Turkish delegations. The Government of the Russian Republic considers it necessary to carry on the further negotiations on neutral ground, and proposes removing to Stockholm. Regarding attitude to the proposals as formulated by the German and Austro-Hungarian delegation in Points 1 and 2, the Government of the Russian Republic and the Pan-Russian Central Executive Committee of the Councils of Workers’, Soldiers’ and Peasants’ Deputies consider, in entire agreement with the view expressed by our delegation, that the proposals are contrary to the principle of national self-determination, even in the restricted form in which it appears in Point 3 of the reply given by the Four Powers on the 12th ult. President of the Russian Delegation, A. Joffe.” Major Brinkmann has communicated this by telephone to the German delegation, already on the way here. Herr von Kuehlmann has sent a telephone message in return that he is continuing the journey, and will arrive at Brest this evening.’

“I also went on of course, considering this manoeuvre on the part of the Russians as rather in the nature of bluffing. If they do not come, then we can treat with the Ukrainians, who should be in Brest by now.

“In Vienna I saw, among politicians, Baernreither, Hauser, Wekerle, Seidler, and some few others. The opinion of almost all may be summed up as follows: ’Peace *must* be arranged, but a separate peace without Germany is *impossible*.’

“No one has told me how I am to manage it if neither Germany nor Russia will listen to reason.

“*January 4, 1918.*—Fearful snowstorm in the night; the heating apparatus in the train was frozen, and the journey consequently far from pleasant. On awaking early at Brest the trains of the Bulgarians and Turks were standing on adjacent sidings. Weather magnificent now: cold, and the air as at St. Moritz. I went across to Kuehlmann, had breakfast with him, and talked over events in Berlin. There seems to have been desperate excitement there. Kuehlmann suggested to Ludendorff

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that he should come to Brest himself and take part in the negotiations. After long discussion, however, it appeared that Ludendorff himself was not quite clear as to what he wanted, and declared spontaneously that he considered it superfluous for him to go to Brest; he would, at best, 'only spoil things if he did.' Heaven grant the man such gleams of insight again, and often! It seems as if the whole trouble is more due to feeling against Kuehlmann than to anything in the questions at issue; people do not want the world to have the impression that the peace was gained by 'adroit diplomacy,' but by military success alone. General Hoffmann appears to have been received with marked favour by the Kaiser, and both he and Kuehlmann declare themselves well satisfied with the results of their journey.

"We talked over the reply to the Petersburg telegram, declining a conference in Stockholm, and further tactics to be followed in case of need. We agreed that if the Russians did not come, we must declare the armistice at an end, and chance what the Petersburgers would say to that. On this point Kuehlmann and I were entirely agreed. Nevertheless, the feeling, both in our party and in that of the Germans, was not a little depressed. Certainly, if the Russians do break off negotiations, it will place us in a very unpleasant position. The only way to save the situation is by acting quickly and energetically with the Ukrainian delegation, and we therefore commenced this work on the afternoon of the same day. There is thus at least a hope that we may be able to arrive at positive results with them within reasonable time.

"In the evening, after dinner, came a wire from Petersburg announcing the arrival of the delegation, including the Foreign Minister, Trotski. It was interesting to see the delight of all the Germans at the news; not until this sudden and violent outbreak of satisfaction was it fully apparent how seriously they had been affected by the thought that the Russians would not come. Undoubtedly this is a great step forward, and we all feel that peace is really now on the way.

"*January 5, 1918.*—At seven this morning a few of us went out shooting with Prince Leopold of Bavaria. We went for a distance of 20 to 30 kilometres by train, and then in open automobiles to a magnificent primeval forest extending over two to three hundred square kilometres. Weather very cold, but fine, much snow, and pleasant company. From the point of view of sport, it was poorer than one could have expected. One of the Prince's aides stuck a pig, another shot two hares, and that was all. Back at 6 P.M.

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"*January 6, 1918.*—To-day we had the first discussions with the Ukrainian delegates, all of whom were present except the leader. The Ukrainians are very different from the Russian delegates. Far less revolutionary, and with far more interest in their own country, less in the progress of Socialism generally. They do not really care about Russia at all, but think only of the Ukraine, and their efforts are solely directed towards attaining their own independence as soon as possible. Whether that independence is to be complete and international, or only as within the bounds of a Russian federative state, they do not seem quite to know themselves. Evidently, the very intelligent Ukrainian delegates intended to use us as a springboard from which they themselves could spring upon the Bolsheviks. Their idea was that we should acknowledge their independence, and then, with this as a *fait accompli*, they could face the Bolsheviks and force them to recognise their equal standing and treat with them on that basis. Our line of policy, however, must be either to bring over the Ukrainians to our peace basis, or else to drive a wedge between them and the Petersburgers. As to their desire for independence, we declared ourselves willing to recognise this, provided the Ukrainians on their part would agree to the following three points: 1. The negotiations to be concluded at Brest-Litovsk and not at Stockholm. 2. Recognition of the former political frontier between Austria-Hungary and Ukraine. 3. Non-interference of any one state in the internal affairs of another. Characteristically enough, no answer has yet been received to this proposal!

"*January 7, 1918.*—This forenoon, all the Russians arrived, under the leadership of Trotski. They at once sent a message asking to be excused for not appearing at meals with the rest for the future. At other times also we see nothing of them. The wind seems to be in a very different quarter now from what it was. The German officer who accompanied the Russian delegation from Dunaburg, Captain Baron Lamezan, gave us some interesting details as to this. In the first place, he declared that the trenches in front of Dunaburg are entirely deserted, and save for an outpost or so there were no Russians there at all; also, that at many stations delegates were waiting for the deputation to pass, in order to demand that peace should be made. Trotski had throughout answered them with polite and careful speeches, but grew ever more and more depressed. Baron Lamezan had the impression that the Russians were altogether desperate now, having no choice save between going back with a bad peace or with no peace at all; in either case with the same result: that they would be swept away. Kuehlmann said: 'Ils n'ont que le choix a quelle sauce ils se feront manger.' I answered: 'Tout comme chez nous.'

"A wire has just come in reporting demonstrations in Budapest against Germany. The windows of the German Consulate were broken, a clear indication of the state of feeling which would arise if the peace were to be lost through our demands.

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"*January 8, 1918.*—The Turkish Grand Vizier, Talaat Pasha, arrived during the night, and has just been to call on me. He seems emphatically in favour of making peace; but I fancy he would like, in case of any conflict arising with Germany, to push me into the foreground and keep out of the way himself. Talaat Pasha is one of the cleverest heads among the Turks, and perhaps the most energetic man of them all.

"Before the Revolution he was a minor official in the telegraph service, and was on the revolutionary committee. In his official capacity, he got hold of a telegram from the Government which showed him that the revolutionary movement would be discovered and the game be lost unless immediate action were taken. He suppressed the message, warned the revolutionary committee, and persuaded them to start their work at once. The coup succeeded, the Sultan was deposed, and Talaat was made Minister of the Interior. With iron energy he then turned his attention to the suppression of the opposing movement. Later, he became Grand Vizier, and impersonated, together with Enver Pasha, the will and power of Turkey.

"This afternoon, first a meeting of the five heads of the allied delegations and the Russian. Afterwards, plenary sitting.

"The sitting postponed again, as the Ukrainians are still not ready with their preparations. Late in the evening I had a conversation with Kuehlmann and Hoffmann, in which we agreed fairly well as to tactics. I said again that I was ready to stand by them and hold to their demands as far as ever possible, but in the event of Germany's breaking off the negotiations with Russia I must reserve the right to act with a free hand. Both appeared to understand my point of view, especially Kuehlmann, who, if he alone should decide, would certainly not allow the negotiations to prove fruitless. As to details, we agreed to demand continuation of the negotiations at Brest-Litovsk in the form of an ultimatum.

"*January 9, 1918.*—Acting on the principle that attack is the best defence, we had determined not to let the Russian Foreign Minister speak at all, but to go at him at once with our ultimatum.

"Trotski had prepared a long speech, and the effect of our attack was such that he at once appealed for adjournment, urging that the altered state of affairs called for new resolutions. The removal of the conference to Stockholm would have meant the end of matters for us, for it would have been utterly impossible to keep the Bolsheviks of all countries from putting in an appearance there, and the very thing we had endeavoured with the utmost of our power to avoid from the start—to have the reins torn from our hands and these elements take the lead—would infallibly have taken place. We must now wait to see what to-morrow brings: either a victory or the final termination of the negotiations.

“Adler said to me in Vienna: ’You will certainly get on all right with Trotski,’ and when I asked him why he thought so, he answered: ’Well, you and I get on quite well together, you know.’

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“I think, after all, the clever old man failed to appreciate the situation there. These Bolsheviks have no longer anything in common with Adler; they are brutal tyrants, autocrats of the worst kind, a disgrace to the name of freedom.

“Trotski is undoubtedly an interesting, clever fellow, and a very dangerous adversary. He is quite exceptionally gifted as a speaker, with a swiftness and adroitness in retort which I have rarely seen, and has, moreover, all the insolent boldness of his race.

“*January 10, 1918.*—The sitting has just taken place. Trotski made a great and, in its way, really fine speech, calculated for the whole of Europe, in which he gave way entirely. He accepts, he says, the German-Austria ‘ultimatum,’ and will remain in Brest-Litovsk, as he will not give us the satisfaction of being able to blame Russia for the continuance of the war.

“Following on Trotski’s speech, the Committee was at once formed to deal with the difficult questions of territory. I insisted on being on the Committee myself, wishing to follow throughout the progress of these important negotiations. This was not an easy matter really, as the questions involved, strictly speaking, concern only Courland and Lithuania, *i.e*., they are not our business, but Germany’s alone.

“In the evening I had another long talk with Kuehlmann and Hoffmann, in the course of which the General and the Secretary of State came to high words between themselves. Hoffmann, elated at the success of our ultimatum to Russia, wished to go on in the same fashion and ’give the Russians another touch of the whip.’ Kuehlmann and I took the opposite view, and insisted that proceedings should be commenced quietly, confining ourselves to the matters in hand, clearing up point by point as we went on, and putting all doubtful questions aside. Once we had got so far, in clearing up things generally, we could then take that which remained together, and possibly get telegraphic instructions from the two Emperors for dealing therewith. This is undoubtedly the surest way to avoid disaster and a fresh breach.

“A new conflict has cropped up with the Ukrainians. They now demand recognition of their independence, and declare they will leave if this is not conceded.

“Adler told me at Vienna that Trotski had his library, by which he set great store, somewhere in Vienna, with a Herr Bauer, I fancy. I told Trotski that I would arrange to have the books forwarded to him, if he cared about it. I then recommended to his consideration certain prisoners of war, as L. K. and W., all of whom are said to have been very badly treated. Trotski noted the point, declared that he was strongly opposed to ill-treatment of prisoners of war, and promised to look into the matter; he wished to point out, however, that in so doing he was not in the least influenced by the thought of his library; he would in any case have considered my request. He would be glad to have the books.

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"*January 11, 1918.*—Forenoon and afternoon, long sittings of the Committee on territorial questions. Our side is represented by Kuehlmann, Hoffmann, Rosenberg, and a secretary, in addition to myself, Csicserics, Wiesner, and Colloredo. The Russians are all present, but without the Ukrainians. I told Kuehlmann that I only proposed to attend as a second, seeing that the German interests were incomparably more affected than our own. I only interpose now and again.

"Trotski made a tactical blunder this afternoon. In a speech rising to violence, he declared that we were playing false; we aimed at annexations, and were simply trying to cover them with the cloak of self-determination. He would never agree to this, and would rather break off altogether than continue in that way. If we were honest, we should allow representatives from Poland, Courland, and Lithuania to come to Brest, and there express their views without being influenced in any way by ourselves. Now it should here be noted that from the commencement of the negotiations it has been a point of conflict whether the legislative bodies at present existing in the occupied territories are justified in speaking in the name of their respective peoples, or not. We affirm that they are; the Russians maintain they are not. We at once accepted Trotski's proposal, that representatives of these countries should be called, but added that, when we agreed to accept their testimony, then their judgment if in our favour should be taken as valid.

"It was characteristic to see how gladly Trotski would have taken back what he had said. But he kept his countenance, fell in with the new situation at once, and requested that the sitting be adjourned for twenty-four hours, as our reply was of such far-reaching importance that he must confer with his colleagues on the matter. I hope Trotski will make no difficulty now. If the Poles could be called, it would be an advantage. The awkward thing about it is that Germany, too, would rather be without them, knowing the anti-Prussian feeling that exists among the Poles.

"*January 12, 1918.*—Radek has had a scene with the German chauffeur, which led to something more. General Hoffmann had placed cars at the disposal of the Russians in case they cared to drive out. On this occasion it happened that the chauffeur was not there at the proper time, and Radek flew into a rage with the man and abused him violently. The chauffeur complained, and Hoffmann took his part. Trotski seems to consider Hoffmann's action correct, and has *forbidden* the entire delegation to go out any more. That settled them. And serve them right.

"No one ventured to protest. They have indeed a holy fear of Trotski. At the sittings, too, none of them dare to speak while he is there.

"*January 12, 1918.*—Hoffmann has made his unfortunate speech. He has been working at it for days, and was very proud of the result. Kuehlmann and I did not conceal from him that he gained nothing by it beyond exciting the people at home against us. This made a certain impression on him, but it was soon effaced by Ludendorff's

congratulations, which followed promptly. Anyhow, it has rendered the situation more difficult, and there was certainly no need for that.

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"*January 15, 1918.*—I had a letter to-day from one of our mayors at home, calling my attention to the fact that disaster due to lack of foodstuffs is now imminent.

"I immediately telegraphed the Emperor as follows:

"'I have just received a letter from Statthalter N.N. which justifies all the fears I have constantly repeated to Your Majesty, and shows that in the question of food supply we are on the very verge of a catastrophe. The situation *arising out of the carelessness and incapacity of the Ministers* is terrible, and I fear it is already too late to check the total collapse which is to be expected in the next few weeks. My informant writes: "Only small quantities are now being received from Hungary, from Roumania only 10,000 wagons of maize; this gives then a decrease of at least 30,000 wagons of grain, without which we must infallibly perish. On learning the state of affairs, I went to the Prime Minister to speak with him about it. I told him, as is the case, that in a few weeks our war industries, our railway traffic, would be at a standstill, the provisioning of the army would be impossible, it must break down, and that would mean the collapse of Austria and therewith also of Hungary. To each of these points he answered yes, that is so, and added that all was being done to alter the state of affairs, especially as regards the Hungarian deliveries. But no one, not even His Majesty, has been able to get anything done. We can only hope that some *deus ex machina* may intervene to save us from the worst.'"

"To this I added:

"'I can find no words to describe properly the apathetic attitude of Seidler. How often and how earnestly have I not implored Your Majesty to intervene forcibly for once and *compel* Seidler, on the one hand, and Hadik, on the other, to set these things in order. Even from here I have written entreating Your Majesty to act while there was yet time. But all in vain.'

"I then pointed out that the only way of meeting the situation would be to secure temporary assistance from Germany, and then to requisition by force the stocks that were doubtless still available in Hungary; finally, I begged the Emperor to inform the Austrian Prime Minister of my telegram.

"*January 16, 1918.*—Despairing appeals from Vienna for food supplies. Would I apply at once to Berlin for aid, otherwise disaster imminent. I replied to General Landwehr as follows:

"'Dr. Kuehlmann is telegraphing to Berlin, but has little hope of success. The only hope now is for His Majesty to do as I have advised, and send an urgent wire at once to Kaiser Wilhelm. On my return I propose to put before His Majesty my point of view, that it is impossible to carry on the foreign policy if the food question at home is allowed to come to such a state as now.

“’Only a few weeks back your Excellency declared most positively that we could hold out till the new harvest.’

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“At the same time I wired the Emperor:

“’Telegrams arriving show the situation becoming critical for us. Regarding question of food, we can only avoid collapse on two conditions: first, that Germany helps us temporarily, second, that we use this respite to set in order our machinery of food supply, which is at present beneath contempt, and to gain possession of the stocks still existing in Hungary.“’I have just explained the entire situation to Dr. Kuehlmann, and he is telegraphing to Berlin. He, however, is not at all sanguine, as Germany is itself in straitened circumstances. I think the only way to secure any success from this step would be for Your Majesty to send at once, through military means, a Hughes telegram to Kaiser Wilhelm direct, urgently entreating him to intervene himself, and by securing us a supply of grain prevent the outbreak of revolution, which would otherwise be inevitable. I must, however, emphatically point out that the commencement of unrest among our people at home will have rendered conclusion of peace here absolutely impossible. As soon as the Russian representatives perceive that we ourselves are on the point of revolution, they will not make peace at all, since their entire speculation is based on this factor.’

“*January 17, 1918.*—Bad news from Vienna and environs: serious strike movement, due to the reduction of the flour rations and the tardy progress of the Brest negotiations. The weakness of the Vienna Ministry seems to be past all understanding.

“I have telegraphed to Vienna that I hope in time to secure some supplies from the Ukraine, if only we can manage to keep matters quiet at home for the next few weeks, and I have begged the gentlemen in question to do their utmost not to wreck the peace here. On the same day, in the evening, I telegraphed to Dr. von Seidler, the Prime Minister:

> “’I very greatly regret my inability to counteract the effect of all the errors made by those entrusted with the food resources.
>
> “’Germany declares categorically that it is unable to help us, having insufficient for itself.

“’Had your Excellency or your department called attention to the state of things *in time*, it might still have been possible to procure supplies from Roumania. As things are now, I can see no other way than that of brute force, by requisitioning Hungarian grain for the time being, and forwarding it to Austria, until the Roumanian, and it is to be hoped also Ukrainian, supplies can come to hand.’

[Illustration: GENERAL HOFFMANN (on right) WITH MAJ. BRINKMANN]

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"*January 20, 1918.*—The negotiations have now come to this: that Trotski declares his intention of laying the German proposals before Petersburg, though he cannot accept them himself; he undertakes, in any case, to return here. As to calling in representatives from the outer provinces, he will only do this provided he is allowed to choose them. We cannot agree to this. With the Ukrainians, who, despite their youth, are showing themselves quite sufficiently grown to profit by the situation, negotiations are proceeding but slowly. First they demanded East Galicia for the new 'Ukrainia.' This could not be entertained for a moment. Then they grew more modest, but since the outbreak of trouble at home among ourselves they realise our position, and know that we *must* make peace in order to get corn. Now they demand a separate position for East Galicia. The question will have to be decided in Vienna, and the Austrian Ministry will have the final word.

"Seidler and Landwehr again declare by telegram that without supplies of grain from Ukraine the catastrophe is imminent. There *are* supplies in the Ukraine; if we can get them, the worst may be avoided.

"The position now is this: Without help from outside, we shall, according to Seidler, have thousands perishing in a few weeks. Germany and Hungary are no longer sending anything. All messages state that there is a great surplus in Ukraine. The question is only whether we can get it in time. I hope we may. But if we do not make peace *soon*, then the troubles at home will be repeated, and each demonstration in Vienna will render peace here most costly to obtain, for Messrs. Sewrjuk and Lewicky can read the degree of our state of famine at home from these troubles as by a thermometer. If only the people who create these disturbances know how they are by that very fact increasing the difficulty of procuring supplies from Ukraine! And we were all but finished!

"The question of East Galicia I will leave to the Austrian Ministry; it must be decided in Vienna. I cannot, and dare not, look on and see hundreds of thousands starve for the sake of retaining the sympathy of the Poles, so long as there is a possibility of help.

"*January 21, 1918.*—Back to Vienna. The impression of the troubles here is even greater than I thought, and the effect disastrous. The Ukrainians no longer treat with us: they *dictate*!

"On the way, reading through old reports, I came upon the notes relating to the discussions with Michaelis on August 1. According to these, Under-Secretary of State von Stumm said at the time:

"'The Foreign Ministry was in communication with the Ukrainians, and the separatist movement in Ukrainia was very strong. In furtherance of their movement, the Ukrainians demanded the assurance that they should be allowed to unite with the Government of Cholm, and with the areas of East Galicia occupied by Ukrainians. So

long as Galicia belongs to Austria, the demand for East Galicia cannot be conceded. It would be another matter if Galicia were united with Poland; then a cession of East Galicia might be possible.'

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“It would seem that the unpleasant case had long since been prejudged by the Germans.

“On January 22 the Council was held which was to determine the issue of the Ukrainian question. The Emperor opened the proceedings, and then called on me to speak. I described first of all the difficulties that lay in the way of a peace with Petersburg, which will be apparent from the foregoing entries in this diary. I expressed my doubt as to whether our group would succeed in concluding general peace with Petersburg. I then sketched the course of the negotiations with the Ukrainians. I reported that the Ukrainians had originally demanded the cession of East Galicia, but that I had refused this. With regard to the Ruthenian districts of Hungary also they had made demands which had been refused by me. At present, they demanded the division of Galicia into two parts, and the formation of an independent Austrian province from East Galicia and Bukovina. I pointed out the serious consequences which the acceptance of the Ukrainian demands would have upon the further development of the Austro-Polish question. The concessions made by the Ukrainians on their part were to consist in the inclusion in the peace treaty of a commercial agreement which should enable us to cover our immediate needs in the matter of grain supplies. Furthermore, Austria-Hungary would insist on full reciprocity for the Poles resident in Ukraine.

“I pointed out emphatically that I considered it my duty to state the position of the peace negotiations; that the decision could not lie with me, but with the Ministry as a whole, in particular with the Austrian Prime Minister. The Austrian Government would have to decide whether these sacrifices could be made or not, and here I could leave them in no doubt that if we declined the Ukrainian demands we should probably come to no result with that country, and should thus be compelled to return from Brest-Litovsk without having achieved any peace settlement at all.

“When I had finished, the Prime Minister, Dr. von Seidler, rose to speak. He pointed out first of all the necessity of an immediate peace, and then discussed the question of establishing a Ukrainian crown land, especially from the parliamentary point of view. Seidler believed that despite the active opposition which was to be expected from the Poles, he would still have a majority of two-thirds in the House for the acceptance of the bill on the subject. He was not blind to the fact that arrangement would give rise to violent parliamentary conflicts, but repeated his hope that a two-thirds majority could be obtained despite the opposition of the Polish Delegation. After Seidler came the Hungarian Prime Minister, Dr. Wekerle. He was particularly pleased to note that no concessions had been made to the Ukrainians with regard to the Ruthenians resident in Hungary. A clear division of the nationalities in Hungary was impracticable. The Hungarian Ruthenians were

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also at too low a stage of culture to enable them to be given national independence. Dr. Wekerle also laid stress on the danger, alike in Austria, of allowing any interference from without; the risk of any such proceeding would be very great, we should find ourselves on a downward grade by so doing, and we must hold firmly to the principle that no interference in the affairs of the Monarchy from without could be tolerated. In summing up, however, Wekerle opposed the point of view of the Austrian Prime Minister.

“I then rose again to speak, and declared that I was perfectly aware of the eminent importance and perilous aspects of this step. It was true that it would bring us on to a down-grade, but from all appearances, we had been in that position already for a long time, owing to the war, and could not say how far it might lead us. I put the positive question to Dr. Wekerle, what was a responsible leader of our foreign policy to do when the Austrian Prime Minister and both the Ministers of Food unanimously declared that the Hungarian supplies would only suffice to help us over the next two months, after which time a collapse would be absolutely unavoidable, unless we could secure assistance from somewhere in the way of corn? On being interrupted here by a dissentient observation from Dr. Wekerle, I told him that if he, Wekerle, could bring corn into Austria I should be the first to support his point of view, and that with pleasure, but so long as he stood by his categorical denial, and insisted on his inability to help us, we were in the position of a man on the third floor of a burning house who jumps out of the window to save himself. A man in such a situation would not stop to think whether he risked breaking his legs or not; he would prefer the risk of death to the certainty of the same. If the position really were as stated, that in a couple of months we should be altogether without food supplies, then we must take the consequences of such a position. Dr. von Seidler here once more took up the discussion, and declared himself entirely in agreement with my remarks.

“During the further course of the debate, the probability of a definitive failure of the Austro-Polish solution in connection with the Ukrainian peace was discussed, and the question was raised as to what new constellation would arise out of such failure. Sektionschef Dr. Gratz then took up this question. Dr. Gratz pointed out that the Austro-Polish solution must fail even without acceptance of the Ukrainian demands, since the German postulates rendered solution impossible. The Germans demanded, apart from quite enormous territorial reductions of Congress-Poland, the restriction of Polish industry, part possession of the Polish railways and State domains, as well as the imposition of part of the costs of war upon the Poles. We could not attach ourselves to a Poland thus weakened, hardly, indeed, capable of living at all, and necessarily highly dissatisfied with its

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position. Dr. Gratz maintained that it would be wiser to come back to the programme already discussed in general form; the project, by which United Poland should be left to Germany, and the attachment of Roumania to the Monarchy in consequence. Dr. Gratz went at length into the details of this point of view. The Emperor then summed up the essence of the opinions expressed to-day as indicating that it was primarily necessary to make peace with Petersburg and the Ukrainians, and that negotiations should be entered upon with Ukrainia as to the division of Galicia. The question as to whether the Austro-Polish solution should be definitely allowed to drop was not finally settled, but shelved for the time being.

"In conclusion, Dr. Burian, the Minister of Finance, rose to speak, and pointed out, as Dr. Wekerle had done, the danger of the Austrian standpoint. Burian declared that, while the war might doubtless change the internal structure of the Monarchy, such alteration must be made from within, not from without, if it were to be of any benefit to the Monarchy at all. He further pointed out that if the Austrian principle of the division of Galicia were to be carried through, the *form* of so doing would be of great importance. Baron Burian advised that a clause referring to this should be inserted, not in the instrument of peace itself, but in a secret annexe. This form was, in his, Burian's, view, the only possible means of diminishing the serious consequences of the steps which the Austrian Government wished to take."

Thus the notes in my diary relative to this Council. The Austrian Government was thus not only agreed as to the proposed arrangement with the Ukraine; it was indeed at the direct wish of the Government, by its instigation and on its responsibility, that it was brought about.

"*January 28, 1918.*—Reached Brest this evening.

"*January 29, 1918.*—Trotski arrived.

"*January 30, 1918.*—The first plenary session has been held. There is no doubt that the revolutionary happenings in Austria and in Germany have enormously raised the hopes of the Petersburgers for a general convulsion, and it seems to me altogether out of the question now to come to any peace terms with the Russians. It is evident among the Russians themselves that they positively expect the outbreak of a world-revolution within the next few weeks, and their tactics now are simply to gain time and wait for this to happen. The conference was not marked by any particular event, only pin-pricks between Kuehlmann and Trotski. To-day is the first sitting of the Committee on territorial questions, where I am to preside, and deal with our territorial affairs.

“The only interesting point about the new constellation seems to be that the relations between Petersburg and Kieff are considerably worse than before, and the Kieff Committee is no longer recognised at all by the Bolsheviks as independent.

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"*February 1, 1918.*—Sitting of the Territorial Committee, I myself presiding, with the Petersburg Russians. My plan is to play the Petersburgers and the Ukrainians one against the other, and manage at least to make peace with one of the two parties. I have still some slight hope that a peace with one may so affect the other that possibly peace with both may be attained.

"As was to be expected, Trotski replied to my question, whether he admitted that the Ukrainians should treat with us alone on questions dealing with their frontiers, with an emphatic denial. I then, after some exchange of words, proposed that the sitting be adjourned, and a plenary sitting convened, in order that the matter might be dealt with by the Kieff and Petersburg parties together.

"*February 2, 1918.*—I have tried to get the Ukrainians to talk over things openly with the Russians, and succeeded almost too well. The insults hurled by the Ukrainians to-day against the Russians were simply grotesque, and showed what a gulf is fixed between these two Governments, and that it is not our fault that we have not been able to bring them together under one hat on the question of peace. Trotski was so upset it was painful to see. Perfectly pale, he stared fixedly before him, drawing nervously on his blotting paper. Heavy drops of sweat trickled down his forehead. Evidently he felt deeply the disgrace of being abused by his fellow-citizens in the presence of the enemy.

"The two brothers Richthofen were here a little while ago. The elder has shot down some sixty, the younger 'only' some thirty enemy airmen. The elder's face is like that of a young and pretty girl. He told me 'how the thing is done.' It is very simple. Only get as near to the enemy as possible, from behind, and then keep on shooting, when the other man would fall. The one thing needful was to 'get over your own fright,' and not be shy of getting quite close to your opponent.—Modern heroes.

"Two charming stories were told about these two brothers. The English had put a price on the head of the elder Richthofen. When he learned of this, he sent down broadsheets informing them that to make matters easier for them, he would from the following day have his machine painted bright red. Next morning, going to the shed, he found all the machines there painted bright red. One for all and all for one.

"The other story is this: Richthofen and an English airman were circling round each other and firing furiously. They came closer and closer, and soon they could distinctly see each other's faces. Suddenly something went wrong with Richthofen's machine-gun, and he could not shoot. The Englishman looked across in surprise, and seeing what was wrong, waved his hand, turned and flew off. Fair play! I should like to meet that Englishman, only to tell him that he is greater, to my mind, than the heroes of old.

"*February 3, 1918.*—Started for Berlin. Kuehlmann, Hoffmann, Colloredo.

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"*February 4, 1918.*—Arrived Berlin. Nothing this afternoon, as the Germans are holding council among themselves.

"*February 5, 1918.*—Sitting all day. I had several violent passages of arms with Ludendorff. Matters seemed to be clearing up, though this is not yet altogether done. Apart from deciding on our tactics for Brest, we have at last to set down *in writing* that we are only obliged to fight for the pre-war possessions of Germany. Ludendorff was violently opposed to this, and said, 'If Germany makes peace without profit, then Germany has lost the war.'

"The controversy was growing more and more heated, when Hertling nudged me and whispered: 'Leave him alone, we two will manage it together without him.'

"I am now going to work out the draft at once and send it in to Hertling.

"Supper this evening at Hoehenlohe.

"*February 6, 1918.*—Arrived Brest this evening. Wiesner has been at it untiringly and done excellent work; the situation, too, is easier now. The leader of the Austrian Ruthenians, Nikolay Wassilko, arrived yesterday, and albeit evidently excited by the part his Russian-Ukrainian comrades are playing at Brest, speaks nationally, far more chauvinistically than when I thought I knew him in Vienna, and we have at last agreed on the minimum of the Ukrainian demands. I gave as my advice in Berlin that we should try to finish with the Ukrainians as soon as possible. I could then in the name of Germany commence negotiations with Trotski, and try if I could not get speech with him privately, and find out whether any agreement were possible or not. It is Gratz's idea. After some opposition we agreed.

"*February 7, 1918.*—My conversation with Trotski took place. I took Gratz with me; he has far exceeded all my expectations of him. I began by telling Trotski that a breach of the regulations and a resumption of hostilities were imminent, and wished to know if this could not be avoided before the fatal step were definitely taken. I therefore begged Herr Trotski to inform me openly and without reserve what conditions he would accept. Trotski then declared very frankly and clearly that he was not so simple as we appeared to think, that he knew well enough force was the strongest of all arguments, and that the Central Powers were quite capable of taking away the Russian provinces. He had several times tried to bridge a way for Kuehlmann during the conference, telling him it was not a question of the right of self-determination of the peoples in the occupied districts, but of sheer brutal annexation, and that he must give way to force. He would never relinquish his principles, and would never give his consent to this interpretation of the right of self-determination. The Germans must say straight out what were the boundaries they demanded, and he would then make clear to all Europe that it was a brutal annexation and nothing else, but that Russia was too

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weak to oppose it. Only the Moon Sound Islands seemed to be more than he could swallow. Secondly, and this is very characteristic, Trotski said he could never agree to our making peace with the Ukraine, since the Ukraine was no longer in the hands of its Rada, but in the hands of his troops. It was a part of Russia, and to make peace with it would be interfering in the internal affairs of Russia itself. The fact of the matter seems to be that about nineteen days ago the Russian troops really did enter Kieff, but were subsequently driven out, the Rada once more coming into power as before. Whether Trotski was unaware of this latter development or purposely concealed the truth I cannot say for certain, but it seems as if the former were the case.

"The last hope of coming to an understanding with Petersburg has vanished. An appeal from the Petersburg Government to the German soldiers has been discovered in Berlin, inciting them to revolt, to murder the Kaiser and their generals, and unite with the soviets. Following on this came a telegram from Kaiser Wilhelm to Kuehlmann ordering him to terminate negotiations at once, by demanding, besides Courland and Lithuania, also the unoccupied territories of Livonia and Esthonia—all without regard to the right of self-determination of the peoples concerned.

"The dastardly behaviour of these Bolsheviks renders negotiation impossible. I cannot blame Germany for being incensed at such proceedings, but the instructions from Berlin are hardly likely to be carried out. We do not want to drag in Livonia and Esthonia.

"*February 8, 1918.*—This evening the peace with Ukraine is to be signed. The first peace in this terrible war. I wonder if the Rada is still really sitting at Kieff? Wassilko showed me a Hughes message dated 6th inst. from Kieff to the Ukrainian delegation here, and Trotski has declined my suggestion to dispatch an officer of the Austrian General Staff to the spot, in order to bring back reliable information. Evidently, then, his assertion that the Bolsheviks were already masters of Kieff was only a ruse. Gratz informs me, by the way, that Trotski, with whom he spoke early this morning, is much depressed at our intention of concluding peace with Ukraine to-day after all. This confirms me in my purpose of having it signed. Gratz has convened a meeting with the Petersburgers for to-morrow; this will clear matters up, and show us whether any agreement is possible, or if we must break off altogether. In any case, there can be no doubt that the intermezzo at Brest is rapidly nearing its end."

After conclusion of peace with Ukraine, I received the following telegram from the Emperor:

"'*Court train, February 9, 1918.*

“’Deeply moved and rejoiced to learn of the conclusion of peace with Ukraine. I thank you, dear Count Czernin, from my heart for your persevering and successful endeavours.

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"'You have thereby given me the happiest day of my hitherto far from happy reign, and I pray God Almighty that He may further continue to aid you on your difficult path—to the benefit of the Monarchy and of our peoples.

KARL.'

"*February 11, 1918.*—Trotski declines to sign. The war is over, but there is no peace.

"The disastrous effects of the troubles in Vienna will be seen clearly from the following message from Herr von Skrzynski, dated Montreux, February 12, 1918. Skrzynski writes:

"'I learn from a reliable source that France has issued the following notification: We were already quite disposed to enter into discussion with Austria. Now we are asking ourselves whether Austria is still sound enough for the part it was intended to give her. One is afraid of basing an entire policy upon a state which is perhaps already threatened with the fate of Russia.' And Skrzynski adds: 'During the last few days I have heard as follows: It has been decided to wait for a while.'"

Our position, then, during the negotiations with Petersburg was as follows: We could not induce Germany to resign the idea of Courland and Lithuania. We had not the physical force to do so. The pressure exerted by the Supreme Army Command on the one hand and the shifty tactics of the Russians made this impossible. We had then to choose between leaving Germany to itself, and signing a separate peace, or acting together with our three Allies and finishing with a peace including the covert annexation of the Russian outer provinces.

The former alternative involved the serious risk of making a breach in the Quadruple Alliance, where some dissension was already apparent. The Alliance could no longer stand such experiments. We were faced with the final military efforts now, and the unity of the Allies must not in any case be further shaken. On the other hand, the danger that Wilson, the only statesman in the world ready to consider the idea of a peace on mutual understanding, might from the conclusion of such a peace obtain an erroneous impression as to our intentions. I hoped then, and I was not deceived, that this eminently clever man would see through the situation and recognise that we were forced to act under pressure of circumstances. His speeches delivered after the peace at Brest confirmed my anticipation.

The peace with Ukraine was made under pressure of imminent famine. And it bears the characteristic marks of such a birth. That is true. But it is no less true that despite the fact of our having obtained far less from Ukraine than we had hoped, we should, without these supplies, have been unable to carry on at all until the new harvest. Statistics show that during the spring and summer of 1918 42,000 wagon-loads were received from the Ukraine. It would have been impossible to procure these supplies from

anywhere else. Millions of human beings were thus saved from death by starvation—-and let those who sit in judgment on the peace terms bear this in mind.

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It is also beyond doubt that with the great stocks available in Ukraine, an incomparably greater quantity could have been brought into Austria if the collecting and transport apparatus had worked differently.

The Secretary of State for Food Supplies has, at my request, in May, 1919, furnished me with the following statistical data for publication:

> Brief survey of the organisation of corn imports from Ukraine (on terms of the Brest-Litovsk Peace) and the results of same:

When, after great efforts, a suitable agreement had been arrived at with Germany as to the apportionment of the Ukrainian supplies, a mission was dispatched to Kieff, in which not only Government officials but also the best qualified and most experienced experts which the Government could procure were represented.Germany and Hungary had also sent experts, among them being persons with many years of experience in the Russian grain business, and had been in the employ of both German and Entente grain houses (as, for instance, the former representative of the leading French corn merchants, the house of Louis Dreyfuss).

> The official mission arrived at Kieff by the middle of March, and commenced work at once. A comparatively short time sufficed to show that the work would present quite extraordinary difficulties.

The Ukrainian Government, which had declared at Brest-Litovsk that very great quantities, probably about one million tons, of surplus foodstuffs were ready for export, had in the meantime been replaced by another Ministry. The Cabinet then in power evinced no particular inclination, or at any rate no hurry, to fulfil obligations on this scale, but was more disposed to point out that it would be altogether impossible, for various reasons, to do so.Moreover, the Peace of Brest had provided for a regular exchange system, bartering load by load of one article against another. But neither Germany nor Austria-Hungary was even approximately in a position to furnish the goods (textiles especially were demanded) required in exchange.We had then to endeavour to obtain the supplies on credit, and the Ukrainian Government agreed, after long and far from easy negotiations, to provide *credit valuta* (against vouchers for mark and krone in Berlin and Vienna). The arrangements for this were finally made, and the two Central Powers drew in all 643 million karbowanez.The Rouble Syndicate, however, which had been formed under the leadership of the principal banks in Berlin, Vienna and Budapest, was during the first few months only able to exert a very slight activity. Even the formation of this syndicate was a matter of great difficulty, and in particular a great deal of time was lost; and even then the apparatus proved very awkward to work with. Anyhow, it had only procured comparatively small sums of roubles,

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so that the purchasing organisation in Ukraine, especially at first, suffered from a chronic lack of means of payment.But, in any case, a better arrangement of the money question would only have improved matters in a few of the best supplied districts, for the principal obstacle was simply *the lack of supplies*. The fact that Kieff and Odessa were themselves continually in danger of a food crisis is the best indication as to the state of things.In the Ukraine, the effects of four years of war, with the resulting confusion, and of the destruction wrought by the Bolsheviks (November, 1917, to March, 1918) were conspicuously apparent; cultivation and harvesting had suffered everywhere, but where supplies had existed they had been partly destroyed, partly carried off by the Bolsheviks on their way northward. Still, the harvest had given certain stocks available in the country, though these were not extensive, and the organisation of a purchasing system was now commenced. The free buying in Ukraine which we and Germany had originally contemplated could not be carried out in fact, since the Ukrainian Government declared that it would itself set up this organisation, and maintained this intention with the greatest stubbornness. But the authority in the country had been destroyed by the Revolution, and then by the Bolshevist invasion; the peasantry turned Radical, and the estates were occupied by revolutionaries and cut up. The power of the Government, then, in respect of collecting supplies of grain, was altogether inadequate; on the other hand, however, it was still sufficient (as some actual instances proved) to place serious, indeed insuperable, obstacles in our way. It was necessary, therefore, to co-operate with the Government—that is, to come to a compromise with it. After weeks of negotiation this was at last achieved, by strong diplomatic pressure, and, accordingly, the agreement of April 23, 1918, was signed.This provided for the establishment of a German-Austro-Hungarian Economical Central Commission; practically speaking, a great firm of corn merchants, in which the Central Powers appointed a number of their most experienced men, familiar, through years of activity in the business, with Russian grain affairs.But while this establishment was still in progress the people in Vienna (influenced by the occurrences on the Emperor’s journey to North Bohemia) had lost patience; military leaders thought it no longer advisable to continue watching the operations of a *civil* commercial undertaking in Ukraine while that country was occupied by the military, and so finally the General Staff elicited a decree from the Emperor providing that the procuring of grain should be entrusted to Austro-Hungarian army units in the districts occupied by them. To carry out this plan a general, who had up to that time been occupied in Roumania, was dispatched

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to Odessa, and now commenced independent military proceedings from there. For payment kronen were used, drawn from Vienna. The War Grain Transactions department was empowered, by Imperial instructions to the Government, to place 100 million kronen at the disposal of the War Ministry, and this amount was actually set aside by the finance section of that department.This military action and its execution very seriously affected the civil action during its establishment, and also greatly impaired the value of our credit in the Ukraine by offering kronen notes to such an extent at the time. Moreover, the kronen notes thus set in circulation in Ukraine were smuggled into Sweden, and coming thus into the Scandinavian and Dutch markets undoubtedly contributed to the well-known fall in the value of the krone which took place there some months later.The Austro-Hungarian military action was received with great disapproval by the *Germans*, and when in a time of the greatest scarcity among ourselves (mid-May) we were obliged to ask Germany for temporary assistance, this was granted only on condition that independent military action on the part of Austria-Hungary should be suppressed and the whole leadership in Ukraine be entrusted to Germany.It was then hoped that increased supplies might be procured, especially from Bessarabia, where the Germans have established a collecting organisation, to the demand of which the Roumanian Government had agreed. This hope, however, also proved vain, and in June and July the Ukraine was still further engaged. The country was, in fact, almost devoid of any considerable supplies, and in addition to this the collecting system never really worked properly at all, as the arrangement for maximum prices was frequently upset by overbidding on the part of our own military section.Meantime everything had been made ready for getting in the harvest of 1918. The collecting organisation had become more firmly established and extended, the necessary personal requirements were fully complied with, and *it would doubtless have been possible to bring great quantities out of the country*. But first of all the demands of the Ukrainian cities had to be met, and there was in many cases a state of real famine there; then came the Ukrainian and finally the very considerable contingents of German and Austro-Hungarian armies of occupation. Not until supplies for these groups had been assured would the Ukrainian Government allow any export of grain, and to this we were forced to agree.It was at once evident that the degree of cultivation throughout the whole country had seriously declined—owing to the entire uncertainty of property and rights after the agrarian revolution. The local authorities, affected by this state of things, were little inclined to agree to export, and it actually came to local embargoes,

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one district prohibiting the transfer of its stocks to any other, exactly as we had experienced with ourselves.In particular, however, the agitation of the Entente agents (which had been frequently perceptible before), under the impression of the German military defeats, was most seriously felt. The position of the Government which the Germans had set up at Kieff was unusually weak. Moreover, the ever-active Bolshevik elements throughout the whole country were now working with increasing success against our organisation. All this rendered the work more difficult in September and October—and then came the collapse.The difficulties of transport, too, were enormous; supplies had either to be sent to the Black Sea, across it and up the Danube, or straight through Galicia. For this we often lacked sufficient wagons, and in the Ukraine also coal; there were, in addition, often instances of resistance on the part of the local railways, incited by the Bolsheviks, and much more of the same sort.However great the lack of supplies in Ukraine itself, however much the limitations of our Russian means of payment may have contributed to the fact that the hopes entertained on the signing of peace at Brest-Litovsk were far from being realised, we may nevertheless maintain that *all that was humanly possible* was done to overcome the unprecedented difficulties encountered. And in particular, by calling in the aid of the most capable and experienced firms of grain merchants, the forces available were utilised to the utmost degree.Finally it should perhaps be pointed out that the import organisation—apart from the before-mentioned interference of the military department and consequent fluctuations of the system—was largely upset by very extensive smuggling operations, carried on more particularly from Galicia. As such smuggling avoided the high export duty, the maximum prices appointed by the Ukrainian Government were constantly being overbid. This smuggling was also in many cases assisted by elements from Vienna; altogether the nervousness prevailing in many leading circles in Vienna, and frequently criticising our own organisation in public, or upsetting arrangements before they could come into operation, did a great deal of damage. It should also be mentioned that Germany likewise carried on a great deal of unofficially assisted smuggling, with ill effects on the official import organisation, and led to similar conditions on our own side.Despite all obstacles, the machinery established, as will be seen from the following survey, nevertheless succeeded in getting not inconsiderable quantities of foodstuffs into the states concerned, amounting in all to about 42,000 wagons, though unfortunately the quantities delivered did not come up to the original expectations.

SURVEY OF THE IMPORTS FROM UKRAINE DATING FROM COMMENCEMENT OF
IMPORTATION (SPRING, 1918) TO NOVEMBER, 1918.

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I. Foodstuffs obtained by the War Grain Transactions Department (corn, cereal products, leguminous fruits, fodder, seeds):

Total imported for the contracting states (Germany, Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria and Turkey)	113,421 tons
Of which Austria-Hungary received	57,382 "
Grain and flour amounting to	46,225 "

II. Articles obtained by the Austrian Central Purchasing Company:

	Of which Austria-Hungary Total received:	
Butter, fat, bacon	3,329,403 kg.	2,170,437 kg.
Oil, edible oils	1,802,847 "	977,105 "
Cheese, curds	420,818 "	325,103 "
Fish, preserved fish, herrings	1,213,961 "	473,561 "
Cattle	105,542 head (36,834,885 kg.)	55,421 head (19,505,760 kg.)
Horses	98,976 head (31,625,172 kg.)	40,027 head (13,165,725 kg.)
Salted meat	2,927,439 "	1,571,569 "
Eggs	75,200 boxes	32,433 boxes
Sugar	66,809,969 kg.	24,973,443 kg.
Various foodstuffs	27,385,095 "	7,836,287 "
Total	172,349,556 " and 75,200 boxes eggs (Total, 30,757 wagons)	61,528,220 " and 32,433 boxes eggs (Total, 13,037 wagons)

The goods imported under II. represent a value of roughly 450 *million kronen*.

The quantities *smuggled* unofficially into the states concerned are estimated at about 15,000 wagons (about half the official imports).

So ended this phase, a phase which seemed important while we were living through it, but which was yet nothing but a phase of no great importance after all, since it produced no lasting effect.

The waves of war have passed over the Peace of Brest-Litovsk, washing it away as completely as a castle of sand on the shore is destroyed by the incoming tide.

Long after I was reproached by the Polish element in the Herrenhaus, who asserted that I had proved my incapability by my own confession that the Peace of Brest had not withstood the test of subsequent events. But should I have shown more capability by asserting, after the collapse of the Central Powers, that the peace still existed?

The term “bread peace” (*Brotfrieden*) was not coined by me, but by Burgemeister Weisskirchner on the occasion of my reception by the Gemeinderat of Vienna at the Nordbahnhof. The millions whose lives were saved by those 42,000 wagon-loads of food may repeat the words without a sneer.

CHAPTER XI

THE PEACE OF BUCHAREST

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At Brest-Litovsk rumours had already spread that Roumania did not intend to continue the war. These rumours assumed a very definite character after peace was concluded with the Ukraine. That peace, as well as Trotski's attitude, left no doubt in Bucharest that Roumania could no longer reckon on further co-operation on the part of Russia and gave rise to the idea in some circles that she would turn back. I say in *some* circles, for there was one group which, to the very last moment, was all for war.

While at Brest-Litovsk I began to get into touch with the leaders of the Hungarian Parliament in order to come to an agreement on the peace aims relating to Roumania. It was evident that, as regards Roumania, a peace without annexations would be more difficult to bring about than with any other state, because the treacherous attack by the Roumanians on the whole of Hungary had raised the desire for a better strategical frontier. As might be expected, I met with violent opposition from Hungary, where, under the name of strategical frontier rectifications, as a matter of fact greater annexations were desired. The first person with whom I dealt was Stephen Tisza, who, at great trouble, was brought to modify his original standpoint and finally was led so far as to admit that the fundamental ideas for peace were capable of acceptance. On February 27, 1918, he handed me a *pro-memoria* with the request to show it to the Emperor, in which he explained his already more conciliatory point of view, though, nevertheless, he very distinctly showed his disapproval of my intentions. The *pro-memoria* reads as follows:

> Unfortunately, Roumania can withdraw from the war not as much exhausted as justice and the justified interests of the Monarchy could wish.

The loss of the Dobrudsha will be made good by territorial gains in Bessarabia, while the frontier rectifications demanded by us are out of all proportion with Roumania's guilt and with her military situation.Our peace terms are so mild that they are as a generous gift offered to vanquished Roumania and are *not at all to be made a subject for negotiations*. In no case are these negotiations to assume the character of trading or bargaining. If Roumania refuses to conclude peace on the basis laid down by us our answer can only be a resumption of hostilities.I consider it highly probable that the Roumanian Government will run that risk to prove her necessity in the eyes of the Western Powers and her own population. But it is just as probable that after breaking off negotiations she will just as quickly turn back and give way before our superior forces.

> At the worst a short campaign would result in the total collapse of Roumania.

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In all human probability it is almost certain that the development of affairs will take a course similar to the last phase in the peace with Northern Russia, and will lead to an easy and complete success for the Central Powers. That we lay down the frontier rectification as *conditio sine qua non* forms a justifiable measure to protect an important interest for the Monarchy of a purely defensive nature. It is energetically demanded by the entire patriotic public opinion of Hungary. It appears out of the question that a Minister of Foreign Affairs, had he taken up another attitude in the matter, would have been able to remain in the Delegation.

> And, besides, the procedure—to which the greatest importance must be attached—is absolutely necessary in order not to compromise the chances of a general peace.

It is obvious from the public statements of leading statesmen of the Western Powers that they will not be prevailed upon to agree to an acceptable peace, as they do not believe in our capacity and firm resolve to carry it out. Whatever confirms their views in this respect widens the distance between us and peace; the only way to bring us really nearer to peace is to adopt an attitude that will lead them to think differently.This must constitute the line of action in our resolves and undertakings. In connection with the Roumanian peace, it is evident that to yield on the frontier question—even for fear of a breakdown in the negotiations—must have a deplorable effect on the opinion our enemies have of us. It would certainly be right not to take advantage of Roumania's desperate situation, but to grant her reasonable peace terms in accordance with the principles embodied in our statements. But if we do not act with adequate firmness on that reasonable basis we shall encourage the Western Powers in the belief that it is not necessary to conclude a peace with us on the basis of the integrity of our territory and sovereignty, and fierce and bitter fighting may be looked for to teach them otherwise.

> TISZA.
>
> *February 27, 1916.*

Andrassy and Wekerle were also opposed to a milder treatment of Roumania, and thus the whole Hungarian Parliament were of one accord on the question. I am not sure what standpoint Karolyi held, and I do not know if at that period the "tiger soul" which he at one time displayed to Roumania, or the pacifist soul which he laid later at the feet of General Franchet d'Esperey, dominated.

Thus at Brest-Litovsk, when the Roumanian peace appeared on the horizon, I took up the standpoint that the party desirous of peace negotiations must be supported.

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The episode of the Roumanian peace must not be taken out of the great picture of the war. Like the Peace of Brest-Litovsk, the Roumanian peace was necessary from a military point of view, because it seemed desirable to release troops in the East as quickly as possible and transfer them to the Western front. It was urgently desired and repeatedly demanded that we should come to a final settlement with Roumania as soon as possible. In order to secure a speedy result I had already, from Brest-Litovsk, advised the Emperor to send word privately to King Ferdinand that he could reckon on an honourable peace should he wish to enter into negotiations. The Emperor took my advice, and Colonel Randa had one or two interviews with a member of the immediate entourage of the King. But the German opinion was that King Ferdinand must be "punished for his treachery" and no negotiations entered into with him. For this reason, and to avoid fruitless controversy, I first imparted to Herr von Kuehlmann the accomplished fact and informed him that we had put ourselves secretly into communication with King Ferdinand. This event was quite in accordance with the standard of equality in our Federation, by which every member was privileged to act according to the best of his ability and was merely bound to inform the friendly Powers of the proceedings. It was not our duty to apply to Germany for permission to take such a step.

There was a three-fold reason why I did not share Germany's opinion on this question. In the first place, my point of view was that it was not our duty to mete out divine justice and to inflict punishment, but, on the contrary, to end the war as quickly as possible. Therefore my duty was to seize every means possible to prevent a continuance of the war. I must mention here that the idea prevailing in many circles that the Roumanians were quite at the end of their strength, and were compelled to accept all the conditions, is entirely false. The Roumanians held very strong positions, the *moral* in the army was excellent, and in the last great attack on Maracesci, Mackensen's troops had suffered very severely. This success turned the Roumanians' heads, and there were many leading men in the ranks of the Roumanian army who sided entirely with those who wished to carry on the war *a l'outrance*. They did not count so much on an actual victory, but were upheld by the hope that for some time to come they could maintain the defensive and that, meanwhile, the decisive successes of their Allies on the West would secure victory for them. They were probably afraid, too, that a peace concluded with us would place them in permanent disgrace with the Entente—that they would lose the friendship of the Entente, fail to gain ours, and find themselves between two stools. The second reason which decided me to insist on negotiating with the King was that, from a dynastic point of view, I considered it most unwise to dethrone a foreign

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king. There was already then a certain fall in the value of kings on the European market, and I was afraid it might develop into a panic if we put more kings off their thrones. The third reason was that, in order to conclude peace, we must have a competent representative in Roumania. If we were to depose the King we should divide Roumania into two camps and would, at the best, only be able to conclude a transitory peace with that party which accepted the dethronement of the King. A rapid and properly-secured peace could only be concluded with the legitimate head in Roumania.

In the introductory interviews which Colonel Randa had on February 4 and 5 with the confidential envoy from the King of Roumania, the envoy asked whether all the Quadruple Alliance Powers were acting in the step in question, and whether the occupied territory in Roumania would be released. I was notified of this inquiry of the King, and replied that I was persuaded that no refusal need be expected from the other Central Powers should he, with the object of securing an honourable peace, address them accordingly. As to the question of territorial possessions, I stated that, for the present, I was not able to express any opinion on the matter, as it would have to be a subject for the introductory negotiations.

The view held by the German military leaders in agreement with Hungarian politicians that Roumania should be treated differently from, and in a much sterner manner than, any other state was, if the question is considered from the point of view of retribution, quite justified. Roumania's actions with regard to us were far more treacherous than those of Italy. Italy, owing to her geographical position and to the fact of her being totally dependent on the Western Powers—a blockade by whom might finally have forced her to submit to their demands—would have found it very difficult to remain neutral in this world war. Roumania was not only perfectly independent, but was amply provided for through her rich granaries. Apart from the fact that Roumania alone was to blame for allowing things to go so far that Russia was enabled finally to send her an ultimatum and so force her into war, it must be admitted that Roumania was far less likely to be influenced by the Entente than Italy. But neither would the Russian ultimatum have taken effect if Roumania had not consciously and willingly placed herself in a position in regard to military and political matters that gave her into Russia's power. Bratianu said to me in one of our last interviews: "Russia is exactly like a blackcock dancing before the hens." In admitting the truth of this appropriate comparison, it must be added that the female of the simile, longing to be embraced, directly provoked violence.

For two years Bratianu had stirred up public opinion against us in his own country. Had he not done so, and had he not finally bared his Russian frontier of all troops, the Russian ultimatum would have had no effect.

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In Roumania the Avarescu Ministry was in power. On February 24 Kuehlmann and I had our first interview alone with Avarescu at the castle of Prince Stirbey, at Buftia. At this interview, which was very short, the sole topic was the Dobrudsha question. The frontier rectifications, as they stood on the Austro-Hungarian programme, were barely alluded to, and the economic questions, which later played a rather important part, were only hinted at. Avarescu's standpoint was that the cession of the Dobrudsha was an impossibility, and the interview ended with a *non possumus* from the Roumanian general, which was equivalent to breaking off negotiations. As regards the Dobrudsha question, our position was one of constraint. The so-called "old" Dobrudsha, the portion that Roumania in 1913 had wrested from Bulgaria, had been promised to the Bulgarians by a treaty in the time of the Emperor Francis Joseph as a reward for their co-operation, and the area that lies between that frontier and the Constanza-Carnavoda railway line was vehemently demanded by the Bulgarians. They went much further in their aspirations: they demanded the whole of the Dobrudsha, including the mouth of the Danube, and the great and numerous disputes that occurred later in this connection show how insistently and obstinately the Bulgarians held to their demands. At the same time, as there was a danger that the Bulgars, thoroughly disappointed in their aspirations, might secede from us, it became absolutely impossible to hand over the Dobrudsha to the Roumanians. All that could be effected was to secure for the Roumanians free access to Constanza, and, further, to find a way out of the difficulty existing between Turkey and Bulgaria in connection with the Dobrudsha.

In order not to break off entirely all discussion, I suggested to Avarescu that he should arrange for his King to meet me. My plan was to make it clear to the King that it would be possible for him now to conclude a peace, though involving certain losses, but still a peace that would enable him to keep his crown. On the other hand, by continuing the war, he could not count on forbearance on the part of the Central Powers. I trusted that this move on my part would enable him to continue the peace negotiations.

I met the King on February 27 at a little station in the occupied district of Moldavia.

We arrived at Focsani at noon and continued by motor to the lines, where Colonel Ressel and a few Roumanian officers were waiting to receive me. We drove past positions on both sides in a powerful German car that had been placed at my disposal, and proceeded as far as the railway station of Padureni. A saloon carriage in the train had been reserved for me there, and we set off for Rasaciuni, arriving there at 5 o'clock.

The Roumanian royal train arrived a few minutes later, and I at once went across to the King.

Incidentally my interview with King Ferdinand lasted twenty minutes.

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As the King did not begin the conversation I had to do so, and said that I had not come to sue for peace but purely as the bearer of a message from the Emperor Charles, who, in spite of Roumania's treachery, would show indulgence and consideration if King Ferdinand would *at once* conclude peace under the conditions mutually agreed on by the Quadruple Alliance Powers.

Should the King not consent, then a continuance of the war would be unavoidable and would put an end to Roumania and the dynasty. Our military superiority was already very considerable, and now that our front would be set free from the Baltic to the Black Sea, it would be an easy matter for us, in a very short space of time, to increase our strength still more. We were aware that Roumania would very soon have no more munitions and, were hostilities to continue, in six weeks the kingdom and dynasty would have ceased to exist.

The King did not oppose anything but thought the conditions terribly hard. Without the Dobrudsha Roumania would hardly be able to draw breath. At any rate, there could be further parley as to ceding "old" Dobrudsha again.

I said to the King that if he complained about hard conditions I could only ask what would his conditions have been if his troops had reached Budapest? Meanwhile, I was ready to guarantee that Roumania would not be cut off from the sea, but would have free access to Constanza.

Here the King again complained of the hard conditions enforced on him, and declared he would never be able to find a Ministry who would accept them.

I rejoined that the forming of a Cabinet was Roumania's internal business, but my private opinion was that a Marghiloman Cabinet, in order to save Roumania, would agree to the conditions laid down. I could only repeat that no change could be made in the peace terms laid before the King by the Quadruple Alliance. If the King did not accept them, we should have, in a month's time, a far better peace than the one which the Roumanians might consider themselves lucky to get to-day.

We were ready to give our diplomatic support to Roumania that she might obtain Bessarabia, and she would, therefore, gain far more than she would lose.

The King replied that Bessarabia was nothing to him, that it was steeped in Bolshevism, and the Dobrudsha could not be given up; anyhow, it was only under the very greatest pressure that he had decided to enter into the war against the Central Powers. He began again, however, to speak of the promised access to the sea, which apparently made the cession of the Dobrudsha somewhat easier.

We then entered into details, and I reproached the King for the dreadful treatment of our people interned in Roumania, which he said he regretted.

Finally, I requested that he would give me a clear and decided answer within forty-eight hours as to whether he would negotiate on the basis of our proposals or not.

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The result of the interview was the appointment of the Marghiloman Ministry and the continuation of the negotiations.

Before Marghiloman consented to form a Cabinet, he approached me to learn the exact terms.

He declared himself to be in agreement with the first and hardest of the conditions—the cession of the Dobrudsha, because he was quicker than the King in seeing that in consequence of our binding obligation to Bulgaria in this connection, it could not be otherwise. As to our territorial demands, I told Marghiloman that I laid chief stress on entering into friendly and lasting relations with Roumania after peace was concluded, and, therefore, desired to reduce the demands in such measure as Roumania, on her part, would consider bearable. On the other hand, he, Marghiloman, must understand that I was bound to consider the Hungarian aspirations to a certain degree, Marghiloman, who was an old and tried parliamentarian, fully saw in what a constrained position I was placed. We finally agreed that the cession of the populated districts and towns like Turn-Saverin and Okna should not take place, and, altogether the original claims were reduced to about half. Marghiloman said he accepted the compromise.

My desire to enter into a lasting economic union with Roumania played an important part in the negotiations. It was clear to me that this demand was in Austrian, but not in Hungarian interests; but I still think that, even so, it was my duty, although joint Minister for both countries, to work for Austria, as the shortage of provisions made the opening of the Roumanian granaries very desirable. As was to be expected, this clause in the negotiations met with the most violent opposition in Hungary, and it was at first impossible to see a way out of the difficulty. I never took back my demand, however, and was firmly resolved that peace should not be signed if my plan was not realised. I was dismissed from office in the middle of the negotiations, and my successor did not attach the same importance to that particular item as I did.

On the German side there was at once evidence of that insatiable appetite which we had already noticed at Brest-Litovsk. The Germans wished to have a species of war indemnity by compelling Roumania to cede her petroleum springs, her railways and harbours to German companies, and placing the permanent control of her finances in German hands. I opposed these demands in the most decided manner from the very first, as I was convinced that such terms would preclude all possibility of any friendly relations in future. I went so far as to ask the Emperor Charles to telegraph direct to the Emperor William in that connection, which met with a certain amount of success. In the end the German claims were reduced by about fifty per cent., and accepted by Marghiloman in the milder form. With regard to the petroleum question, a ninety years' lease was agreed on. In the matter of the corn supply, Roumania was to bind

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herself to deliver her agricultural produce to the Central Powers for a certain number of years. The plan for Germany to be in the permanent control of Roumanian finances was not carried out. In the question of price, the Roumanian views held good. The most impossible of the German demands, namely, the occupation of Roumania for five to six years after the conclusion of peace, gave rise to great difficulties. This was the point that was most persistently and energetically insisted on by the German Supreme Military Command, and it was only with great trouble and after lengthy explanations and discussions that we settled the matter on the following lines: That on the conclusion of peace the entire legislative and executive power of the Roumanian Government would be restored in principle, and that we should content ourselves with exercising a certain control through a limited number of agents, this control not to be continued after the general peace was made. I cannot say positively whether this standpoint was adhered to by my successor or not, but certain it is that Marghiloman only undertook office on condition that I gave him a guarantee that the plan would be supported by me.

As already mentioned, the question of the Dobrudsha had prepared great difficulties for us in two respects. First of all there was the relinquishing of their claim which, for the Roumanians, was the hardest term of all, and imparted to the peace the character of a peace of violence; and secondly, the matter had precipitated a dispute between Turkey and Bulgaria.

The Bulgarians' view was that the entire Dobrudsha, including the mouth of the Danube, must be promised to them, and they insisted on their point with an obstinacy which I have seldom, if ever, come across. They went so far as to declare that neither the present Government nor any other would be able to return to Sofia, and allowed it clearly to be seen that by refusing their claims we could never again count on Bulgaria. The Turks, on the other hand, protested with equal vehemence that the Dobrudsha had been conquered by two Turkish army corps, that it was a moral injustice that the gains chiefly won by Turkish forces should be given exclusively to the Bulgarians, and that they would never consent to Bulgaria receiving the whole of the Dobrudsha unless compensation was given to them. By way of compensation, they asked not only for that stretch of land which they had ceded to Bulgaria on their entry into the war (Adrianople), but also a considerable area beyond.

In the numerous conferences at which the question was discussed, Kuehlmann and I played the part of honest mediators who were making every effort to reconcile the two so divergent standpoints. We both saw clearly that the falling off of the Bulgars or Turks might be the result if a compromise was not effected. Finally, after much trouble, we succeeded in drawing up a programme acceptable to both sides. It took this form: That "old" Dobrudsha should at once be given back to Bulgaria, and the other parts of the area to be handed over as a possession to the combined Central Powers, and a definite decision agreed upon later.

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Neither Turkey nor Bulgaria was quite satisfied with the decision, nor yet averse to it; but, in the circumstances, it was the only possible way of building a bridge between the Turks and the Bulgars.

Just as England and France secured the entry into the war of Italy through the Treaty of London, so did the Emperor Francis Joseph and Burian, as well as the Government in Berlin, give binding promises to the Bulgars to secure their co-operation, and these promises proved later to be the greatest obstacles to a peace of understanding. Nevertheless, no sensible person can deny that it is natural that a state engaged in a life-and-death struggle should seek an ally without first asking whether the keeping of a promise later will give rise to important or minor difficulties. The fireman extinguishing flames in a burning house does not first ask whether the water he pumps on it has damaged anything. When Roumania attacked us in the rear the danger was very great, the house was in flames, and the first act of my predecessor was naturally, and properly, to avert the great danger. There was no lack of promises, and the Dobrudsha was assigned to the Bulgarians. Whether and in what degree the Turks had a right, through promises, to the territory they, on their part, had ceded to the Bulgars I do not know. But they certainly had a moral right to it.

On the occasion of the Roumanian peace in the spring of 1918, too severe a test of the loyalty of Bulgars and Turks to the alliance was dangerous. For some time past the former had been dealing in secret with the Entente. The alliance with Turkey rested mainly on Talaat and Enver. Talaat told me in Bucharest, however, quite positively that he would be forced to send in his resignation if he were to return empty-handed, and in that case the secession of Turkey would be very probable.

We tried then at Bucharest to steer our way through the many shoals; not mortally to offend the Roumanians, to observe as for as possible the character of a peace of understanding, and yet to keep both Turks and Bulgars on our side.

The cession of the Dobrudsha was a terribly hard demand to make on the Roumanians, and was only rendered bearable for them when Kuehlmann and I, with the greatest difficulty and against the most violent opposition from the Bulgarians, obtained for them free access to the Black Sea.

When later, in one breath, we were reproached with having enforced a peace of violence on the Roumanians and with not having treated the Bulgarian claims and wishes with sufficient consideration—the answer to the charge is obvious. *Because* we were compelled to consider both Bulgaria and Turkey we were forced to demand the Dobrudsha from the Roumanians and treat them with greater severity than we should have done otherwise, in order finally to gain the Turks and the Bulgars for our negotiation plans. Judged according to the Versailles standard, the Peace of Bucharest would be a peace of understanding, both as regards form and contents.

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The Central Powers' mediators, both at Versailles and St. Germain, would have been glad had they been treated in the same way as the Marghiloman Ministry was treated.

The Roumanians lost the Dobrudsha, but acquired safe and guaranteed access to the sea; they lost a district of sparsely populated mountainous country to us, and through us they acquired Bessarabia.

They gained far more than they lost.

CHAPTER XII

FINAL REFLECTIONS

The farther the world war progressed, the more did it lose the character of the work of individual men. It assumed rather the character of a cosmic event, taking more and more from the effectiveness of the most powerful individuals.

All settlements on which coalitions were based were connected with certain war aims by the Cabinets, such as the promises of compensation given to their own people, the hopes of gain from the final victory. The encouragement of intense and boundless hatred, the increasing crude brutality of the world all tended to create a situation making each individual like a small stone which, breaking away from an avalanche of stones, hurls itself downwards without a leader and without goal, and is no longer capable of being guided by anyone.

The Council of Four at Versailles tried for some time to make the world believe that they possessed the power to rebuild Europe according to their own ideas. According to their own ideas! That signified, to begin with, four utterly different ideas, for four different worlds were comprised in Rome, Paris, London, and Washington. And the four representatives—"the Big Four," as they were called—were each individually the slave of his programme, his pledges, and his people. Those responsible for the Paris negotiations *in camera*, which lasted for many months, and were a breeding ground for European anarchy, had their own good reasons for secrecy; there was no end to the disputes, for which no outlet could be found.

Here, Wilson had been scoffed at and cursed because he deserted his programme; certainly, there is not the slightest similarity between the Fourteen Points and the Peace of Versailles and St. Germain, but it is forgotten now that Wilson no longer had the power to enforce his will against the three others. We do not know what occurred behind those closed doors, but we can imagine it, and Wilson probably fought weeks and months for his programme. He could have broken off proceedings and left! He certainly could have done so, but would the chaos have been any less; would it have been any better for the world if the only one who was not solely imbued with the lust of

conquest had thrown down his arms? But Clemenceau, too, the direct opposite of Wilson, was not quite open in his dealings. Undoubtedly this old man, who now at the close of his life was able to satisfy his hatred of the Germans of 1870, gloried in the triumph; but, apart from that, if he had tried to conclude a “Wilson peace,” all the private citizens of France, great and small, would have risen against him, for they had been told for the last five years: *Que les boches payeront tout*. What he did, he enjoyed doing; but he was forced to do it or France would have dismissed him.

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And Italy? From Milan to Naples is heard the subterraneous rumbling of approaching revolution; the only means the Government have adopted to check the upheaval is to drown the revolution in a sea of national interests. I believe that in 1917, when the general discontent was much less and finances were much better, the Italian Government might much more probably have accepted Wilson's standpoint than after final victory. Then they could not do it. At Versailles they were the slaves of their promises. And does anyone believe that Lloyd George would have had the power at Versailles to extend the Wilson principle of the right of self-determination to Ireland and the Dominions? Naturally, he did not wish to do otherwise than he did; but that is not the question here, but rather that neither could have acted very differently even had he wished to do so.

It seems to me that the historical moment is the year 1917 when Wilson lost his power, which was swallowed up in Imperialism, and when the President of the United States neglected to force his programme on his Allies. Then power was still in his hands, as the American troops were so eagerly looked for; but later, when victory came, he no longer held it.

And thus there came about what is now a fact. A dictated peace of the most terrible nature was concluded and a foundation laid for a continuance of unimaginable disturbances, complications and wars.

In spite of all the apparent power of victorious armies, in spite of all the claims of the Council of Four, a world has expired at Versailles—the world of militarism. Solely bent on exterminating Prussian militarism, the Entente have gained so complete a victory that all fences and barriers have been pulled down and they can give themselves up unchecked to a torrent of violence, vengeance and passion. And the Entente are so swallowed up by their revengeful paroxysm of destruction that they do not appear to see that, while they imagine they still rule and command, they are even now but instruments in a world revolution.

The Entente, who would not allow the war to end and kept up the blockade for months after the cessation of hostilities, has made Bolshevism a danger to the world. War is its father, famine its mother, despair its godfather. The poison of Bolshevism will course in the veins of Europe for many a long year.

Versailles is not the end of the war, it is only a phase of it. The war goes on, though in another form. I think that the coming generation will not call the great drama of the last five years the world-war, but the world-revolution, which it will realise began with the world-war.

Neither at Versailles nor St. Germain has any lasting work been done. The germs of decomposition and death lie in this peace. The paroxysms that shattered Europe are not yet over; as, after a terrible earthquake, the subterraneous rumblings may still be

heard. Again and again we shall see the earth open, now here, now there, and shoot up flames into the heavens; again and again there will be expressions of elementary nature and elementary force that will spread devastation through the land—until everything has been swept away that reminds us of the madness of the war and the French peace.

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Slowly but with unspeakable suffering a new world will be born. Coming generations will look back to our times as to a long and very bad dream, but day follows the darkest night. Generations have been laid in their graves, murdered, famished, and a prey to disease. Millions, with hatred and murder in their hearts, have died in their efforts to devastate and destroy.

But other generations will arise and with them a new spirit: They will rebuild what war and revolution have pulled down. Spring comes always after winter. Resurrection follows after death; it is the eternal law in life.

Well for those who will be called upon to serve as soldiers in the ranks of whoever comes to build the new world.

June, 1919.

APPENDIX

1

=Resolutions of the London Conference, of April 26, 1915=[11]

On February 28, 1917, the *Isvestia* published the following text of this agreement:

“The Italian Ambassador in London, Marchese Imperiali, acting on the instructions of his Government, has the honour to convey to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Sir Edward Grey, the French Ambassador in London, M. Cambon, and the Russian Ambassador in London, Count Benckendorff, the following notable points:

Sec.1. A *Military Convention* shall be concluded without delay between the General Staffs of France, Great Britain, Russia and Italy. This convention to determine the minimum of forces to be directed by Russia against Austria-Hungary in case that country should turn all its forces against Italy, provided Russia decides to concentrate chiefly against Germany. The Military Convention referred to shall also settle questions bearing upon an armistice, in so far as these by their nature come within the scope of the Army Command.

Sec.2. Italy on her part undertakes to carry on war with all the means at her disposal, together with France, Great Britain and Russia, against all countries at war with them.

Sec.3. The naval forces of France and Great Britain are to render Italy undiminished, active assistance until the *destruction of the Austrian fleet*, or until the moment peace is concluded. A *Naval Convention* shall be concluded without delay between France, Great Britain and Italy.

Sec.4. At the coming conclusion of peace Italy is to receive: the district of the *Trentino; the whole of South Tyrol as far as its natural geographical boundary, thereby understood the Brenner; the city and district of Trieste; the provinces of Goerz and Gradisca, the whole of Istria* as far as Quarnero, including Volosca and the Istrian islands of Cherso and Lussin, also the smaller islands of Plavnica, Unie, Canidolo, Palazzoli, as well as the island of St. Peter de Nembi, Astinello and Cruica, with the neighbouring islands.

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Note: 1. By way of supplement to Sec.4, the frontier shall be drawn through the following-points: From the peak of the Umbrail in a northerly direction as far as the Stilfserjoch, and thence along the watershed of the Ratische Alps as far as the sources of the rivers Etsch and Eisack, then over the Reschen-Scheideck, the Brenner and the Oetztaler and Zillertaler Alps; the frontier line then to turn southwards, cutting the Toblach range, and proceeding as far as the present frontier of Grein, drawn towards the Alps; following this it will run to the heights of Tarvis, then, however, pursuing a course along the watershed of the Julian Alps, over the heights of Predil, Mangart and Triglav group, and the passes of Podbrda, Podlaneskan and Idria. From there the frontier continues in a south-easterly direction to the Schneeberg, so that the basin of the River Save, with its sources, shall not fall within the Italian territory. From the Schneeberg the frontier proceeds towards the coast, enclosing Castua, Matuglie and Volosca in the Italian possessions.

Sec.5. Similarly, Italy is to receive the province of Dalmatia in its present form, including Lissarik and Trebinje in the north, and all possessions as far as a line drawn from the coast at Cape Blanca eastward to the watershed in the south, so as to include in the Italian possessions all valleys on the course of the rivers debouching at Sebenico, such as Cikola, Kerke and Budisnica, with all those situate on their sources. Similarly also, Italy is promised *all the islands lying north and west of the Dalmatian coast*, beginning with the islands of Premuda, Selve, Ulbo, Skerda Maon, Pago and Puntadura, *etc*., in the north; as far as Malarda in the south, adding also the islands of St. Andrae, Busi, Lissa, Lessina, Torzola, Curzola, Cazza and Lagosta, with all rocks and islets thereto pertaining, as well as Pelagosa, but not to include the islands of Great and Lesser Zirona, Pua, Solta and Brazza.

The following are to be *neutralised*: (1) The entire coast from Cape Blanca in the north as far as the southern end of the peninsula of Sabbioncello, and in the south including the whole of the mentioned peninsula in the neutralised area; (2) a part of the coast beginning from a point situate 10 versts south of the cape of Alt-Ragusa, as far as the river Wojusa in the south, so as to include within the boundaries of the neutralised zone *the whole of the Bay of Cattaro* with its ports, Antivari, Dulcigno, San Giovanni di Medua and Durazzo; this not to affect the declarations of the contracting parties in April and May, 1909, as to the rights of *Montenegro*.

In consideration, however, of the fact that these rights were only admitted as applying to the present possessions of Montenegro, they shall not be so extended as to embrace any lands or ports which may in the future be ceded to Montenegro. In the same way, no part of the coast at present belonging to Montenegro shall be subject to future neutralisation. The restrictions in the case of the port of Antivari, agreed by Montenegro itself in 1909, remain in force. (3) Finally, the islands not accorded to Italy.

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Note: 3. The following lands in the Adriatic Sea are accorded by the Powers of the Quadruple Alliance to the territories of *Croatia, Serbia and Montenegro*: In the north of the Adriatic, *the entire coast, commencing from the Bay of Volosca* on the frontier of Istria as far as the *northern frontier* of Dalmatia, including the whole of the coast-line now belonging to Hungary, the entire coast of Croatia, the port of Fiume and the small harbours of Novi and Carlopago, as also the islands of Velia, Pervicchio, Gregorio, Goli and Arbe. In the south of the Adriatic, where Serbia and Austrian interests lie, the entire coast from Cape Planca as far as the river Drina, with the principal ports of *Spaluto, Ragusa, Cattaro, Antivari, Dulcigno and San Giovanni di Medua*, and with the islands of Greater Zirona, Pua, Solta, Brazza, Jaklian and Calamotta.

The port of Durazzo can be accorded to an independent Mohammedan State of Albania.

Sec.6. Italy to be given full possession of *Valona, the Island of Sasseno*, and a sufficiently extensive territory to protect it in military respects, approximately from the River Vojusa in the north and east to the boundary of the Chimara district in the south.

Sec.7. Italy, receiving the Trentino according to Sec.4, Dalmatia and the islands of the Adriatic according to Sec.5, as well as Valona, is not to oppose the possible wishes of France, Great Britain and Russia in case of the establishment of a small autonomous neutralised state in Albania, as to *division of the northern and southern frontier belts of Albania between Montenegro, Serbia and Greece*. The southern strip of coast from the frontier of the Italian district of Valona as far as Cape Stiloa to be subject to neutralisation.

Italy has the prospect of *right to determine the foreign policy of Albania*; in any case, Italy undertakes to assent to the cession of a sufficient territory to Albania to make the frontiers of the latter on the west of the Ochrida Lake coincide with the frontiers of Greece and Serbia.

Sec.8. Italy to have full possession of all the *islands of the Dodecanessus* which it occupies at present.

Sec.9. France, Great Britain and Russia accept in principle the fact of *Italy's interest in maintaining political equilibrium* in the Mediterranean, as also Italy's right, in case of any *division of Turkey, to a like portion with themselves* in the basin of the Mediterranean, and that in the part adjacent to the *province of Adalia*, where Italy has already acquired particular rights, and developed particular interests, to be noted in the Italo-British Convention. The zone then falling to the possession of Italy will in due time be determined according to the vital interests of France and Great Britain. Similarly, the interests of Italy are also to be considered in case the territorial integrity of Asiatic Turkey should be maintained by the Powers for a further period, and only a limitation between the spheres of interest be made. Should, in such case, any areas of Asiatic

Turkey be occupied by France, Great Britain and Russia during the present war, then the entire area contiguous to Italy, and further defined below, shall be granted to Italy, together with the right to occupy the same.

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Sec.10. In Lybia, Italy is to be granted all rights and claims hitherto conceded to the Sultan on the basis of the Treaty of Lausanne.

Sec.11. Italy to receive such part of the war contribution as shall be commensurate with her sacrifices and efforts.

Sec.12. Italy subscribes to the declaration issued by France, England and Russia whereby *Arabia and the holy cities of the Mohammedans* are to be granted to *an independent Mohammedan Power*.

Sec.13. In case of any extension of the French and English colonial possessions in Africa at the expense of Germany, France and Great Britain acknowledge in principle the right of Italy to demand certain compensation in respect of extension of Italian possessions in Eritrea, Somaliland, in Lybia, and the colonial areas contiguous to the colonies of France and England.

Sec.14. England undertakes to facilitate the immediate realisation of *a loan of not less than 50 million pounds sterling* in the English market on favourable conditions.

Sec.15. France, England and Russia undertake to support Italy in *preventing the representatives of the Holy See from taking any diplomatic steps whatever in connection with the conclusion of a peace*, or the regulation of questions connected with the present war.

Sec.16. The present treaty to be *kept secret*. As regards Italy's agreement to the declaration of September 5, 1914, this declaration will be made public as soon as war is declared by Italy or against Italy.

The foregoing points having been duly noted, the respective authorised representatives of France, Great Britain and Russia, together with the representative of Italy similarly authorised by his Government for this purpose, are agreed: France, Great Britain and Russia declare their full agreement with the foregoing notable points, as set before them by the Italian Government. With regard to Sec.Sec.1, 2 and 3, referring to the agreement upon military and naval undertakings of all four Powers, *Italy undertakes to commence active operations at the earliest possible date*, and in any case not later than one month after the signing of the present document by the contracting parties.

The present agreement, in four copies, signed in London on the 26th April, 1915, and sealed, by

Sir Edward Grey,
Cambon,
Marchese Imperiali,
Graf Benckendorff."

After the entry of Roumania into the war (September, 1916) this programme was further extended.

2

=Note from Count Czernin to the American Government, dated March 5, 1917=

From the *aide-memoire* of the American Ambassador in Vienna, dated February 18 of this year, the Imperial and Royal Ministry for Foreign Affairs understands that the Washington Cabinet entertains some doubt, in view of the statements issued by the Imperial and Royal Government on February 10 and January 11 of this year, as to what attitude Austria-Hungary contemplates adopting for the future with regard to submarine warfare, and whether the assurance given by the Austrian Government to the Washington Cabinet in the course of the proceedings with regard to the case of the vessels *Ancona* and *Persia* might not be taken as altered or withdrawn by the statements mentioned.

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The Austrian Government is most willing to meet the desire of the United States Government that this doubt should be removed by a clear and final declaration.

It should here be permitted first of all to touch very briefly on the methods adopted by the Allied Powers in marine warfare, since these form the starting-point of the aggravated submarine warfare put into practice by Austria-Hungary and her allies, besides throwing a clear light upon the attitude hitherto adopted by the Austrian Government in the questions arising therefrom.

When Great Britain entered upon the war with the Central Powers, but a few years had elapsed since the memorable time when Great Britain itself, together with the remaining states, had commenced at the Hague to lay the foundations of a modern code of law for marine warfare. Shortly after that the English Government had brought about a meeting of representatives of the principal naval Powers, assembling in London, in order further to carry forward the work commenced at the Hague, presumably in a spirit of reasonable compromise between the interests of belligerents and those of neutrals. The unexpected success of these endeavours, which aimed at nothing less than concerted establishment of legal standards calculated to maintain the freedom of the seas and the interests of neutrals even in time of war, was not to be long enjoyed by the peoples concerned.

Hardly had the United Kingdom decided to take part in the war than it also began to break through the barriers with which it was confronted by the standards of international law. While the Central Powers immediately on the outbreak of war had announced their intention of observing the Declaration of London, which also bore the signature of the British representative, England discarded the most important points in that Declaration. In the endeavour to cut off the Central Powers from all supplies by sea, England gradually extended the list of contraband until it included everything now required by human beings for the maintenance of life. Great Britain then placed all the coasts of the North Sea—an important transit-way also for the maritime trade of Austria-Hungary—-under the obstruction of a so-called “blockade,” in order to prevent the entry into Germany of all goods not yet inscribed on the contraband list, as also to bar all neutral traffic with those coasts, and prevent any export from the same. That this method of proceeding stands in the most lurid contradiction to the standards of blockade law arrived at and established by international congress has already been admitted by the President of the United States in words which will live in the history of the law of nations. By this illegally preventing export of goods from the Central Powers Great Britain thought to be able to shut down the innumerable factories and industries which had been set up by industrious and highly-developed peoples in the heart of Europe; and to bring the workers

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to idleness and thence to want and revolt. And when Austria-Hungary's southern neighbour joined the ranks of the enemies of the Central Powers her first step was to declare a blockade of all the coasts of her opponent—following the example, of course, of her Allies—in disregard of the legal precepts which Italy had shortly before helped to lay down. Austria-Hungary did not fail to point out to the neutral Powers at once that this blockade was void of all legal validity.

For two years the Central Powers have hesitated. Not until then, and after long and mature consideration for and against, did they proceed to answer in like measure and close with their adversaries at sea. As the only belligerents who had done everything to secure the observance of the agreement which should provide for freedom of the seas to neutrals, it was sorely against their wishes to bow to the need of the moment and attack that freedom; but they took that step in order to fulfil their urgent duty to their peoples and with the conviction that the step in question must lead towards the freedom of the seas in the end. The declarations made by the Central Powers on the last day of January of this year are only apparently directed against the rights of neutrals; as a matter of fact, they are working toward the restitution of those rights which the enemy has constantly infringed and would, if victorious, annihilate for ever. The submarines, then, which circle round England's shores, announce to all peoples using and needing the sea—and who does not need it?—that the day is not far off when the flags of all nations shall wave over the seas in newly acquired freedom.

It may doubtless be hoped that this announcement will find echo wherever neutral peoples live, and that it will be understood in particular by the great people of the United States of America, whose most famous representative has in the course of the war spoken up with ardent words for the freedom of the seas as the highway of all nations. If the people and the government of the Union will bear in mind that the "blockade" established by Great Britain is intended not only to force the Central Powers to submission by starvation but ultimately to secure undisputed mastery of the sea for itself, and thereby ensure its supremacy over all other nations, while on the other hand the blockading of England and its Allies only serves to render possible *a peace with honour* for these Powers and to guarantee to all peoples the freedom of navigation and maritime trade, thus ensuring their safe existence, then the question as to which of the two belligerent parties has right on its side is already decided. Though the Central Powers are far from wishing to seek for further allies in their struggle, they nevertheless feel justified in claiming that neutrals should appreciate their endeavours to bring to life again the principles of international law and the equal rights of nations.

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Proceeding now to answer the questions set forth in the memorandum of February 18 of this year, already referred to, the Austrian Government would first of all remark that in the exchange of Notes in the cases of the *Ancona* and *Persia* this Government restricted itself to consideration of the concrete questions which had up to then arisen, without setting forth the legal position in point of principle. In the Note of December 29, 1915, however, regarding the *Ancona* case it reserved the right to bring up the intricate questions of international law connected with the submarine warfare for discussion at a later date. In reverting now to this point, and taking up the question as to sinking of enemy ships, with which the memorandum is concerned, for brief consideration, it is with the hope that it may be made clear to the American Government that the Austrian Government now as heretofore *holds immovably by the assurance already given*, and with the endeavour to avoid any misunderstanding between the Monarchy and the American Union by clearing up the most important question arising out of the submarine warfare—most important as it rests on the dictates of humanity.

First and foremost the Austrian Government wishes to point out that the thesis advanced by the American Government and adopted in many learned works—to the effect that enemy merchant vessels, save in the event of attempted flight or resistance, should not be destroyed without provision for the safety of those on board—is also, in the opinion of the Austrian Government itself, the kernel, so to speak, of the whole matter. Regarded from a higher point of view, this theory can at any rate be considered in connection with possible circumstances, and its application be more closely defined; from the dictates of humanity, which the Austrian Government and the Washington Cabinet have equally adopted as their guide, we can lay down the general principle that, in exercising the right to destroy enemy merchant shipping, loss of life should be avoided as far as possible. This necessitates a warning on the part of the belligerent before exercising the right of destruction. And he can here adopt the method indicated by the theory of the Union Government referred to, according to which *the commander of the warship himself issues a warning to the vessel about to be sunk*, so that crew and passengers can be brought into safety at the last moment; or, on the other hand, the Government of the belligerent state can, when it is considered an imperative necessity of war, give warning, with complete effect, *before the sailing of the vessel* to be sunk; or, finally, such Government can, when preparing comprehensive measures against the enemy traffic at sea, have recourse to *a general warning applicable to all enemy vessels concerned*.

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That the principle as to providing for the safety of persons on board is liable to exceptions has been admitted by the Union Government itself. The Austrian Government believes, however, that destruction without warning is not only justifiable in cases of attempted escape or resistance. It would seem, to take one instance only, that the character of the vessel itself should be taken into consideration; thus merchant ships or other private craft, placed in the service of war operations, whether as transports or guardships, or with a military crew or weapons on board for the purpose of any kind of hostilities, should doubtless, according to general law, be liable to destruction without notice. The Austrian Government need not go into the question of how far a belligerent is released from any obligation as to provision for safety of human life when his opponent sinks enemy merchant vessels without such previous warning, as in the well-known cases, previously referred to, of the *Elektra*, *Dubrovnik*, *Zagreb*, *etc*., since, in this respect, despite its evident right, the Austrian Government itself has never returned like for like. Throughout the entire course of the war Austro-Hungarian warships have not destroyed a single enemy merchant vessel without previous warning, though this may have been of a general character.

The theory of the Union Government, frequently referred to, also admits of several interpretations; the question arises, for instance, whether, as has frequently been maintained, only armed resistance can be held to justify destruction of ship and persons on board, or whether the same applies to resistance of another sort, as, for example, when the crew purposely refrain from getting the passengers into the boats (the case of the *Ancona*), or when the passengers themselves decline to enter the boats. In the opinion of the Austrian Government cases such as those last should also justify destruction of the vessel without responsibility for the lives of those on board, as otherwise it would be in the power of anyone on the vessel to deprive the belligerent of his right to sink the ship. For the rest it should also be borne in mind that there is no unanimity of opinion really as to when the destruction of enemy merchant tonnage is justifiable at all.

The obligation as to issuing a warning immediately before sinking a vessel will, in the view of the Austrian Government on the one hand, involve hardships otherwise avoidable, while, on the other, it may in certain circumstances be calculated to prejudice the rightful interests of the belligerent. In the first place it cannot be denied that saving lives *at sea* is nearly always a matter of blind uncertainty, since the only alternatives are to leave them on board a vessel exposed to the operations of the enemy, or to take them off in small boats to face the dangers of the elements. It is, therefore, far more in accordance with the dictates of humanity *to restrain people from venturing upon vessels thus endangered by warning them beforehand*. For the rest, however, the Austrian Government is not convinced, despite careful consideration of all legal questions concerned, that the subjects of neutral countries have any claim to immunity when travelling on board enemy ships.

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The principle that neutrals shall also in time of war enjoy the freedom of the seas extends only to neutral vessels, not to neutral persons on board enemy ships, since the belligerents are admittedly justified in hampering enemy traffic at sea as far as lies in their power. Granted the necessary military power, they can, if deemed necessary to their ends, forbid enemy merchant vessels to sail the sea, on pain of instant destruction, as long as they make their purpose known beforehand so that all, whether enemy or neutral, *are enabled to avoid risking their lives*. But even where there is doubt as to the justification of such proceeding, and possible reprisals threatened by the opposing side, the question would remain one to be decided between the belligerents themselves alone, they being admittedly allowed the right of making the high seas a field for their military operations, of suppressing any interruption of such operations and supremely determining what measures are to be taken against enemy ships. The neutrals have in such case no legitimate claims beyond that of demanding that due notice be given them of measures contemplated against the enemy, in order that they may refrain from entrusting their persons or goods to enemy vessels.

The Austrian Government may presumably take it for granted that the Washington Cabinet agrees with the foregoing views, which the Austrian Government is fully convinced are altogether unassailable. To deny the correctness of these views would imply—and this the Union Government can hardly intend—that neutrals have the right of interfering in the military operations of the belligerents; indeed, ultimately to constitute themselves the judges as to what methods may or may not be employed against an enemy. It would also seem a crying injustice for a neutral Government, in order merely to secure for its subjects the right of passage on enemy ships when they might just as well, or indeed with far greater safety, travel by neutral vessels, to grasp at the arm of a belligerent Power, fighting perhaps for its very existence. Not to mention the fact that it would open the way for all kinds of abuses if a belligerent were forced to lay down arms at the bidding of any neutral whom it might please to make use of enemy ships for business or pleasure. No doubt has ever been raised as to the fact that subjects of neutral states are themselves responsible for any harm they may incur *by their presence in any territory on land where military operations are in progress*. Obviously, there is no ground for establishing another standard for naval warfare, particularly since the second Peace Conference expressed the wish that, pending the agreement of rules for naval warfare, the rules observed in warfare upon land should be applied as far as possible at sea.

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From the foregoing it appears that the rule as to warning being given to the vessel itself before such vessel is sunk is subject to exceptions of various kinds under certain circumstances, as, for instance, the cases cited by the Union Government of flight and resistance, the vessel may be sunk without any warning; in others warning should be given before the vessel sails. The Austrian Government may then assert that it is essentially in agreement with the Union Government as to the protection of neutrals against risk of life, whatever may be the attitude of the Washington Cabinet towards some of the separate questions here raised. The Austrian Government has not only put into practice throughout the war the views it holds in this respect, but has gone even farther, regulating its actions with the strictest care according to the theory advanced by the Washington Cabinet, although its assurance as published only stated that was "essentially in agreement" with the Union Government's views. The Austrian Government would be extremely satisfied if the Washington Cabinet should be inclined to assist it in its endeavours, which are inspired by the warmest feelings of humanity, to save American citizens from risk at sea by instructing and warning its subjects in this direction.

Then, as regards the circular verbal note of February 10 of this year concerning the treatment of armed enemy merchant vessels, the Austrian Government must in any case declare itself to be, as indicated in the foregoing, of the opinion that the arming of trading ships, even when only for the purpose of avoiding capture, is not justified in modern international law. The rules provide that a warship is to approach an enemy merchant vessel in a peaceable manner; it is required to stop the vessel by means of certain signals, to interview the captain, examine the ship's papers, enter the particulars in due form and, where necessary, make an inventory, *etc*. But in order to comply with these requirements it must obviously be understood that the warship has full assurance that the merchant vessel will likewise observe a peaceable demeanour throughout. And it is clear that no such assurance can exist when the merchant vessel is so armed as to be capable of offering resistance to a warship. A warship can hardly be expected to act in such a manner under the guns of an enemy, whatever may be the purpose for which the guns were placed on board. Not to speak of the fact that the merchant vessels of the Entente Powers, despite all assurances to the contrary, have been proved to be armed for offensive purposes, and make use of their armament for such purposes. It would also be to disregard the rights of humanity if the crew of a warship were expected to surrender to the guns of an enemy without resistance on their own part. No State can regard its duty to humanity as less valid in respect of men defending their country than in respect of the subjects of a foreign Power.

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The Austrian Government is therefore of opinion that its former assurance to the Washington Cabinet could not be held to apply to armed merchant vessels, since these, according to the legal standards prevailing, whereby hostilities are restricted to organised military forces, must be regarded as privateers (freebooters) which are liable to immediate destruction. History shows us that, according to the *general* law of nations, merchant vessels have never been justified in resisting the exercise by warships of the right of taking prizes. But even if a standard to this effect could be shown to exist, it would not mean that the vessels had the right to provide themselves with guns. It should also be borne in mind that the arming of merchant ships must necessarily alter the whole conduct of warfare at sea, and that such alteration cannot correspond to the views of those who seek to regulate maritime warfare according to the principles of humanity. As a matter of fact, since the practice of privateering was discontinued, until a few years back no Power has ever thought of arming merchant vessels. Throughout the whole proceedings of the second Peace Conference, which was occupied with all questions of the laws of warfare at sea, not a single word was ever said about the arming of merchant ships. Only on one occasion was a casual observation made with any bearing on this question, and it is characteristic that it should have been by a British naval officer of superior rank, who impartially declared: "Lorsqu'un navire de guerre se propose d'arreter et de visiter un vaisseau marchand, le commandant, avant de mettre une embarcation a la mer, fera tirer un coup de canon. Le coup de canon est la meilleure garantie que l'on puisse donner. *Les navires de commerce n'ont pas de canons a bord.*" (When a warship intends to stop and board a merchant vessel the commander, before sending a boat, will fire a gun. The firing of a gun is the best guarantee that can be given. *Merchant vessels do not carry guns.*)

Nevertheless, Austria-Hungary has in this regard also held by its assurance; in the circular verbal note referred to neutrals were cautioned beforehand against entrusting their persons or their goods on board any armed ship; moreover, the measures announced were not put into execution at once, but a delay was granted in order to enable neutrals already on board armed ships to leave the same. And, finally, the Austro-Hungarian warships are instructed, even in case of encountering armed enemy merchant vessels, to give warning and to provide for the safety of those on board, provided it seems possible to do so in the circumstances.

The statement of the American Ambassador, to the effect that the armed British steamers *Secondo* and *Welsh Prince* were sunk without warning by Austrian submarines, is based on error. The Austrian Government has in the meantime received information that no Austro-Hungarian warships were at all concerned in the sinking of these vessels.

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The Austrian Government has, as in the circular verbal note already referred to—-reverting now to the question of aggravated submarine warfare referred to in the memorandum—also in its declaration of January 31 of this year issued a warning to neutrals with corresponding time limit; indeed, *the whole of the declaration itself is, from its nature, nothing more or less than a warning to the effect that no merchant vessel may pass the area of sea expressly defined therein*. Nevertheless, the Austrian warships have been instructed as far as possible to warn such merchant vessels as may be encountered in the area concerned and provide for the safety of passengers and crew. And the Austrian Government is in the possession of numerous reports stating that the crews and passengers of vessels destroyed in these waters have been saved. But the Austrian Government cannot accept any responsibility for possible loss of human life which may after all occur in connection with the destruction of armed vessels or vessels encountered in prohibited areas. Also it may be noted that the Austro-Hungarian submarines operate only in the Adriatic and Mediterranean Seas, and there is thus hardly any question as to any action affecting American interests on the part of Austro-Hungarian warships.

After all that has been said in the preamble to this Memorandum, it need hardly be said that the declaration of the waters in question as a prohibited area is in no way intended as a measure aiming at the destruction of human life, or even to endangering the same, but that its object—apart from the higher aims of *relieving humanity from further suffering by shortening the war*, is only to place Great Britain and its Allies, who have—-without establishing any legally effective blockade of the coasts of the Central Powers—hindered traffic by sea between neutrals and these Powers in a like position of isolation, and render them amenable to a peace with some guarantee of permanency. That Austria-Hungary here makes use of other methods of war than her opponents is due mainly to circumstances beyond human control. But the Austrian Government is conscious of having done all in its power to avoid loss of human life. *The object aimed at in the blockading of the Western Powers would be most swiftly and certainly attained if not a single human life were lost or endangered in those waters.*

To sum up, the Austrian Government may point out that the assurance given to the Washington Cabinet in the case of the *Ancona*, and renewed in the case of the *Persia*, is neither withdrawn nor qualified by its statements of February 10, 1916, and January 31, 1917. Within the limits of this assurance the Austrian Government will, together with its Allies, continue its endeavours to secure to the peoples of the world a share in the blessings of peace. If in the pursuit of this aim—which it may take for granted has the full sympathy of the Washington

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Cabinet itself—it should find itself compelled to impose restrictions on neutral traffic by sea in certain areas, it will not need so much to point to the behaviour of its opponents in this respect, which appears by no means an example to be followed, but rather to the fact that Austria-Hungary, through the persistence and hatred of its enemies, who are determined upon its destruction, is brought to a state of self-defence in so desperate extreme as is unsurpassed in the history of the world. The Austrian Government is encouraged by the knowledge that the struggle now being carried on by Austria-Hungary tends not only toward the preservation of its own vital interests, but also towards the realisation of the idea of equal rights for all states; and in this last and hardest phase of the war, which unfortunately calls for sacrifices on the part of friends as well, it regards it as of supreme importance to confirm in word and deed the fact that it is guided equally by the laws of humanity and by the dictates of respect for the dignity and interests of neutral peoples.

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=Speech by Dr. Helfferich, Secretary of State, on the Submarine Warfare=

The *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* of May 1, 1917, gives the following speech by Dr. Helfferich, Secretary of State, on the economic effects of the submarine warfare delivered in the principal committee of the Reichstag on April 28. The speech is here given verbatim, with the exception of portions containing confidential statements:

“In the sitting of yesterday a member rightly pointed out that the technical and economic results of the submarine warfare have been estimated with caution. In technical respects the caution observed in estimating the results is plain; the sinkings have, during the first month, exceeded by nearly a quarter, in the second by nearly half, the estimated 600,000 tons, and for the present month also we may fairly cherish the best expectations. The technical success guarantees the economic success with almost mathematical exactitude. True, the economic results cannot be so easily expressed numerically and set down in a few big figures as the technical result in the amount of tonnage sunk. The economic effects of the submarine warfare are expressed in many different spheres covering a wide area, where the enemy seeks to render visibility still more difficult by resorting, so to speak, to statistical smoke-screens.

“The English statistics to-day are most interesting, one might almost say, in what they wisely refrain from mentioning. The Secretary of State for the Navy pointed out yesterday how rapidly the pride of the British public had faded. The English are now suppressing our reports on the successes of our submarines and our statements as to submarine losses; they dare not make public the amount of tonnage sunk, but mystify the public with shipping statistics which have given rise to general annoyance in the English

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Press itself. The English Government lets its people go on calmly trusting to the myth that instead of six U-boats sunk there are a hundred at the bottom of the sea. It conceals from the world also the true course of the entries and departures of tonnage in British ports since the commencement of unrestricted submarine warfare. And more than all, the English Government has since February suppressed most strictly all figures tending to throw light on the position of the grain market. In the case of the coal exports, the country of destination is not published. The monthly trade report, which is usually issued with admirable promptness by the tenth of the next month or thereabouts, was for February delayed and incomplete; and for March it has not yet appeared at all. It is to be regretted that this sudden withdrawal of information makes it more difficult for us to estimate the effect of our submarine operations, but there is a gratifying side to the question after all. It is not to be supposed that England should suddenly become reticent in order to avoid revealing its strength.

"For the rest, what can be seen is still sufficient to give us an idea.

"I will commence with the tonnage. You are aware that in the first two months of the unrestricted submarine warfare more than 1,600,000 tons were sunk, of which probably considerably over one million tons sailed under the British flag.

"The estimates as to the quantity of English tonnage at present available are somewhat divergent; in any case, whether we take the higher or the lower figures, a loss of more than a million tons in two months is a thing that England cannot endure for long. And to replace it, even approximately, by new building, is out of the question. In the year 1914 England's newly-built ships gave a tonnage increment of 1,600,000; in 1915 it was 650,000 tons, in 1916 only 580,000, despite all efforts. And the normal loss of the British merchant fleet in peace time amounts to between 700,000 and 800,000 tons. It is hopeless to think of maintaining equilibrium by urging on the building of new vessels.

"The attempts which are made to enlist the neutral tonnage in British service by a system of rewards and punishments may here and there, to the ultimate disadvantage of the neutrals themselves, have met with some success, but even so, the neutrals must consider the need for preserving a merchant fleet themselves for peace time, so that there is a narrow limit to what can be attained in this manner. Even in January of this year about 30 per cent. of the shipping entries into British ports were under foreign flags. I have heard estimates brought up to 80 per cent. in order to terrify the neutrals; if but 50 per cent. of this be correct it means a decrease in British shipping traffic of roughly one-sixth. Counting tonnage sunk and tonnage frightened off, the arrivals at British ports have been reduced, at a low estimate, by one-fourth,

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and probably by as much as one-third, as against January. In January arrivals amounted to 2.2 million net tons. I may supplement the incomplete English statistics by the information that in March the arrivals were only 1.5 to 1.6 million tons net, and leave it to Mr. Carson to refute this. The 1.5 to 1.6 million tons represent, compared with the average entries in peace time, amounting to 4.2 millions, not quite 40 per cent. This low rate will be further progressively reduced. Lloyd George at the beginning of the war reckoned on the last milliard. Those days are now past. Then he based his plans on munitions. England has here, with the aid of America, achieved extraordinary results. But the Somme and Arras showed that, even with those enormous resources, England was not able to beat us. Now, in his greeting to the American Allies, Lloyd George cries out: 'Ships, ships, and yet more ships.' And this time he is on the right tack; it is on ships that the fate of the British world-empire will depend.

"The Americans, too, have understood this. They propose to build a thousand wooden vessels of 3,000 tons. But before these can be brought into action they will, I confidently hope, have nothing left to save.

"I base this confidence upon the indications which are visible, despite the English policy of suppression and concealment.

"Take the total British trade. The figures for March are still not yet available, but those for February tell us enough.

"British imports amounted in January of this year to 90 million pounds sterling, in February to only 70 million; the exports have gone down from 46 to 37 millions sterling —imports and exports together showing a decline of over 20 per cent. in the first month of the submarine warfare. And again, the rise in prices all round has, since the commencement of the U-boat war, continued at a more rapid rate, so that the decline in the import quantity from one month to another may fairly be estimated at 25 per cent. The figures for imports and exports, then, confirm my supposition as to the decrease of tonnage in the traffic with British ports.

"The British Government has endeavoured, by the strictest measures rigorously prohibiting import of less important articles, to ward off the decline in the quantity of vital necessaries imported. The attempt can only partially succeed.

"In 1916, out of a total import quantity of 42 million tons, about 31 millions fall to three important groups alone, *viz*., foodstuffs and luxuries, timber, and iron ore; all other goods, including important war materials, such as other ores and metals, petroleum, cotton and wool, rubber, only 11 million tons, or roughly one-fourth. A decline of one-fourth, then, as brought about by the first month of unrestricted submarine warfare, must affect articles indispensable to life and to the purposes of war.

“The decline in the imports in February, 1917, as against February, 1916, appears as follows:

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“Wool 17 per cent., cotton 27 per cent., flax 38 per cent., hemp 48 per cent., jute 74 per cent., woollen materials 83 per cent., copper and copper ore 49 per cent., iron and steel 59 per cent. As to the imports of iron ore I will give more detailed figures:

“Coffee 66 per cent., tea 41 per cent., raw sugar 10 per cent., refined sugar 90 per cent., bacon 17 per cent., butter 21 per cent., lard 21 per cent., eggs 39 per cent., timber 42 per cent.

“The only increases worth noting are in the case of leather, hides, rubber and tin.

“As regards the group in which we are most interested, the various sorts of grain, no figures for quantities have been given from February onwards.

“The mere juxtaposition of two comparable values naturally gives no complete idea of the facts. It should be borne in mind that the commencement of the unrestricted U-boat campaign came at a time when the economical position of England was not normal, but greatly weakened already by two and a half years of war. A correct judgment will, then, only be possible when we take into consideration the entire development of the imports during the course of the war.

“I will here give only the most important figures.

“In the case of iron ore, England has up to now maintained its position better than in other respects.

“Imports amounted in 1913 to 7.4 million tons.

“In 1916 to 6.9 million tons.

“January, 1913, 689,000 tons; February, 1913, 658,000 tons.

“January, 1916, 526,000 tons; February, 1916, 404,000 tons.

“January, 1917, 512,000 tons; February, 1917, 508,000 tons.

“Here again comparison with the peace year 1913 shows for the months of January and February a not inconsiderable decrease, though the imports, especially in February, 1917, were in excess of those for the same month in 1916.

“Timber imports, 1913, 10.1 million loads.
" " 1916, 5.9 " "
" February, 1913, 406,000 loads.
" " 1916, 286,000 "
" " 1917, 167,000 "

“As regards mining timber especially, the import of which fell from 3.5 million loads in 1913 to 2.0 million in 1916, we have here December, 1916, and January, 1917, with 102,000 and 107,000 loads as the lowest import figures given since the beginning of 1913; a statement for the import of mining timber is missing for February.

“Before turning to the import of foodstuffs a word may be said as to the export of coal.

“The total export of coal has decreased from 78 million tons in 1913 to 461/2 million tons in 1915; in 1916 only about 42 million tons were exported. In December, 1916, the export quantity fell for the first time below 3 million tons, having remained between 3.2 and 3.9 million tons during the months from January to November, 1916. In January, 1917, a figure of 3.5 million tons was again reached; it is the more

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significant, therefore, that the coal export, which from the nature of the case exhibits only slight fluctuations from month to month, falls again in February, 1917, to 2.9 million tons (as against 3.4 million tons in February of the year before), thus almost reaching once more to the lowest point hitherto recorded—that of December, 1916. And it should be remembered that here, as in the case of all other exports, sunk transports are included in the English statistics.

"Details as to the destination of exported coal have since the beginning of this year been withheld. England is presumably desirous of saving the French and Italians the further distress of reading for the future in black and white the calamitous decline in their coal supply. The serious nature of this decline, even up to the end of 1916, may be seen from the following figures:

"England's coal export to France amounted in December, 1916, to only 1,128,000 tons, as against 1,269,000 tons in January of the same year; the exports to Italy in December, 1916, amounted only to 278,000 tons, as against 431,000 tons in January, and roughly 800,000 tons monthly average for the peace year 1913.

"As to the further development since the end of February, I am able to give some interesting details. Scotland's coal export in the first week of April was 103,000 tons, as against 194,000 tons the previous year; from the beginning of the year 1,783,000 tons, as against 2,486,000 tons the previous year. From this it is easy to see how the operations of the U-boats are striking at the root of railway and war industries in the countries allied with England.

"Lloyd George, in a great speech made on January 22 of this year, showed the English how they could protect themselves against the effects of submarine warfare by increased production in their own country. The practicability and effectiveness of his counsels are more than doubtful. He makes no attempt, however, to instruct his Allies how they are to protect themselves against the throttling of the coal supply.

"I come now to the most important point: *the position of England with regard to its food supply*.

"First of all I would give a few brief figures by way of calling to mind the degree to which England is dependent upon supplies of foodstuffs from overseas.

"The proportion of imports in total British consumption averaged during the last years of peace as follows:

"Bread-corn, close on 80 per cent.

“Fodder-grain (barley, oats, maize), which can be utilised as substitutes for, and to supplement, the bread-corn, 50 per cent.; meat, over 40 per cent.; butter, 60-65 per cent. The sugar consumption, failing any home production at all, must be entirely covered by imports from abroad.

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“I would further point out that our U-boats, inasmuch as concerns the food situation in England, are operating under quite exceptionally favourable conditions; the world’s record harvest of 1915 has been followed by the world’s worst harvest of 1916, representing a loss of 45-50 million tons of bread and fodder-grain. The countries hardest hit are those most favourably situated, from the English point of view, in North America. The effects are now—the rich stocks from the former harvest having been consumed—becoming more evident every day and everywhere. The Argentine has put an embargo on exports of grain. As to the condition of affairs in the United States, this may be seen from the following figures:

“The Department of Agriculture estimates the stocks of wheat still in the hands of the farmer on March 1, 1917, at 101 million bushels, or little over 21/2 million tons. The stocks for the previous year on that date amounted to 241 million bushels. Never during the whole of the time I have followed these figures back have the stocks been so low or even nearly so. The same applies to stocks of maize. Against a supply of 1,138,000 bushels on March 1, 1916, we have for this year only 789,000 bushels.

“The extraordinary scarcity of supplies is nearing the panic limit. The movement of prices during the last few weeks is simply fantastic. Maize, which was noted in Chicago at the beginning of January, 1917, at 95 cents, rose by the end of April to 127 cents, and by April 25 had risen further to 148 cents. Wheat in New York, which stood at 871/4 cents in July, 1914, and by the beginning of 1917 had already risen to 1911/2 cents, rose at the beginning of April to 229 cents, and was noted at no less than 281 on April 2. This is three and a half times the peace figure! In German currency at normal peace time exchange, these 281 cents represent about 440 marks per ton, or, at present rate of exchange for dollars, about 580 marks per ton.

“That, then, is the state of affairs in the country which is to help England in the war of starvation criminally begun by itself!

“In England no figures are now made public as to imports and stocks of grain. I can, however, state as follows:

“On the last date for which stocks were noted, January 13, 1917, England’s visible stocks of wheat amounted to 5.3 million quarters, as against 6.3 and 5.9 million quarters in the two previous years. From January to May and June there is, as a rule, a marked decline in the stocks, and even in normal years the imports during these months do not cover the consumption. In June, 1914 and 1915, the visible stocks amounted only to about 2 million quarters, representing the requirements for scarcely three weeks.

“We have no reason to believe that matters have developed more favourably during the present year. This is borne out by the import figures for January—as published. The imports of bread-corn and fodder-grain—I take them altogether, as in the English

regulations for eking out supplies—amounted only to 12.6 million quarters, as against 19.8 and 19.2 in the two previous years.

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“For February the English statistics show an increase in the import value of unstated import quantity of all grain of 50 per cent., as against February, 1916. This gives, taking the distribution among the various sorts of grain as similar to that of January, and reckoning with the rise in prices since, about the same import quantity as in the previous year. But in view of the great decrease in American grain shipments and the small quantity which can have come from India and Australia the statement is hardly credible. We may take it that March has brought a further decline, and that to-day, when we are nearing the time of the three-week stocks, the English supplies are lower than in the previous years.

“The English themselves acknowledge this. Lloyd George stated in February that the English grain supplies were lower than ever within the memory of man. A high official in the English Ministry of Agriculture, Sir Ailwyn Fellowes, speaking in April at an agricultural congress, added that owing to the submarine warfare, which was an extremely serious peril to England, the state of affairs had grown far worse even than then.

“Captain Bathurst, of the British Food Controller’s Department (*Kriegsernaehrungsamt*), stated briefly on April 19 that the then consumption of breadstuffs was 50 per cent. in excess of the present *and prospective* supplies. It would be necessary to reduce the consumption of bread by fully a third in order to make ends meet.

“Shortly before, Mr. Wallhead, a delegate from Manchester, at a conference of the Independent Labour Party in Leeds had stated that, according to his information, England would in six to eight weeks be in a complete state of famine.

“The crisis in which England is placed—and we can fairly call it a crisis now—is further aggravated by the fact that the supplies of other important foodstuffs have likewise taken an unfavourable turn.

“The import of meat in February, 1917, shows the lowest figures for many years, with the single exception of September, 1914.

“The marked falling off in the butter imports—February, 1917, showing only half as much as in the previous year—is not nearly counterbalanced by the margarine which England is making every effort to introduce.

“The import of lard also, most of which comes from the United States, shows a decline, owing to the poor American crops of fodder-stuffs. The price of lard in Chicago has risen from 151/2 cents at the beginning of January, 1917, to 211/2 cents on April 25, and the price of pigs in the same time from 9.80 to 16.50 dollars.

“Most serious of all, however, is the shortage of potatoes, which at present is simply catastrophic. The English crop was the worst for a generation past. The imports are

altogether insignificant. Captain Bathurst stated on April 19 that in about four weeks the supplies of potatoes in the country would be entirely exhausted.

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“The full seriousness of the case now stares English statesmen in the face. Up to now they have believed it possible to exorcise the danger by voluntary economies. Now they find themselves compelled to have recourse to compulsory measures. I believe it is too late.”

The Secretary of State then gives a detailed account of the measures taken up to date in England for dealing with the food question, and thereafter continues:

“On March 22 again the English food dictator, Lord Devonport, stated in the House of Lords that a great reduction in the consumption of bread would be necessary, but that it would be *a national disaster* if England should have to resort to compulsion.

“His representative, Bathurst, stated at the same time: ’We do not wish to introduce *so un-English a system*. In the first place, because we believe that the patriotism of the people can be trusted to assist us in our endeavours towards economy, and, further, because, as we can see from the example of Germany, the compulsory system promises no success; finally, because such a system would necessitate a too complicated administrative machinery and too numerous staffs of men and women whose services could be better employed elsewhere.’

“Meantime the English Government has, on receipt of the latest reports, decided to adopt this un-English system which has proved a failure in Germany, declaring now that the entire organisation for the purpose is in readiness.

“I have still something further to say about the vigorous steps now being taken in England to further the progress of agriculture in the country itself. I refrain from going into this, however, as the measures in question cannot come to anything by next harvest time, nor can they affect that harvest at all. The winter deficiency can hardly be balanced, even with the greatest exertions, by the spring. Not until the 1918 crop, if then, can any success be attained. And between then and now lies a long road, a road of suffering for England, and for all countries dependent upon imports for their food supply.

“Everything points to the likelihood that the universal failure of the harvest in 1916 will be followed by a like universal failure in 1917. In the United States the official reports of acreage under crops are worse than ever, showing 63.4, against 78.3 the previous year. The winter wheat is estimated at only 430 million bushels, as against 492 million bushels for the previous year and 650 million bushels for 1915.

“The prospects, then, for the next year’s harvest are poor indeed, and offer no hope of salvation to our enemies.

“As to our own outlook, this is well known to those present: short, but safe—for we can manage by ourselves. And to-day we can say that the war of starvation, that crime

against humanity, has turned against those who commenced it. We hold the enemy in an iron grip. No one can save them from their fate. Not even the apostles of humanity across the great ocean, who are now commencing to protect the smaller nations by a blockade of our neutral neighbours through prohibition of exports, and seeking thus to drive them, under the lash of starvation, into entering into the war against us.

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“Our enemies are feeling the grip of the fist that holds them by the neck. They are trying to force a decision. England, mistress of the seas, is seeking to attain its end by land, and driving her sons by hundreds of thousands to death and mutilation. Is this the England that was to have sat at ease upon its island till we were starved into submission, that could wait till their big brother across the Atlantic arrived on the scene with ships and million armies, standing fast in crushing superiority until the last annihilating battle?

“No, gentlemen, our enemies have no longer time to wait. Time is on our side now. True, the test imposed upon us by the turn of the world’s history is enormous. What our troops are doing to help, what our young men in blue are doing, stands far above all comparison. But they will attain their end. For us at home, too, it is hard; not so hard by far as for them out there, yet hard enough. Those at home must do their part as well. If we remain true to ourselves, keeping our own house in order, maintaining internal unity, then we have won existence and the future for our Fatherland. Everything is at stake. The German people is called upon now, in these weeks heavy with impending decision, to show that it is worthy of continued existence.”

4

=Speech by Count Czernin to the Austrian Delegation, January 24, 1918.=

“Gentlemen, it is my duty to give you a true picture of the peace negotiations, to set forth the various phases of the results obtained up to now, and to draw therefrom such conclusions as are true, logical and justifiable.

“First of all it seems to me that those who consider the progress of the negotiations too slow cannot have even an approximate idea of the difficulties which we naturally had to encounter at every step. I will in my remarks take the liberty of setting forth these difficulties, but would like first to point out a cardinal difference existing between the peace negotiations in Brest-Litovsk and all others which have ever taken place in the history of the world. Never, so far as I am aware, have peace negotiations been conducted with open windows. It would be impossible that negotiations of the depth and extent of the present could from the start proceed smoothly and without opposition. We are faced with nothing less than the task of building up a new world, of restoring all that the most merciless of all wars has destroyed and cast down. In all the peace negotiations we know of the various phases have been conducted more or less behind closed doors, the results being first declared to the world when the whole was completed. All history books tell us, and indeed it is obvious enough, that the toilsome path of such peace negotiations leads constantly over hill and dale, the prospects appearing often more or less favourable day by day. But when the separate phases themselves, the details of each day’s proceedings, are telegraphed all

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over the world at the time, it is again obvious that nervousness prevailing throughout the world must act like an electric current and excite public opinion accordingly. We were fully aware of the disadvantage of this method of proceeding. Nevertheless we at once agreed to the wish of the Russian Government in respect of this publicity, desiring to meet them as far as possible, and also because we had nothing to conceal on our part, and because it would have made an unfavourable impression if we had stood firmly by the methods hitherto pursued, of secrecy until completion. *But the complete publicity in the negotiations makes it insistent that the great public, the country behind, and above all the leaders, must keep cool.* The match must be played out in cold blood, and the end will be satisfactory if the peoples of the Monarchy support their representatives at the conference.

"It should be stated beforehand that the basis on which Austria-Hungary treats with the various newly-constituted Russian states is that of 'no indemnities and no annexations.' That is the programme which a year ago, shortly after my appointment as Minister, I put before those who wished to talk of peace, and which I repeated to the Russian leaders on the occasion of their first offers of peace. And I have not deviated from that programme. Those who believe that I am to be turned from the way which I have set myself to follow are poor psychologists. I have never left the public in the slightest doubt as to which way I intended to go, and I have never allowed myself to be turned aside so much as a hair's breadth from that way, either to right or left. And I have since become far from a favourite of the Pan-Germans and of those in the Monarchy who follow the Pan-German ideas. I have at the same time been hooted as an inveterate partisan of war by those whose programme is peace at any price, as innumerable letters have informed me. Neither has ever disturbed me; on the contrary, the double insults have been my only comfort in this serious time. I declare now once again that I ask not a single kreuzer, not a single square metre of land from Russia, and that if Russia, as appears to be the case, takes the same point of view, then peace must result. Those who wish for peace at any price might entertain some doubt as to my 'no-annexation' intentions towards Russia if I did not tell them to their faces with the same complete frankness that I shall never assent to the conclusion of a peace going beyond the lines just laid down. If the Russian delegates demand any surrender of territory on our part, or any war indemnity, then I shall continue the war, despite the fact that I am as anxious for peace as they, or I would resign if I could not attain the end I seek.

"This once said, and emphatically asserted, that there is no ground for the pessimistic anticipation of the peace falling through, since the negotiating committees are agreed on the basis of no annexations or indemnities—and nothing but new instructions from the various Russian Governments, or their disappearance, could shift that basis—I then pass to the two great difficulties in which are contained the reasons why the negotiations have not proceeded as quickly as we all wished.

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“The first difficulty is this: that we are not dealing with *a single* Russian peace delegation, but with various newly-formed Russian states, whose spheres of action are as yet by no means definitely fixed or explained among themselves. We have to reckon with the following: firstly, the Russia which is administered from St. Petersburg; secondly, our new neighbour proper, the great State of Ukraine; thirdly, Finland; and, fourthly, the Caucasus.

“With the first two of these states we are treating directly; that is to say, face to face; with the two others it was at first in a more or less indirect fashion, as they had not sent any representative to Brest-Litovsk. We have then four Russian parties, and four separate Powers on our own side to meet them. The case of the Caucasus, with which we ourselves have, of course, no direct questions to settle, but which, on the other hand, is in conflict with Turkey, will serve to show the extent of the matter to be debated.

“The point in which we ourselves are most directly interested is that of the great newly-established state upon our frontiers, Ukraine. In the course of the proceedings we have already got well ahead with this delegation. We are agreed upon the aforementioned basis of no indemnities and no annexations, and have in the main arrived at a settlement on the point that trade relations are to be re-established with the new republic, as also on the manner of so doing. But this very case of the Ukraine illustrates one of the prevailing difficulties. While the Ukraine Republic takes up the position of being entirely autonomous and justified in treating independently with ourselves, the Russian delegation insists that the boundaries between their territory and that of the Ukraine are not yet definitely fixed, and that Petersburg is therefore able to claim the right of taking part in our deliberations with the Ukraine, which claim is not admitted by the members of the Ukraine delegation themselves. This unsettled state of affairs in the internal conditions of Russia, however, gave rise to very serious delays. We have got over these difficulties, and I hope that in a few days’ time we shall be able once more to resume negotiations.

“As to the position to-day, I cannot say what this may be. I received yesterday from my representative at Brest-Litovsk the following two telegrams:

“’Herr Joffe has this evening, in his capacity as President of the Russian Delegation, issued a circular letter to the delegations of the four allied Powers in which he states that the Workers’ and Peasants’ Government of the Ukrainian Republic has decided to send two delegates to Brest-Litovsk with instructions to take part in the peace negotiations on behalf of the central committee of the workers’, soldiers’ and peasants’ councils of Pan-Ukraine, but also to form a supplementary part of the *Russian* delegation itself. Herr Joffe adds with regard to this that the Russian delegation is prepared to

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receive these Ukrainian representatives among themselves. The above statement is supplemented by a copy of a "declaration" dated from Kharkov, addressed to the President of the Russian Peace Delegation at Brest, and emanating from the Workers' and Peasants' Government of the Ukrainian Republic, proclaiming that the Central Rada at Kiev only represents the propertied classes, and is consequently incapable of acting on behalf of the entire Ukrainian people. The Ukrainian Workers' and Peasants' Government declares that it cannot acknowledge any decisions arrived at by the delegates of the Central Rada at Kiev without its participation, but has nevertheless decided to send representatives to Brest-Litovsk, there to participate as a supplementary fraction of the Russian Delegation, which they recognise as the accredited representatives of the Federative Government of Russia.'

"Furthermore: 'The German translation of the Russian original text of the communication received yesterday evening from Herr Joffe regarding the delegates of the Ukrainian Government at Kharkov and the two appendices thereto runs as follows:

"'To the President of the Austro-Hungarian Peace Delegation.

"'Sir,—In forwarding you herewith a copy of a declaration received by me from the delegates of the Workers' and Peasants' Government of the Ukrainian Republic, W.M. Schachrai and J.G. Medwjedew, and their mandates, I have the honour to inform you that the Russian Delegation, in full agreement with its frequently repeated acknowledgment of the right of self-determination among all peoples—including naturally the Ukrainian—sees nothing to hinder the participation of the representatives of the Workers' and Peasants' Government of the Ukrainian Republic in the peace negotiations, and receives them, according to their wish, among the personnel of the Russian Peace Delegation, as accredited representatives of the Workers' and Peasants' Government of the Ukrainian Republic. In bringing this to your knowledge, I beg you, sir, to accept the expression of my most sincere respect.—The President of the Russian Peace Delegation: A. JOFFE.'

"'Appendix 1. To the President of the Peace Delegation of the Russian Republic. Declaration.

"'We, the representatives of the Workers' and Peasants' Government of the Ukrainian Republic, People's Commissary for Military Affairs, W.M. Schachrai, and the President of the Pan-Ukrainian Central Executive Committee of the Council of the Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputation, J.G. Medwjedew, delegated to proceed to Brest-Litovsk for the purpose of conducting peace negotiations with the representatives of Germany, Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria and Turkey, in full agreement with the representatives of the Workers' and Peasants' Government of the Russian Federative Republic, thereby understood the Council of People's Commissaries, hereby declare as

follows: The General Secretariat of the Ukrainian Central Rada can in no case be acknowledged as representing the entire Ukrainian people. In the name of the Ukrainian workers, soldiers and peasants, we declare categorically that all resolutions formed by the General Secretariat without our assent will not be accepted by the Ukrainian people, cannot be carried out, and can in no case be realised.

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“’In full agreement with the Council of People’s Commissaries, and thus also with the Delegation of the Russian Workers’ and Peasants’ Government, we shall for the future undertake the conduct of the peace negotiations with the Delegation of the four Powers, together with the Russian Peace Delegation.

“’And we now bring to the knowledge of the President the following resolution, passed by the Central Executive Committee of the Pan-Ukrainian Council of Workers’, Soldiers’ and Peasants’ Deputies, on the 30th December, 1917/12th January, 1918:

“’The Central Committee has decided: To delegate Comrade Medwjedew, President of the Central Executive Committee, and People’s Secretary Satonski and Commissary Schachrai, to take part in the peace negotiations, instructing them at the same time to declare categorically that all attempts of the Ukrainian Central Rada to act in the name of the Ukrainian people are to be regarded as *arbitrary steps* on the part of the bourgeois group of the Ukrainian population, against the will and interests of the working classes of the Ukraine, and that no resolutions formed by the Central Rada will be acknowledged either by the Ukrainian Soviet Government or by the Ukrainian people; that the Ukrainian Workers’ and Peasants’ Government regards the Council of People’s Commissaries as representatives of the Pan-Russian Soviet Government, and as accordingly entitled to act on behalf of the entire Russian Federation; and that the delegation of the Ukrainian Workers’ and Peasants’ Government, sent out for the purpose of exposing the arbitrary steps of the Ukrainian Central Rada, will act together with and in full agreement with the Pan-Russian Delegation.

“’Herewith: The mandate issued by the People’s Secretariat of the Ukrainian Workers’ and Peasants’ Republic, 30th December, 1917.

“’Note: People’s Secretary for Enlightenment of the People, Wladimir Petrowitch Satonski, was taken ill on the way, and did not therefore arrive with us.

“’January, 1918.

“’The President of the Central Executive Committee of the Ukrainian Council of Workers’, Soldiers’ and Peasants’ Deputies, E. Medwjedew.

“’The People’s Commissary for Military Affairs, Schachrai.

“’A true copy of the original.

“’The Secretary of the Peace Delegation, Leo Karachou.’

“Appendix 2.

“’On the resolution of the Central Executive Committee of the Council of Workers’, Peasants’ and Soldiers’ Deputies of Ukraina, the People’s Secretariat of the Ukrainian

Republic hereby appoints, in the name of the Workers' and Peasants' Government of Ukraina, the President of the Central Executive Committee of the Council of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies of Ukraina, Jesim Gregoriewitch Medwjedew, the People's Secretary for Military Affairs, Wasili Matwjejewitch Schachrai, and the People's Secretary for Enlightenment of the People, Wladimir Petrowitch Satonski, in the

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name of the Ukrainian People's Republic, to take part in the negotiations with the Governments of Germany, Austria-Hungary, Turkey and Bulgaria as to the terms of peace between the mentioned states and the Russian Federative Republic. With this end in view the mentioned deputies, Jesim Gregoriewitch Medwjedew, Wasili Matwjejewitch Schachrai and Wladimir Petrowitch Satonski are empowered, in all cases where they deem it necessary, to issue declarations and to sign documents in the name of the Workers' and Peasants' Government of the Ukrainian Republic. The accredited representatives of the Ukrainian Workers' and Peasants' Government are bound to act throughout in accordance with the actions of the accredited representatives of the Workers' and Peasants' Government of the Russian Federative Republic, whereby is understood the Council of People's Commissaries.

"'In the name of the Workers' and Peasants' Government of the Ukrainian People's Republic, the People's Secretary for International Affairs, for Internal Affairs, Military Affairs, Justice, Works, Commissariat.

"'The Manager of the Secretariat.

"'Kharkov, 30th December, 1917/12th January, 1918.

"'In accordance with the copy.

"'The President of the Russian Peace Delegation, A. Joffe.'

"This is at any rate a new difficulty, since we cannot and will not interfere in the internal affairs of Russia.

"This once disposed of, however, there will be no further difficulties to encounter here; we shall, in agreement with the Ukrainian Republic determine that *the old boundaries between Austria-Hungary and the former Russia will also be maintained as between ourselves and the Ukraine.*

=Poland=

"As regards Poland, the frontiers of which, by the way, have not yet been exactly determined, *we want nothing at all from this new state*. Free and uninfluenced, the population of Poland shall choose its own fate. For my part I attach no great weight to the *form* of the people's vote in this respect; *the more surely it expresses the general wish of the people, the better I shall be pleased*. For I desire only the *voluntary* attachment of Poland; only in the express *wish* of Poland itself toward that end can I see any guarantee for lasting harmony. It is my unalterable conviction that *the Polish question must not be allowed to delay the signing of peace by a single day*. If, after

peace is arrived at, Poland should wish to approach us, we will not reject its advances —*the Polish question must not and shall not endanger the peace itself*.

"I should have been glad if *the Polish Government had been able to take part in the negotiations*, since in my opinion Poland is *an independent state*. The Petersburg Government, however, takes the attitude that the present Polish Government is not entitled to speak in the name of the country, and does not acknowledge it as competent to represent the country, and we therefore gave way on this point in order to avoid possible conflict. The question is certainly one of importance, but it is more important still in my opinion *to set aside all difficulties likely to delay the negotiations*.

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=German-Russian Differences as to the Occupied Areas=

“The second difficulty to be reckoned with, and one which has been most widely echoed in the Press, is the *difference of opinion between our German allies and the Petersburg Government* anent the interpretation of *the right of self-determination among the Russian peoples*; that is to say, in the areas occupied by German troops. Germany maintains that it *does not aim at any annexation of territory by force* from Russia, but, briefly stated, the difference of opinion is a double one.

“In the first place, Germany rightly maintains that *the numerous expressions of desire for independence* on the part of *legislative corporations, communal representations*, *etc*., in the occupied areas should be taken as the *provisional* basis for the will of the people, to be *later* tested by *plebiscite on a broader foundation*, a point of view which the Russian Government at first was indisposed to agree to, as it did not consider the existing administrations in Courland and Lithuania entitled to speak for those provinces any more than in the case of Poland.

“In the second place, Russia demands that this plebiscite shall take place *after all German troops and officials have been withdrawn from the occupied provinces*, while Germany, in reply to this, points out that if this principle were carried to its utmost limits it would create a vacuum, which could not fail to bring about at once a state of complete anarchy and the utmost misery. It should here be noted that everything in these provinces which to-day renders possible the life of a state at all is *German property*. Railways, posts and telegraphs, the entire industry, and moreover the entire administrative machinery, police, law courts, all are in German hands. The sudden withdrawal of all this apparatus would, in fact, create a condition of things which seems *practically impossible to maintain*.

“In both cases it is a question of finding a *middle way*, which moreover *must be found*.

“*The differences between these two points of view are in my opinion not great enough to justify failure of the negotiations*.

“But such negotiations cannot be settled from one day to another; they take time.

“*If once we have attained peace with Russia, then in my opinion the general peace cannot be long delayed*, despite all efforts on the part of the Western Entente statesmen. I have learned that some are unable to understand why I stated in my first speech after the resumption of negotiations that it was not now a question at Brest of a general peace, but of a *separate peace with Russia*. This was the necessary recognition of a plain fact, which Herr Trotski also has admitted without reserve, and it was necessary, since the negotiations would have been on a different footing—that is to say, *in a more limited sphere*—if treating with Russia alone than if it were a case of treating for a general peace.

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“Though I have no illusions in the direction of expecting the fruit of general peace to ripen in a single night, I am nevertheless convinced that the fruit *has begun to ripen*, and that it is now only a question of holding out whether we are to obtain a general honourable peace or not.

=Wilson’s Message=

“I have recently been confirmed in this view by the offer of peace put forward by the President of the United States of America to the whole world. This is *an offer of peace*, for in fourteen points Mr. Wilson sets forth the principles upon which he seeks to establish a general peace. Obviously, an offer of this nature cannot be expected to furnish a scheme acceptable in every detail. If that were the case, then negotiations would be superfluous altogether, and peace could be arrived at by a simple acceptance, a single assent. This, of course, is not so.

“*But I have no hesitation in declaring that these last proposals on the part of President Wilson seem to me considerably nearer the Austro-Hungarian point of view*, and that there are among his proposals some which we can even agree to *with great pleasure*.

“If I may now be allowed to go further into these proposals, I must, to begin with, point out two things:

“So far as the proposals are concerned with *our Allies*—mention is made of the German possession of *Belgium* and of the *Turkish Empire*—I declare that, in fulfilment of our duty to our Allies, I am firmly determined *to hold out in defence of our Allies to the very last. The pre-war possessions of our Allies we will defend equally with our own*. This standpoint is that of all four Allies in complete reciprocity with ourselves.

“In the second place, I have to point out that I must *politely but definitely decline* to consider the Point dealing with our internal Government. We have in Austria *a parliament elected by general, equal, direct and secret ballot*. There is not a more democratic parliament in the world, and this parliament, together with the other constitutionally admissible factors, has the sole right to decide upon matters of *Austrian internal affairs*. I speak of *Austria* only, because I do not refer to *Hungarian* internal affairs in the *Austrian Delegation*. I should not consider it constitutional to do so. *And we do not interfere in American affairs; but, on the other hand, we do not wish for any foreign guidance from any state whatever.* Having said this, I may be permitted, with regard to the remaining Points, to state as follows:

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“As to the Point dealing with the abolition of ‘secret diplomacy’ and the introduction of full openness in the negotiations, I have nothing to say. From my point of view I have *no objection to such public negotiations so long as full reciprocity* is the basis of the same, though I do entertain *considerable doubt* as to whether, all things considered, *it is the quickest and most practical method* of arriving at a result. Diplomatic negotiations are simply a matter of business. But it might easily be imagined that in the case, for instance, of commercial treaties between one country and another it would not be advisable *to publish incomplete results beforehand* to the world. In such negotiations both parties naturally commence by setting their demands as high as possible in order to climb down gradually, using this or that expressed demand as matter for *compensation in* other ways until finally an *equilibrium of the opposing interests is arrived at*, a point which must necessarily be reached if agreement is to be come to at all. If such negotiations were to be carried on with full publicity, nothing could prevent the general public from passionately defending every separate clause involved, regarding any concession as a defeat, even when such clauses had only been advanced *for tactical reasons*. And when the public takes up any such point with particular fervour, ultimate agreement may be thereby rendered impossible or the final agreement may, if arrived at, be regarded as in itself *a defeat*, possibly by both sides. And this would not conduce to peaceable relations thereafter; it would, on the contrary, *increase the friction* between the states concerned. And as in the case of commercial treaties, so also with *political* negotiations, which deal with political matters.

“If the abolition of secret diplomacy is to mean that *no secret compacts are to be made*, that no agreements are to be entered upon without the public knowledge, then I have no objection to the introduction of this principle. As to how it is to be realised and adherence thereto ensured, I confess I have no idea at all. Granted that the governments of two countries are agreed, they will always be able to make a secret compact without the public being aware of the fact. These, however, are minor points. I am not one to stick by formalities, and *a question of more or less formal nature will never prevent me from coming to a sensible arrangement*.

“Point 1, then, is one that can be discussed.

“Point 2 is concerned with the *freedom of the seas*. In this postulate the President speaks from the hearts of all, and I can here *fully and completely share America’s desire*, the more so as the President adds the words, ’outside territorial waters’—that is to say, we are to understand the freedom of *the open sea*, and there is thus, of course, no question of any interference by force in the sovereign rights of our faithful *Turkish* Allies. Their standpoint in this respect will be ours.

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“Point 3, which is definitely directed against any *future economic war*, is so right, so sensible, and has so often been craved by ourselves that I have here again nothing to remark.

“Point 4, which demands *general disarmament*, sets forth in particularly clear and lucid form the necessity of reducing after this present war the free competition in armaments to a footing sufficient for the *internal security* of states. Mr. Wilson states this frankly and openly. In my speech at Budapest some months back I ventured to express the same idea; it forms *part of my political creed*, and I am most happy to find any other voice uttering the same thought.

“As regards the *Russian clause*, we are already showing in deeds that we are endeavouring to bring about friendly relations with our neighbours there.

“With regard to *Italy, Serbia, Roumania and Montenegro*, I can only repeat my statement already made in the Hungarian Delegation.

“I am not disposed to effect any insurance on the war ventures of our enemies.

“I am not disposed to make any one-sided concessions to our enemies, who still obstinately adhere to the standpoint of fighting on until the final victory; to prejudice permanently the Monarchy by such concessions, which would give the enemy the invaluable advantage of being able to carry on the war indefinitely without risk. (*Applause.*)

“Let Mr. Wilson use the great influence he undoubtedly possesses among his Allies to persuade them on their part to declare *on what conditions they are willing to treat*; he will then have rendered the enormous service of having set on foot the *general peace negotiations*. I am here replying openly and freely to Mr. Wilson, and I will speak as openly and freely to any who wish to speak for themselves, but it must necessarily be understood that *time, and the continuation of the war, cannot but affect the situations here concerned*.

“I have already said this once before; Italy is a striking example. Italy had the opportunity before the war of making great territorial acquisitions without firing a shot. It declined this and entered into the war; it has lost hundreds of thousands of lives, milliards in war expenses and values destroyed; it has brought want and misery upon its own population, and all this *only to lose for ever an advantage which it might have won*.

“Finally, as regards Point 13, it is an open secret that we are adherents to the idea of establishing ’an independent Polish State to include the areas undoubtedly occupied by Polish inhabitants.’ On this point also we shall, I think, soon agree with Mr. Wilson. And if the President crowns his proposals with the idea of a universal *League of Nations* he

will hardly meet with any opposition thereto on the part of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy.

“As will be seen from this comparison of my views with those of Mr. Wilson, we are not only *agreed in essentials as to the great principles* for rearrangement of the world after this war, but *our ideas as to several concrete questions bearing on the peace are closely allied*.

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“The differences remaining do not appear to me so great but that a discussion of these points might lead to a clearer understanding and bring us closer still.

“The situation, then, seems to be this: Austria-Hungary on the one hand, and the United States of America on the other, are the two Great Powers in the hostile groups of states whose interests are least opposed one to the other. It seems reasonable, then, to suppose that *an exchange of opinion between these two Powers might form the natural starting point for a conciliatory discussion* between all those states which have not yet entered upon peace negotiations. (*Applause.*) So much for Wilson’s proposals.

=Petersburg and the Ukraine=

“And now, gentlemen, I hasten to conclude. But this conclusion is perhaps the most important of all I have to say; I am endeavouring to bring about peace between the Ukraine and Petersburg.

“The conclusion of peace with Petersburg alters nothing in our definitive situation. Austro-Hungarian troops are nowhere opposed to the Petersburg Government—we have the Ukrainian against us—and it is impossible to export anything from Petersburg, since they have nothing there themselves but *revolution and anarchy, goods which the Bolshevists, no doubt, would be glad to export, but which I must politely decline to receive*.

“In spite of this, I wish to make peace with Petersburg as well, since this, like any other cessation of hostilities, brings us nearer to the *general peace*.

“It is otherwise with Ukraine. For the Ukraine has supplies of provisions which they will export if we can agree on commercial terms. The question of food is to-day a matter of anxiety throughout the world; among our opponents, and also in the neutral countries, it is a burning question. I wish to profit by the conclusion of peace with those Russian states which have food to export, in order to help our own population. *We could and would hold out without this assistance.* But I know my duty, and my duty bids me do all that can be done to lighten the burden of our suffering people, and I will not, therefore, from any hysterical nervousness about getting to final peace a few days or a few weeks earlier, throw away this possible advantage to our people. Such a peace takes time and cannot be concluded in a day. For such a peace must definitely state whether, what and how the Russian party will deliver to us, for the reason that the Ukraine on its part wishes to close the business not after, but at the signing of peace.

“I have already mentioned that the unsettled conditions in this newly established state occasion great difficulty and naturally considerable delay in the negotiations.

=Appeal to the Country=

"*If you fall on me from behind, if you force me to come to terms at once in headlong fashion, we shall gain no economic advantage at all*, and our people will then be forced to renounce the alleviation which they should have gained from the peace.

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“A surgeon conducting a difficult operation with a crowd behind him standing watch in hand may very likely complete the operation in record time, but in all probability the patient would not thank him for the manner in which it had been carried out.

“If you give our present opponents the impression that we must have *peace at once, and at any price*, we shall not get so much as a single measure of grain, and the result will be more or less platonic. It is no longer by any means a question principally of terminating the war on the Ukrainian front; neither we nor the Ukrainians themselves intend to continue the war now that we are agreed upon the no-annexation basis. It is a question—I repeat it once again—not of ‘imperialistic’ annexation plans and ideas, but of securing for our population at last the merited reward of their endurance, and procuring them those supplies of food for which they are waiting. Our partners in the deal are good business men and are closely watching to see *whether you are forcing me to act or not*.

“*If you wish to ruin the peace*, if you are anxious to renounce the supply of grain, then it would be logical enough to force my hand by speeches and resolutions, strikes and demonstrations, but not otherwise. And there is not an atom of truth in the idea that we are now at such a pass that we must prefer a bad peace without economic gain rather than a good peace with economic advantages to-morrow.

“The difficulties in the matter of food of late are not due solely to lack of actual provisions; it is the crises in coal, transport and organisation which are increasing. *When you at home get up strikes you are moving in a vicious circle; the strikes increase and aggravate the crises concerned and hinder the supplies of food and coal.* You are cutting your own throats in so doing, and all who believe that peace is accelerated thereby are terribly mistaken.

“It is believed that men in the country have been circulating rumours to the effect that the Government is instigating the strikes. I leave to these men themselves to choose whether they are to appear as *criminal slanderers or as fools*.

“If you had a Government desirous of concluding a peace different from that desired by the majority of the population, if you had a Government seeking to prolong the war for purposes of conquest, one might understand a conflict between the Government and the country. *But since the Government desires precisely the same as the majority of the people—that is to say, the speedy settlement of an honourable peace without annexationist aims—then it is madness to attack that Government from behind, to interfere with its freedom of action and hamper its movements.* Those who do so are fighting, not against the Government, they are fighting blindly against the people they pretend to serve and against themselves.

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“As for yourselves, gentlemen, it is not only your right, but your duty, to choose between the following alternatives: either you trust me to proceed with the peace negotiations, and in that case you must help me, or you do not trust me, and in that case you must depose me. I am confident that I have the support of the majority of the Hungarian delegation. The Hungarian Committee has given me a vote of confidence. If there is any doubt as to the same here, then the matter is clear enough. The question of a vote of confidence must be brought up and put to the vote; if I then have the majority against me I shall at once take the consequences. No one of those who are anxious to secure my removal will be more pleased than myself; indeed far less so. Nothing induces me now to retain my office but the sense of duty, which constrains me to remain as long as I have the confidence of the Emperor and the majority of the delegations. A soldier with any sense of decency does not desert. But no Minister for Foreign Affairs could conduct negotiations of this importance unless he knows, and all the world as well, that he is endowed with the confidence of the majority among the constitutional representative bodies. There can be no half measures here. You have this confidence or you have not. You must assist me or depose me; there is no other way. I have no more to say.”

5

=Report of the Peace Negotiations at Brest-Litovsk=

The Austro-Hungarian Government entered upon the peace negotiations at Brest-Litovsk with the object of arriving as quickly as possible at a peace compact which, if it did not, as we hoped, lead to a general peace, should at least secure order in the East. The draft of a preliminary peace was sent to Brest containing the following points:

1. Cessation of hostilities; if general peace should not be concluded, then neither of the present contracting parties to afford any support to the enemies of the other.

2. No surrender of territory; Poland, Lithuania and Courland retaining the right of determining their own destiny for the future.

3. No indemnity for costs of war or damages due to military operations.

4. Cessation of economic war and reparation of damages sustained by private persons through the economic war.

5. Resumption of commercial intercourse and the same provisionally on the basis of the old commercial treaty and twenty years’ preference subject to restriction in respect of any Customs union with neighbouring countries.

6. Mutual assistance in raw materials and industrial articles.

A further point was contemplated, dealing with the evacuation of the occupied areas, but the formulation of this had to be postponed until after consultation with the German

Supreme Military Command, whose co-operation was here required owing to the mingling of German and Austro-Hungarian troops on the Russian front. The Army Command has indicated a period of at least six months as necessary for the evacuation.

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In discussing this draft with the German delegates two points in particular were found to present great difficulty. One was that of evacuation. The German Army Command declared categorically that no evacuation of the occupied districts could be thought of until after conclusion of the general peace. The second difficulty arose in connection with the question as to treatment of the occupied districts. Germany insisted that in the peace treaty with Russia it should be simply stated that Russia had conceded to the peoples within its territory the right of self-determination, and that the nations in question had already availed themselves of that right. The plain standpoint laid down in our draft we were unable to carry through, although it was shared by the other Allies. However, in formulating the answer sent on December 25, 1916, to the Russian peace proposals a compromise was, after persistent efforts on our part, ultimately arrived at which at least prevented the full adoption of the divergent German point of view on these two points. In the matter of evacuation the Germans agreed that the withdrawal of certain bodies of troops before the general peace might be discussed.

In the matter of annexations a satisfactory manner of formulating this was found, making it applicable only in the event of general peace. Had the Entente then been disposed to make peace the principle of “no annexations” would have succeeded throughout.

Even allowing for the conciliatory form given through our endeavours to this answer by the four Powers to the Russian proposals, the German Headquarters evinced extreme indignation. Several highly outspoken telegrams from the German Supreme Command to the German delegates prove this. The head of the German Delegation came near to being recalled on this account, and if this had been done it is likely that German foreign policy would have been placed in the hands of a firm adherent of the sternest military views. As this, however, could only have had an unfavourable effect on the further progress of the negotiations, we were obliged to do all in our power to retain Herr Kuehlmann. With this end in view he was informed and invited to advise Berlin that if Germany persisted in its harsh policy Austria-Hungary would be compelled to conclude a separate peace with Russia. This declaration on the part of the Minister for Foreign Affairs did not fail to create a certain impression in Berlin, and was largely responsible for the fact that Kuehlmann was able to remain.

Kuehlmann’s difficult position and his desire to strengthen it rendered the discussion of the territorial questions, which were first officially touched upon on December 27, but had been already taken up in private meetings with the Russian delegates, a particularly awkward matter. Germany insisted that the then Russian front was not to be evacuated until six months after the general peace. Russia was disposed to agree to this, but demanded on the other hand that

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the fate of Poland was not to be decided until after evacuation. Against this the Germans were inclined to give up its original standpoint to the effect that the populations of occupied territories had already availed themselves of the right of self-determination conceded, and allow a new inquiry to be made among the population, but insisted that this should be done during the occupation. No solution could be arrived at on this point, though Austria-Hungary made repeated efforts at mediation. The negotiations had arrived at this stage when they were first interrupted on December 29.

On resuming the negotiations on January 6 the situation was little changed. Kuehlmann's position was at any rate somewhat firmer than before, albeit only at the cost of some concessions to the German military party. In these circumstances the negotiations, in which Trotski now took part as spokesman for the Russians, led only to altogether fruitless theoretical discussions and the right of self-determination, which could not bring about any lessening of the distance between the two firmly maintained points of view. In order to get the proceedings out of this deadlock further endeavours were made on the part of Austria to arrive at a compromise between the German and Russian standpoints, the more so as it was generally, and especially in the case of Poland, desirable to solve the territorial question on the basis of complete self-determination. Our proposals to the German delegates were to the effect that the Russian standpoint should so far be met as to allow the plebiscite demanded by the Russians, this to be taken, as the Germans insisted should be the case, during the German occupation, but with extensive guarantees for free expression of the will of the people. On this point we had long discussions with the German delegates, based on detailed drafts prepared by us.

Our endeavours here, however, were again unsuccessful. Circumstances arising at the time in our own country were responsible for this, as also for the result of the negotiations which had in the meantime been commenced with the Ukrainian delegates. These last had, at the first discussion, declined to treat with any Polish representatives, and demanded the concession of the entire Cholm territory, and, in a more guarded fashion, the cession of Eastern Galicia and the Ukrainian part of North-Eastern Hungary, and in consequence of which the negotiations were on the point of being broken off. At this stage a food crisis broke out in Austria to an extent of which the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was hitherto unaware, threatening Vienna in particular with the danger of being in a few days devoid of flour altogether. Almost immediately after this came a strike movement of threatening proportions. These events at home weakened the position of the Foreign Minister both as regards his attitude towards the German Allies and towards the opposing parties in the negotiations—with both of which he was then in conflict—and

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this, at a most critical moment, to a degree that can hardly be appreciated from a distance. He was required to exert pressure upon Germany, and was now forced, not merely to ask, but to entreat Germany's aid in sending supplies of food, or Vienna would within a few days be in the throes of a catastrophe. With the enemy, on the other hand, he was forced, owing to the situation at home, to strive for a settlement of peace that should be favourable to Austria, in spite of the fact that our food situation and our labour troubles were well known to that enemy.

This complete alteration of the position changed the whole basis and tactics of the Foreign Minister's proceedings. He had to obtain the supplies of grain asked for from Germany and thus to diminish political pressure on that country; but at the same time he had to persuade the Soviet delegates to continue negotiations, and finally to arrive at a settlement of peace under the most acceptable conditions possible with the Ukraine, which would put an end to the still serious difficulties of the food situation.

In these circumstances it was impossible now to work on the German delegates by talking of Austria-Hungary's concluding a separate peace with Russia, as this would have imperilled the chance of food supplies from Germany—the more so as the representative of the German Army Command had declared that it was immaterial whether Austria-Hungary made peace or not. Germany would in any case march on Petersburg if the Russian Government did not give way. On the other hand, however, the Foreign Minister prevailed on the leader of the Russian delegation to postpone the carrying out of the intentions of his Government—to the effect that the Russian delegation, owing to lack of good faith on the part of German-Austro-Hungarian negotiators, should be recalled.

At the same time the negotiations with the Ukrainian delegation were continued. By means of lengthy and wearisome conferences we succeeded in bringing their demands to a footing which might just possibly be acceptable, and gaining their agreement to a clause whereby Ukraine undertook to deliver at least 1,000,000 tons of grain by August, 1918. As to the demand for the Cholm territory, which we had wished to have relegated to the negotiations with Poland, the Ukrainian delegates refused to give way on this point, and were evidently supported by General Hoffmann. Altogether the German military party seemed much inclined to support Ukrainian demands and extremely indisposed to accede to Polish claims, so that we were unable to obtain the admission of Polish representatives to the proceedings, though we had frequently asked for this. A further difficulty in the way of this was the fact that Trotski himself was unwilling to recognise the Polish party as having equal rights here. The only result obtainable was that the Ukrainians should restrict their claims on the Cholm territory to those parts inhabited by Ukrainian majority

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and accept a revision of the frontier line, as yet only roughly laid down, according to the finding of a mixed commission and the wishes of the population, *i.e*. the principle of national boundaries under international protection. The Ukrainian delegates renounced all territorial claims against the Monarchy, but demanded from us on the other hand a guarantee as to the autonomous development of their co-nationals in Galicia. With regard to these two weighty concessions, the Foreign Minister declared that they could only be granted on the condition that the Ukraine fulfilled the obligation it had undertaken as to delivery of grain, the deliveries being made at the appointed times; he further demanded that the obligations on both sides should be reciprocal, *i.e*. that the failure of one party to comply therewith should release the other. The formulation of these points, which met with the greatest difficulties on the part of Ukraine, was postponed to a later date.

At this stage of the proceedings a new pause occurred to give the separate delegates time to advise their Governments as to the results hitherto attained and receive their final instructions. The Foreign Minister returned to Vienna and reported the state of the negotiations to the proper quarters. In the course of these deliberations his policy of concluding peace with Russia and Ukraine on the basis of the concessions proposed was agreed to. Another question dealt with at the same time was whether the Monarchy should, in case of extreme necessity, conclude a separate peace with Russia if the negotiations with that state should threaten to come to nothing on account of Germany's demands. This question was, after full consideration of all grounds to the contrary, answered *in thesi* in the affirmative, as the state of affairs at home apparently left no alternative.

On resuming the negotiations at Brest-Litovsk further endeavours were made to persuade Germany to give way somewhat by pointing out what would be the consequence of its obstinate attitude. In the course of the deliberations on this point with Herr Kuehlmann we succeeded after great difficulty in obtaining the agreement of the German delegates to a final attempt at compromise, to be undertaken by the Foreign Minister. The proposals for this compromise were based on the following considerations:

For months past conflicting views had been expressed as to:

1. Whether in the territories where constitutional alterations were to be made owing to the war the right of self-determination should be taken as already exercised, or whether a plebiscite should be taken first;

2. Whether such plebiscite, if taken, should be addressed to a constituent body or in the form of a referendum to the people direct;

3. Whether this should be done before or after evacuation; and

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4. In what manner it was to be organised (by general franchise, by a vote of the nobles, *etc*.). It would be advisable, and would also be in accordance with the principles adopted by Russia, to leave the decision on all these points to the people themselves, and deliver them over to the “temporary self-administrative body,” which should, also according to the Russian proposal (Kameneff), be introduced at once. The whole of the peace negotiations could then be concentrated upon a single point: the question as to the composition of this temporary body. Here, however, a compromise could be arrived at, as Russia could agree that the already existent bodies set in the foreground by Germany should be allowed to express a part of the will of the people, Germany agreeing that these bodies should, during the occupation, be supplemented by elements appointed, according to the Russian principles, by free election.

On February 7, immediately after Herr Kuehlmann had agreed to mediation on this basis, the Foreign Minister saw the leader of the Russian delegation, Trotski, and had a series of conversations with him. The idea of compromise on the lines just set forth was little to Trotski’s taste, and he declared that he would in any case protest against the handling of the self-determination question by the Four Powers. On the other hand, the discussion did lead to some result, in that a new basis for disposing of the difficulties which had arisen was now found. There was to be no further continuance of the conflict as to whether the territorial alterations involved by the peace should be termed “annexations,” as the Russian delegates wished, or “exercise of the right of self-determination,” as Germany wished; the territorial alterations were to be simply noted in the peace treaty ("Russia notes that ..."). Trotski, however, made his acquiescence to the conclusion of such a compact subject to two conditions: one being that the Moon Sound Islands and the Baltic ports should remain with Russia; the other that Germany and Austria-Hungary should not conclude any separate peace with the Ukrainian People’s Republic, whose Government was then seriously threatened by the Bolsheviks and, according to some reports, already overthrown by them. The Foreign Minister was now anxious to arrive at a compromise on this question also, in which he had to a certain degree the support of Herr von Kuehlmann, while General Hoffmann most vehemently opposed any further concession.

All these negotiations for a compromise failed to achieve their end owing to the fact that Herr Kuehlmann was forced by the German Supreme Army Command to act promptly. Ludendorff declared that the negotiations with Russia must be concluded within three days, and when a telegram from Petersburg was picked up in Berlin calling on the German Army to rise in revolt Herr von Kuehlmann was strictly ordered not to be content with the cessions already agreed to, but to demand

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the further cession of the unoccupied territories of Livonia and Esthonia. Under such pressure the leader of the German delegation had not the power to compromise. We then arrived at the signing of the treaty with Ukraine, which had, after much trouble, been brought to an end meanwhile. It thus appeared as if the efforts of the Foreign Minister had proved fruitless. Nevertheless he continued his discussions with Trotski, but these still led to no result, owing to the fact that Trotski, despite repeated questioning, persisted in leaving everything vague till the last moment as to whether he would, in the present circumstances, conclude any peace with the Four Powers at all or not. Not until the plenary session of February 10 was this cleared up; Russia declared for a cessation of hostilities, but signed no treaty of peace.

The situation created by this declaration offered no occasion for further taking up the idea of a separate peace with Russia, since peace seemed to have come *via facta* already. At a meeting on February 10 of the diplomatic and military delegates of Germany and Austria-Hungary to discuss the question of what was now to be done it was agreed unanimously, save for a single dissentient, that the situation arising out of Trotski's declarations must be accepted. The one dissentient vote—that of General Hoffmann—was to the effect that Trotski's statement should be answered by declaring the Armistice at an end, marching on Petersburg, and supporting the Ukraine openly against Russia. In the ceremonial final sitting, on February 11, Herr von Kuehlmann adopted the attitude expressed by the majority of the peace delegations, and set forth the same in a most impressive speech. Nevertheless, a few days later, as General Hoffmann had said, Germany declared the Armistice at an end, ordered the German troops to march on Petersburg, and brought about the situation which led to the signing of the peace treaty. Austria-Hungary declared that we took no part in this action.

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=Report of the Peace Negotiations at Bucharest=

The possibility of entering upon peace negotiations with Roumania was considered as soon as negotiations with the Russian delegations at Brest-Litovsk had commenced. In order to prevent Roumania itself from taking part in these negotiations Germany gave the Roumanian Government to understand that it would not treat with the present King and the present Government at all. This step, however, was only intended to enable separate negotiations to be entered upon with Roumania, as Germany feared that the participation of Roumania in the Brest negotiations would imperil the chances of peace. Roumania's idea seemed then to be to carry on the war and gain the upper hand. At the end of January, therefore, Austria-Hungary took the initiative in order to bring about negotiations with Roumania. The Emperor sent Colonel Randa, the former Military Attache to the Roumanian Government, to the King of Roumania, assuring him of his willingness to grant Roumania honourable terms of peace.

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In connection with the peace negotiations a demand was raised in Hungarian quarters for a rectification of the frontier line, so as to prevent, or at any rate render difficult, any repetition of the invasion by Roumania in 1916 over the Siebenbuergen, despite opposition on the part of the Minister for Foreign Affairs. The strategical frontier drawn up by the Army Command, which, by the way, was influenced by considerations not conducive to peace, followed a line involving the cession to Hungary of Turnu-Severin, Sinaia and several valuable petroleum districts in Moldavia. Public opinion in Hungary voiced even further demands. The Hungarian Government was of opinion that the Parliament would offer the greatest hindrances to any peace not complying with the general desire in this respect, and leading Hungarian statesmen, even some among the Opposition parties, declared the rectification of the frontier to be a condition of peace *sine qua non*. Wekerle and Tisza in particular took this view. Despite this serious difference of opinion, the Foreign Minister, in entire agreement with the Emperor, even before the commencement of the negotiations in the middle of February, took up the position that demands connected with the frontier line should not offer any obstacle to the conclusion of peace. The rectification of the frontier should only seriously be insisted on as far as could be done on the basis of a loyal and, for the future, amicable relations with Roumania. Hungary regarded this lenient attitude on the part of the Foreign Minister with increasing disapproval. We pointed out that a frontier line conceding cities and petroleum districts to Hungary would be unfortunate in every respect. From the point of view of internal politics, because the number of non-Hungarian inhabitants would be thereby increased; from the military point of view, because it would give rise to frontier conflicts with unreliable Roumanian factions; and, finally, from the point of view of foreign policy, because it would mean annexations and the transference of population this way and that, rendering friendly relations with Roumania an impossibility. Nevertheless, it would be necessary for a time to hold fast by the frontier line as originally conceived, so that the point could be used to bring about the establishment in Roumania of a regime amicably disposed toward the Central Powers. The Foreign Minister was particularly anxious to see a Marghiloman Cabinet formed, inaugurating a policy friendly to ourselves. He believed that with such a Cabinet it would be easier to arrive at a peace of mutual understanding, and was also resolved to render possible such a peace by extensive concessions, especially by giving his diplomatic support in the Bessarabian question. He informed Marghiloman also in writing that he would be prepared to grant important concessions to a Cabinet of which he, Marghiloman, was the head, in particular as regards the cession of inhabited places such as Turnu-Severin

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and Ocna, on which points he was willing to give way. When the Marghiloman Cabinet was formed the Austro-Hungarian demands in respect of the frontier line would, despite active opposition on the part of the Hungarian Government, be reduced almost by half. The negotiations with Roumania were particularly difficult in regard to the question of two places, Azuga and Busteni. On March 24 Count Czernin prepared to terminate these negotiations, declaring that he was ready to renounce all claim to Azuga and Busteni and halve his demands as to the much-debated Lotru district, provided Marghiloman were willing to arrange the frontier question on this basis. Marghiloman declared himself satisfied with this compromise. On the next day, however, it was nevertheless rejected by the Hungarian Government, and not until after further telegraphic communication with the Emperor and Wekerle was the assent of all competent authorities obtained. This had, indeed, been widely considered in Hungarian circles as an impossibility.

Another Austro-Hungarian demand which played some part in the Bucharest negotiations was in connection with the plan of an economical alliance between Austria-Hungary and Roumania. This was of especial interest to the Austrian Government, whereas the frontier question, albeit in some degree affecting Austria as well, was a matter of indifference to this Government, which, as a matter of fact, did not sympathise with the demands at all. The plan for an economical alliance, however, met with opposition in Hungary. Immediately before the commencement of the Bucharest negotiations an attempt was made to overcome this opposition on the part of the Hungarian Government and secure its adherence to the idea of an economical alliance with Roumania—at any rate, conditionally upon the conclusion of a customs alliance with Germany as planned. It proved impossible, however, at the time to obtain this assent. The Hungarian Government reserved the right of considering the question later on, and on March 8 instructed their representatives at Bucharest that they must dissent from the plan, as the future economical alliance with Germany was a matter beyond present consideration. Consequently this question could play no part at first in the peace negotiations, and all that could be done was to sound the leading Roumanian personages in a purely private manner as to the attitude they would adopt towards such a proposal. The idea was, generally speaking, well received by Roumania, and the prevalent opinion was that such an alliance would be distinctly advisable from Roumania’s point of view. A further attempt was therefore made, during the pause in the peace negotiations in the East, to overcome the opposition of the Hungarian Government; these deliberations were, however, not concluded when the Minister for Foreign Affairs resigned his office.

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Germany had, even before the commencement of negotiations in Bucharest, considered the question of imposing on Roumania, when treating for peace, a series of obligations especially in connection with the economical relations amounting to a kind of indirect war indemnity. It was also contemplated that the occupation of Wallachia should be maintained for five or six years after the conclusion of peace. Roumania should then give up its petroleum districts, its railways, harbours and domains to German companies as their property, and submit itself to a permanent financial control. Austria-Hungary opposed these demands from the first on the grounds that no friendly relations could ever be expected to exist with a Roumania which had been economically plundered to such a complete extent; and Austria-Hungary was obliged to maintain amicable relations with Roumania.

This standpoint was most emphatically set forth, and not without some success, on February 5 at a conference with the Reichskansler. In the middle of February the Emperor sent a personal message to the German Emperor cautioning him against this plan, which might prove an obstacle in the way of peace. Roumania was not advised of these demands until comparatively late in the negotiations, after the appointment of Marghiloman. Until then the questions involved gave rise to constant discussion between Germany and Austria-Hungary, the latter throughout endeavouring to reduce the German demands, not only with a view to arriving at a peace of mutual understanding, but also because, if Germany gained a footing in Roumania on the terms originally contemplated, Austro-Hungarian economical interests must inevitably suffer thereby. The demands originally formulated with regard to the Roumanian railways and domains were then relinquished by Germany, and the plan of a cession of the Roumanian harbours was altered so as to amount to the establishment of a Roumanian-German-Austro-Hungarian harbour company, which, however, eventually came to nothing. The petroleum question, too, was reduced from a cession to a ninety years' tenure of the state petroleum districts and the formation of a monopoly trading company for petroleum under German management. Finally, an economic arrangement was prepared which should secure the agricultural products of Roumania to the Central Powers for a series of years. The idea of a permanent German control of the Roumanian finances was also relinquished owing to Austro-Hungarian opposition. The negotiations with Marghiloman and his representatives on these questions made a very lengthy business. In the economic questions especially there was great difference of opinion on the subject of prices, which was not disposed of until the last moment before the drawing up of the treaty on March 28, and then only by adopting the Roumanian standpoint. On the petroleum question, where the differences were particularly acute, agreement was finally arrived at, in face of the extreme views of the German economical representative on the one hand and the Roumanian Foreign Minister, Arion, on the other, by a compromise, according to which further negotiations were to be held in particular with regard to the trade monopoly for petroleum, and the original draft was only to apply when such negotiations failed to lead to any result.

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The German demands as to extension of the period of occupation for five to six years after the general peace likewise played a great part at several stages of the negotiations, and were from the first stoutly opposed by Austria-Hungary. We endeavoured to bring about an arrangement by which, on the conclusion of peace, Roumania should have all legislative and executive power restored, being subject only to a certain right of control in respect of a limited number of points, but not beyond the general peace. In support of this proposal the Foreign Minister pointed out in particular that the establishment of a Roumanian Ministry amicably disposed towards ourselves would be an impossibility (the Averescu Ministry was then still in power) if we were to hold Roumania permanently under our yoke. We should far rather use every endeavour to obtain what could be obtained from Roumania through the medium of such politicians in that country as were disposed to follow a policy of friendly relations with the Central Powers. The main object of our policy to get such men into power in Roumania, and enable them to remain in the Government, would be rendered unattainable if too severe measures were adopted. We might gain something thereby for a few years, but it would mean losing everything in the future. And we succeeded also in convincing the German Secretary of State, Kuehlmann, of the inadvisability of the demands in respect of occupation, which were particularly voiced by the German Army Council. As a matter of fact, after the retirement of Averescu, Marghiloman declared that these demands would make it impossible for him to form a Cabinet at all. And when he had been informed, from German sources, that the German Supreme Army Command insisted on these terms, he only agreed to form a Cabinet on the assurance of the Austrian Foreign Minister that a solution of the occupation problem would be found. In this question also we did ultimately succeed in coming to agreement with Roumania.

One of the decisive points in the conclusion of peace with Roumania was, finally, the cession of the Dobrudsha, on which Bulgaria insisted with such violence that it was impossible to avoid it. The ultimatum which preceded the preliminary Treaty of Buftea had also to be altered chiefly on the Dobrudsha question, as Bulgaria was already talking of the ingratitude of the Central Powers, of how Bulgaria had been disillusioned, and of the evil effects this disillusionment would have on the subsequent conduct of the war. All that Count Czernin could do was to obtain a guarantee that Roumania, in case of cession of the Dobrudsha, should at least be granted a sure way to the harbour of Kustendje. In the main the Dobrudsha question was decided at Buftea. When, later, Bulgaria expressed a desire to interpret the wording of the preliminary treaty by which the Dobrudsha “as far as the Danube” was to be given up in such a sense as to embrace the whole of the territory up

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to the northernmost branch (the Kilia branch) of the Danube, this demand was most emphatically opposed both by Germany and Austria-Hungary, and it was distinctly laid down in the peace treaty that only the Dobrudsha as far as the St. George's branch was to be ceded. This decision again led to bad feeling in Bulgaria, but was unavoidable, as further demands here would probably have upset the preliminary peace again.

The proceedings had reached this stage when Count Czernin resigned his office.

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=Wilson's Fourteen Points=

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

II. 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.

III. 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.

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

V. 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.

VI. 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.

VII. 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.

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VIII. 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 50 years, should be righted in order that peace may once more be made secure in the interests of all.

IX. A readjustment of the frontiers of Italy should be effected along clearly recognisable lines of nationality.

X. 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.

XI. Roumania, Serbia, and Montenegro should be evacuated, occupied territories restored, Serbia accorded free and secure 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.

XII. 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.

XIII. 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.

XIV. 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.

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=Ottokar Czernin on Austria's Policy During the War=

Speech delivered December 11, 1918

GENTLEMEN,—In rising now to speak of our policy during the war it is my hope that I may thereby help to bring the truth to light. We are living in a time of excitement. After four years of war, the bloodiest and most determined war the world has ever seen, and in the midst of the greatest revolution ever known, this excitement is only too easily understood. But the result of this excitement is that all those rumours which go flying

about, mingling truth and falsehood together, end by misleading the public. It is unquestionably necessary to arrive at a clear understanding. The public has a right to know what has really happened, it has the right to know why we did not succeed in attaining the peace we had so longed for, it has a right to know whether, and if so where, any neglect can be pointed out, or whether

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it was the overwhelming power of circumstances which has led our policy to take the course it did. The new arrangement of relations between ourselves and Germany will make an end of all secret proceedings. The day will come then when, fortunately, all that has hitherto been hidden will be made clear. As, however, I do not know when all this will be made public, I am grateful for the opportunity of lifting the veil to-day from certain hitherto unknown events. In treating of this theme I will refrain from touching upon those constitutional factors which once counted for so much, but which do so no longer. I do so because it seems to me unfair to import into the discussion persons who are now paying heavily for what they may have done and who are unable to defend themselves. And I must pay this honourable tribute to the Austro-Hungarian Press, that it has on the whole sought to spare the former Emperor as far as possible. There are, of course, exceptions—*exceptiones firmant regulam*. There are in Vienna, as everywhere else, men who find it more agreeable to attack, the less if those whom they are attacking are able to defend themselves. But, believe me, gentlemen, those who think thus are not the bravest, not the best, nor the most reliable; and we may be glad that they form so insignificant a minority.

But, to come to the point. Before passing on to a consideration of the various phases of the work for peace, I should like to point out two things: firstly, that since the entry of Italy and Roumania into the war, and especially since the entry of America, a “victorious peace” on our part has been a Utopian idea, a Utopia which, unfortunately, was throughout cherished by the German military party; and, secondly, that we have never received any offer of peace from the Entente. On several occasions peace feelers were put forward between representatives of the Entente and our own; unfortunately, however, these never led to any concrete conditions. We often had the impression that we might conclude a separate peace without Germany, but we were never told the concrete conditions upon which Germany, on its part, could make peace; and, in particular, we were never informed that Germany would be allowed to retain its possessions as before the war, in consequence of which we were left in the position of having to fight a war of defence for Germany. We were compelled by our treaty to a common defence of the pre-war possessions, and since the Entente never declared its willingness to treat with a Germany which wished for no annexations, since the Entente constantly declared its intention of annihilating Germany, we were forced to defend Germany, and our position in Berlin was rendered unspeakably more difficult. We ourselves, also, were never given any assurance that we should be allowed to retain our former possessions; but in our case the desire for peace was so strong that we would have made territorial concessions if we had been able thereby to secure general

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peace. This, however, was not the case. Take Italy, for instance, which was primarily at war with ourselves and not with Germany. If we had offered Italy concessions however great, if we had offered all that Italy has now taken possession of, even then it could not have made peace, being bound by duty to its Allies and by circumstances not to make peace until England and France made peace with Germany.

When, then, peace by sacrifice was the only peace attainable, obviously, as a matter of principle, there were two ways of reaching that end. One, a general peace, *i.e*. including Germany, and the other, a separate peace. Of the overwhelming difficulties attending the former course I will speak later; at present a few words on the question of separate peace.

I myself would never have made a separate peace. I have never, not even in the hour of disillusionment—I may say of despair at my inability to lead the policy of Berlin into wiser channels—even in such hours, I say, I have never forgotten that our alliance with the German Empire was no ordinary alliance, no such alliance as may be contracted by two Emperors or two Governments, and can easily be broken, but an alliance of blood, a blood-brotherhood between the ten million Austro-Germans and the seventy million of the Empire, which could not be broken. And I have never forgotten that the military party in power at that time in Germany were not the German people, and that we had allied ourselves with the German people, and not with a few leading men. But I will not deny that in the moments when I saw my policy could not be realised I did ventilate the idea of suggesting to the Emperor the appointment, in my stead, of one of those men who saw salvation in a separation from Germany. But again and again I relinquished this idea, being firmly convinced that separate peace was a sheer impossibility. The Monarchy lay like a great block between Germany and the Balkans. Germany had great masses of troops there from which it could not be cut off, it was procuring oil and grain from the Balkans; if we were to interpose between it and the Balkans we should be striking at its most sensitive vital nerve. Moreover, the Entente would naturally have demanded first of all that we joined in the blockade, and finally our secession would automatically have involved also that of Bulgaria and Turkey. Had we withdrawn, Germany would have been unable to carry on the war. In such a situation there can be no possibility of doubt but that the German Army Command would have flung several divisions against Bohemia and the Tyrol, meting out to us the same fate which had previously befallen Roumania. The Monarchy, Bohemia in particular, would at once have become a scene of war. But even this is not all. Internally, such a step would at once have led to civil war. The Germans of Austria would never have turned against their brothers, and the Hungarians—Tisza's Hungarians—would never have lent their aid to such a policy. *We*

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had begun the war in common, and we could not end it save in common. For us there was no way out of the war; we could only choose between fighting with Germany against the Entente, or fighting with the Entente against Germany until Germany herself gave way. A slight foretaste of what would have happened was given us through the separatist steps taken by Andrassy at the last moment. This utterly defeated, already annihilated and prostrate Germany had yet the power to fling troops toward the Tyrol, and had not the revolution overwhelmed all Germany like a conflagration, smothering the war itself, I am not sure but that the Tyrol might at the last moment have been harried by war. And, gentlemen, I have more to say. The experiment of separate peace would not only have involved us in a civil war, not only brought the war into our own country, but even then the final outcome would have been much the same. The dissolution of the Monarchy into its component national parts was postulated throughout by the Entente. I need only refer to the Conference of London. But whether the State be dissolved by way of reward to the people or by way of punishment to the State makes little difference; the effect is the same. In this case also a “German Austria” would have arisen, and in such a development it would have been hard for the German-Austrian people to take up an attitude which rendered them allies of the Entente. In my own case, as Minister of the Imperial and Royal Government, it was my duty also to consider dynastic interests, and I never lost sight of that obligation. But I believe that in this respect also the end would have been the same. In particular the dissolution of the Monarchy into its national elements by legal means, against the opposition of the Germans and Hungarians, would have been a complete impossibility. And the Germans in Austria would never have forgiven the Crown if it had entered upon a war with Germany; the Emperor would have been constantly encountering the powerful Republican tendencies of the Czechs, and he would have been in constant conflict with the King of Serbia over the South-Slav question, an ally being naturally nearer to the Entente than the Habsburgers. And, finally, the Hungarians would never have forgiven the Emperor if he had freely conceded extensive territories to Bohemia and to the South-Slav state; I believe, then, that in this confusion the Crown would have fallen, as it has done in fact. *A separate peace was a sheer impossibility.* There remained the second way: to make peace jointly with Germany. Before going into the difficulties which rendered this way impossible I must briefly point out wherein lay our great dependence upon Germany. First of all, in military respects. Again and again we were forced to rely on aid from Germany. In Roumania, in Italy, in Serbia, and in Russia we were victorious with the Germans beside us. We were in the position of a poor relation living by the grace

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of a rich kinsman. But it is impossible to play the mendicant and the political adviser at the same time, particularly when the other party is a Prussian officer. In the second place, we were dependent upon Germany owing to the state of our food supply. Again and again we were here also forced to beg for help from Germany, because the complete disorganisation of our own administration had brought us to the most desperate straits. We were forced to this by the hunger blockade established, on the one hand, by Hungary, and on the other by the official authorities and their central depots. I remember how, when I myself was in the midst of a violent conflict with the German delegates at Brest-Litovsk, I received orders from Vienna to bow the knee to Berlin and beg for food. You can imagine, gentlemen, for yourselves how such a state of things must weaken a Minister's hands. And, thirdly, our dependence was due to the state of our finances. In order to keep up our credit we were drawing a hundred million marks a month from Germany, a sum which during the course of the war has grown to over four milliards; and this money was as urgently needed as were the German divisions and the German bread. And, despite this position of dependence, the only way to arrive at peace was by leading Germany into our own political course; that is to say, persuading Germany to conclude a peace involving sacrifice. *The situation all through was simply this: that any momentary military success might enable us to propose terms of peace which, while entailing considerable loss to ourselves, had just a chance of being accepted by the enemy.* The German military party, on the other hand, increased their demands with every victory, and it was more hopeless than ever, after their great successes, to persuade them to adopt a policy of renunciation. I think, by the way, that there was a single moment in the history of this war when such an action would have had some prospect of success. I refer to the famous battle of Goerlitz. Then, with the Russian army in flight, the Russian forts falling like houses of cards, many among our enemies changed their point of view. I was at that time still our representative in Roumania. Majorescu was then not disinclined to side with us actively, and the Roumanian army moved forward toward Bessarabia, could have been hot on the heels of the flying Russians, and might, according to all human calculations, have brought about a complete debacle. It is not unlikely that the collapse which later took place in Russia might have come about then, and after a success of that nature, with no "America" as yet on the horizon, we might perhaps have brought the war to an end. Two things, however, were required: in the first place, the Roumanians demanded, as the price of their co-operation, a rectification of the Hungarian frontier, and this first condition was flatly refused by Hungary; the second condition, which naturally then did not come

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into question at all, would have been that we should even then, after such a success, have proved strong enough to bear a peace with sacrifice. We were not called upon to agree to this, but the second requirement would undoubtedly have been refused by Germany, just as the first had been by Hungary. I do not positively assert that peace would have been possible in this or any other case, but I do positively maintain that during my period of office *such a peace by sacrifice was the utmost we and Germany could have attained*. The future will show what superhuman efforts we have made to induce Germany to give way. That all proved fruitless was not the fault of the German people, nor was it, in my opinion, the fault of the German Emperor, but that of the leaders of the German military party, which had attained such enormous power in the country. Everyone in Wilhelmstrasse, from Bethmann to Kuehlmann, wanted peace; but they could not get it simply because the military party got rid of everyone who ventured to act otherwise than as they wished. This also applies to Bethmann and Kuehlmann. The Pan-Germanists, under the leadership of the military party, could not understand that it was possible to die through being victorious, that victories are worthless when they do not lead to peace, that territories held in an iron grasp as “security” are valueless securities as long as the opposing party cannot be forced to redeem them. There were various shades of this Pan-Germanism. One section demanded the annexation of parts of Belgium and France, with an indemnity of milliards; others were less exorbitant, but all were agreed that peace could only be concluded with an extension of German possessions. It was the easiest thing in the world to get on well with the German military party so long as one believed in their fantastic ideas and took a victorious peace for granted, dividing up the world thereafter at will. But if anyone attempted to look at things from the point of view of the real situation, and ventured to reckon with the possibility of a less satisfactory termination of the war, the obstacles then encountered were not easily surmounted. We all of us remember those speeches in which constant reference was always made to a “stern peace,” a “German peace,” a “victorious peace.” For us, then, the possibility of a more favourable peace—I mean a peace based on mutual understanding—I have never believed in the possibility of a victorious peace—would only have been acute in the case of Poland and the Austro-Polish question. But I cannot sufficiently emphasise the fact that the Austro-Polish solution never was an obstacle in the way of peace and could never have been so. There was only the idea that Austrian Poland and the former Russian Poland might be united and attached to the Monarchy. It was never suggested that such a step should be enforced against the will of Poland itself or against the will of the Entente. There was a time when it looked as if not only Poland but also certain sections among the Entente were not disinclined to agree to such a solution.

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But to return to the German military party. This had attained a degree of power in the State rarely equalled in history, and the rarity of the phenomenon was only exceeded by the suddenness of its terrible collapse. The most striking personality in this group was General Ludendorff. Ludendorff was a great man, a man of genius, in conception, a man of indomitable energy and great gifts. But this man required a political brake, so to speak, a political element in the Wilhelmstrasse capable of balancing his influence, and this was never found. It must fairly be admitted that the German generals achieved the gigantic, and there was a time when they were looked up to by the people almost as gods. It may be true that all great strategists are much alike; they look to victory always and to nothing else. Moltke himself, perhaps, was nothing more, but he had a Bismarck to maintain equilibrium. We had no such Bismarck, and when all is said and done it was not the fault of Ludendorff, or it is at any rate an excuse for him, that he was the only supremely powerful character in the whole of Germany, and that in consequence the entire policy of the country was directed into military channels. Ludendorff was a great patriot, desiring nothing for himself, but seeking only the happiness of his country; a military genius, a hard man, utterly fearless—and for all that a misfortune in that he looked at the whole world through Potsdam glasses, with an altogether erroneous judgment, wrecking every attempt at peace which was not a peace by victory. Those very people who worshipped Ludendorff when he spoke of a victorious peace stone him now for that very thing; Ludendorff was exactly like the statesmen of England and France, who all rejected compromise and declared for victory alone; in this respect there was no difference between them. The peace of mutual understanding which I wished for was rejected on the Thames and on the Seine just as by Ludendorff himself. I have said this already. According to the treaty it was our undoubted duty to carry on a defensive war to the utmost and reciprocally to defend the integrity of the State. It is therefore perfectly obvious that I could never publicly express any other view, that I was throughout forced to declare that we were fighting for Alsace-Lorraine just as we were for Trentino, that I could not relinquish German territory to the Entente so long as I lacked the power to persuade Germany herself to such a step. But, as I will show, the most strenuous endeavours were made in this latter direction. And I may here in parenthesis remark that our military men throughout refrained from committing the error of the German generals, and interfering in politics themselves. It is undoubtedly to the credit of our Emperor that whenever any tendency to such interference appeared he quashed it at once. But in particular I should point out that the Archduke Frederick confined his activity solely to the task of bringing about peace. He has rendered most valuable service in this, as also in his endeavours to arrive at favourable relations with Germany.

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Very shortly after taking up office I had some discussions with the German Government which left those gentlemen perfectly aware of the serious nature of the situation. In April, 1917—eighteen months ago—I sent the following report to the Emperor Charles, which he forwarded to the Emperor William with the remark that he was entirely of my opinion.

[This report is already printed in these pages. See p. 146.]

This led to a reply from the German Government, dated May 9, again expressing the utmost confidence in the success of the submarine campaign, declaring, it is true, their willingness in principle to take steps towards peace, but reprehending any such steps as might be calculated to give an impression of weakness.

As to any territorial sacrifice on the part of Germany, this was not to be thought of.

As will be seen from this report, however, we did not confine ourselves to words alone. In 1917 we declared in Berlin that the Emperor Charles was prepared to permit the union of Galicia with Poland, and to do all that could be done to attach that State to Germany in the event of Germany making any sacrifices in the West in order to secure peace. But we were met with a *non possumus* and the German answer that territorial concessions to France were out of the question.

The whole of Galicia was here involved, but I was firmly assured that if the plan succeeded Germany would protect the rights of the Ukraine; and consideration for the Ukrainians would certainly not have restrained me had it been a question of the highest value—of peace itself.

When I perceived that the likelihood of converting Berlin to our views steadily diminished I had recourse to other means. The journey of the Socialist leaders to Stockholm will be remembered. It is true that the Socialists were not “sent” by me; they went to Stockholm of their own initiative and on their own responsibility, but it is none the less true that I could have refused them their passes if I had shared the views of the Entente Governments and of numerous gentlemen in our own country. Certainly, I was at the time very sceptical as to the outcome, as I already saw that the Entente would refuse passes to their Socialists, and consequently there could be nothing but a “rump” parliament in the end. But despite all the reproaches which I had to bear, and the argument that the peace-bringing Socialists would have an enormous power in the State to the detriment of the monarchical principle itself, I never for a moment hesitated to take that step, and I have never regretted it in itself, only that it did not succeed. It is encouraging to me now to read again many of the letters then received criticising most brutally my so-called “Socialistic proceedings” and to find that the same gentlemen who were then so incensed at my policy are now adherents of a line of criticism which maintains that I am too “narrow-minded” in my choice of new means towards peace.

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It will be remembered how, in the early autumn of 1917, the majority of the German Reichstag had a hard fight against the numerically weaker but, from their relation to the German Army Command, extremely powerful minority on the question of the reply to the Papal Note. Here again I was no idle spectator. One of my friends, at my instigation, had several conversations with Suedekum and Erzberger, and encouraged them, by my description of our own position, to pass the well known peace resolution. It was owing to this description of the state of affairs here that the two gentlemen mentioned were enabled to carry the Reichstag's resolution in favour of a peace by mutual understanding—the resolution which met with such disdain and scorn from the Pan-Germans and other elements. I hoped then, for a moment, to have gained a lasting and powerful alliance in the German Reichstag against the German military plans of conquest.

And now, gentlemen, I should like to say a few words on the subject of that unfortunate submarine campaign which was undoubtedly the beginning of the end, and to set forth the reasons which in this case, as in many other instances, forced us to adopt tactics not in accordance with our own convictions. Shortly after my appointment as Minister the idea of unrestricted submarine warfare began to take form in German minds. The principal advocate of this plan was Admiral Tirpitz. To the credit of the former *Reichskansler*, Bethmann-Hollweg, be it said that he was long opposed to the idea, and used all means and every argument to dissuade others from adopting so perilous a proceeding. In the end he was forced to give way, as was the case with all politicians who came in conflict with the all-powerful military party. Admiral Holtzendorff came to us at that time, and the question was debated from every point of view in long conferences lasting for hours. My then ministerial colleagues, Tisza and Clam, as well as myself were entirely in agreement with Emperor Charles in rejecting the proposal, and the only one who then voted unreservedly in favour of it was Admiral Haus. It should here be noted that the principal German argument at that time was not the prospect of starving England into submission, but the suggestion that the Western front could not be held unless the American munition transports were sunk—that is to say, the case for the submarine campaign was then based chiefly on a point of *technical military importance* and nothing else. I myself earnestly considered the question then of separating ourselves from Germany on this point; with the small number of U-boats at our disposal it would have made but little difference had we on our part refrained. But another point had here to be considered. If the submarine campaign was to succeed in the northern waters it must be carried out at the same time in the Mediterranean. With this latter water unaffected the transports would have been sent via Italy, France

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and Dover to England, and the northern U-boat campaign would have been paralysed. But in order to carry on submarine war in the Adriatic we should have to give the Germans access to our bases, such as Pola, Cattaro and Trieste, and by so doing we were *de facto* partaking in the submarine campaign ourselves. If we did not do it, then we were attacking Germany in the rear by hindering their submarine campaign—that is to say, it would bring us into direct conflict with Germany. Therefore, albeit sorely against our will, we agreed, not convinced by argument, but unable to act otherwise.

And now, gentlemen, I hasten to conclude. I have but a few words to say as to the present. From time to time reports have appeared in the papers to the effect that certain gentlemen were preparing disturbances in Switzerland, and I myself have been mentioned as one of them. I am doubtful whether there is any truth at all in these reports; as for myself, I have not been outside this country for the last nine months. As, however, my contradiction on this head itself appears to have given rise to further misunderstandings, I will give you my point of view here briefly and, as I hope, clearly enough. I am most strongly opposed to any attempt at revolt. I am convinced that any such attempt could only lead to civil war—a thing no one would wish to see. I am therefore of opinion that the Republican Government must be maintained untouched until the German-Austrian people as a whole has taken its decision. But this can only be decided by the German people. Neither the Republic nor the Monarchy is in itself a dogma of democracy. The Kingdom of England is as democratic as republican Switzerland. I know no country where men enjoy so great freedom as in England. But it is a dogma of democracy that the people itself must determine in what manner it will be governed, and I therefore repeat that the final word can only be spoken by the constitutional representative body. I believe that I am here entirely at one with the present Government. There are two methods of ascertaining the will of the people: either each candidate for the representative body stands for election on a monarchical or a republican platform, in which case the majority of the body itself will express the decision; or the question of Monarchy or Republic can be decided by a plebiscite. It is matter of common knowledge that I myself have had so serious conflicts with the ex-Kaiser that any co-operation between us is for all time an impossibility. No one can, therefore, suspect me of wishing on personal grounds to revert to the old regime. But I am not one to juggle with the idea of democracy, and its nature demands that the people itself should decide. I believe that the majority of German-Austria is against the old regime, and when it has expressed itself to this effect the furtherance of democracy is sufficiently assured.

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And with this, gentlemen, I have finished what I proposed to set before you. I vainly endeavoured to make peace together with Germany, but I was not unsuccessful in my endeavours to save the German-Austrians from ultimately coming to armed conflict with Germany. I can say this, and without exaggeration, that I have defended the German alliance as if it had been my own child, and I do not know what would have happened had I not done so. Andrassy's "extra turn" at the last moment showed the great mass of the public how present a danger was that of war with Germany. Had the same experiment been made six months before it would have been war with Germany; would have made Austria a scene of war.

There are evil times in store for the German people, but a people of many millions cannot perish and will not perish. The day will come when the wounds of this war begin to close and heal, and when that day comes a better future will dawn.

The Austrian armies went forth in the hour of war to save Austria. They have not availed to save it. But if out of this ocean of blood and suffering a better, freer and nobler world arise, then they will not have died in vain, all those we loved who now lie buried in cold alien earth; they died for the happiness, the peace and the future of the generations to come.

FOOTNOTES:

[11] Translated from the German text given by Count Czernin, no English text being available.

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| Page 47: 'and and in doing so' replaced with 'and in doing so' |
| Page 81: 'to made room' replaced with 'to make room' |
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