

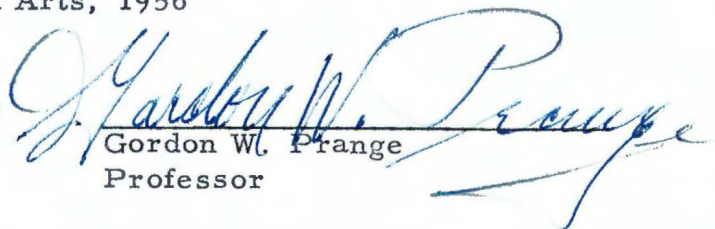
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January 1918 to October 1918

Name of Candidate: Walter Otto Moeller
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Thesis and Abstract Approved:


Gordon W. Prange
Professor

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GERMAN PUBLIC OPINION ON THE FOURTEEN POINTS
JANUARY 1918 TO OCTOBER 1918

by
Walter Otto Moeller
...

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FOREWORD

The Fourteen Points of Woodrow Wilson are known to have shortened the First World War by giving the German nation a program upon which it could agree to conclude peace. In effect, Wilson's program saved them from an unconditional surrender. Since that war, the Germans as a whole have claimed that they were betrayed by the Fourteen Points as they were not carried out as they should have been. It is the purpose of this work to investigate the German public opinion on the Fourteen Points from their inception to the fateful days of October, 1918, when the German nation agreed to conclude a peace on the basis of Wilson's program. The author hopes that he has, in so doing, shed some light on the actual thinking of the German people at the time. Perhaps, then, the reader will be better able to decide for himself how much truth, if any, there is to the claim of betrayal.

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CHAPTER I
BELLIGERENT WAR AIMS AND
THE FOURTEEN POINTS

Most of the major nations which entered the First World War did so by stumbling into it. Their governments, for the most part, declared war because they were defending some principle which they held of vital importance to them or to fulfill the terms of some defensive treaty. The declared war aims of Germany, Austria, France, Russia, and Great Britain were defensive in nature. Even the attack on Belgium, the Germans maintained, was carried out to break her encirclement by hostile powers.

But once these nations were committed and enormous sacrifices were made, there were those who began to think of ways to capitalize on the war. In each of the warring countries pressure groups developed which, for various reasons, wanted the aggrandizement of their particular nation. In Germany these groups were, roughly, the advocates of the Drang Nach Osten and a Mittel Europa, the naval and colonial expansionists who dreamed of German naval dominance and of a Mittel Afrika, and the western annexationists who expected to acquire Belgium and large portions of Northern France for the Reich. The demands of these groups changed and varied during the war and there was a great deal of overlapping between them. For example, early in the war, September 2, 1914, Matthias Erzberger,

the Center Party leader, drafted a memorandum to the government which set forth the minimum aims for a German peace. These terms included all the individual war aims of the expansionist groups.¹

Later on in the war he, influenced by the unfavorable course of the conflict, gradually moderated his aims and was eventually the driving force behind the Reichstag Peace Resolution of July 19, 1917.

The annexationist groups were mainly of the Right and Center. However, even Social Democratic views were modified at times by annexation aims. On March 22, 1915, the Socialist Frankfurter Volkstimme said that

The renunciation of all demands of annexation is in itself not a serviceable program. Social Democracy must put forward positive demands, and these demands can and must include modifications in maps. All must not remain as it was.²

However, the majority of the Social Democrats remained true to their ideals of universal peace and international conciliation. As early as August 4, 1914, they had declared:

We demand that, as soon as the aim of protection shall have been attained and the enemies be inclined

¹Germany, Reichstag, Verhandlungen des Reichstag, XIII. Legislaturperiode, II. Sitzung, Stenographischer Bericht, Vol. 307, p. 856.

²H. Stroebe, Deutsche Revolution (Berlin: Verlag Neues Vaterland, 1922), p. 16.

toward peace, the war be ended by a peace which shall render possible friendship with our neighbors.³

This was the "peace of understanding" or the "Scheidemann Peace" as it was often called, for the Social Democratic leader.

The annexationist and anti-annexationist forces engaged in a bitter struggle to determine German war aims. The conflict grew as the war progressed and in effect prevented Germany from ever categorically stating her war aims. Consequently, the Imperial German Government left the question of war aims vague and undecided and kept reiterating the defensive nature of the war.

In Austria-Hungary there was little expansionist sentiment. If anything, the Empire was overexpanded. The heterogeneous nature of the Dual Monarchy made a concerted and effective war effort impossible, and, after having been largely responsible for precipitating the war, the chief war aim of the Austro-Hungarian Government was to preserve the Empire as a political entity.

Among the Entente powers the situation was somewhat different. In the Allied countries the war was played up as a great crusade, a fight for justice. Austria-Hungary's attack on Serbia and Germany's invasion of Belgium gave the Entente nations a corner on international morality. The Entente was a coalition which had

³R. H. Lutz (Ed.), Fall of the German Empire (Stanford, 1932), I., 8.

banded together largely for self-protection. However, with the exceptions of England and the United States, all had definite territorial aspirations. This caused a much less open, if not less honest, handling of the question of war aims in the Entente nations than in Germany and Austria-Hungary. If they were defending right and justice, they could not be fighting for annexations. The governments of the Entente were therefore forced to enter into agreements with one another in which the national aspirations of each of the Entente members were recognized. Consequently, each Entente nation had two groups of official war aims; the major ones which were of particular interest to itself, and the minor aims which constituted those of its allies. The Major aims of one nation became the minor aims of its allies, and naturally enough with such a complicated arrangement, contradictions occurred. These agreements were the so-called "secret treaties" of 1915, 1916, and 1917.

By the terms of these treaties and understandings (some of them were not official treaties), Italy, in return for entering the war in 1915, was offered large portions of Austria~~a~~ territory, control of the northern Adriatic and a considerable slice of the Turkish Empire. Rumania, too, was offered extensive territories at the expense of Austria-Hungary for her entry into the war in 1916. Russia was assured control of the Dardanelles and an extension of territory into northern Asia Minor; the French claim to Syria was recognized by England and Russia; and Japan was given a free hand

in the ultimate fate of the Shangtung Peninsula and a promise of German colonies in the Pacific north of the equator.⁴ Of as great importance as these more formal treaties and agreements was the understanding that "the crime of 1871" should be erased. Then, too, there was the informal agreement between Russia and France that each should have a free hand in disposing of German territories bordering on their respective frontiers.

These "secret treaties" were in effect the real war aims of the Entente powers. They were much more definite than the vague platitudes which filled the speeches of Allied statesmen. Although their public disclosure in November, 1917, caused great shock in liberal and left-wing circles in the world and their importance at the Versailles settlement caused many Americans to view them as evil, these treaties were quite natural and had a great deal of justification. Sir Edward Grey, a high-minded statesman, even had a hand in negotiating some of them, and, although it was displeasing for him to do so, he asserted that it had been an absolute necessity to do so. After all, it was a war, a outrage, and one had to get one's allies where one could find them, just as Germany had done in the cases of Bulgaria and Turkey.⁵ These treaties were, however, manifestly in contradiction to the righteous crusading pose of the Allies.

⁴Manchester Guardian, December 13, 1917.

⁵E. Grey, Twenty Five Years (New York: Stokes, 1925), II, 166.

When the United States entered the war, a new factor came into play. Wilson had been active in trying to bring about a peace. The German unrestricted submarine warfare had forced Wilson to ask Congress to declare war. Again, a nation went to war to defend a principle, that of freedom of the seas.

Before April 2, 1917, Wilson had made attempts at a "peace without victory". After April 2, 1917, the American nation was committed to a military victory over Germany. But in Wilson's mind there was always the idea that the war must result in a better, more rational world. In his April 2 speech to Congress to ask for a declaration of war, he said:

Our object now, as then, is to vindicate the principles of peace and justice in the life of the world as against selfish and autocratic power and to set up amongst the really free and self-governing nations of the world such a concert of purpose and action as will henceforth ensure the observance of those principles.⁶

It is known that Wilson became aware of the "secret treaties" soon after America's entry into the war. He, Colonel Edward House, his closest personal advisor, and Lord Balfour, who was the British Foreign Minister at the time, discussed the territorial issues at length on April 28, 1917.⁷ Wilson could not, however, at that stage

⁶R. S. Baker and W. E. Dodd (Eds.), Presidential Messages, Addresses, and Public Papers (1917-1924) (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1917), I, 11.

⁷C. Seymour (Ed.), The Intimate Papers of Colonel House (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1928), III, 43-49.

of the war make any protests against the "secret treaties". It was a time when complete unity of purpose was necessary to coordinate the war effort. On July 21, 1917, he wrote a letter to House in which he said:

England and France have not the same views with regard to peace that we have by any means. When the war is over, we can force them to our way of thinking, because by that time they will, among other things, be financially in our hands; but we cannot force them now, and any attempt to speak for them or to our common mind would bring on disagreements which would inevitably come to the surface in public and rob the whole thing of its effect.⁸

Another factor played a part in preventing Wilson from clashing with the Allies over war aims. Wilson, who was a great orator, provided in his speeches the best material for the Allied propaganda to the Central Powers. So effective were his speeches as a weapon that it was as important to coordinate war aims as it was to coordinate material effort. As far as possible, differences between the United States and her allies were to be avoided.

Wilson's speeches had, in effect, two aspects; the constructive one of providing a charter for a new and better world, and the destructive one of stimulating German discontent with the German Government. In his April 2 speech he said, "We have no quarrel with the German people. We have no feeling toward them but one of

⁸C. Seymour, American Diplomacy During the World War (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1934), p. 270.

sympathy and friendship."

Colonel House encouraged Wilson to develop this appeal.

On May 30, 1917, he wrote to Wilson, "Imperial Germany should be broken down from within as well as from without."⁹

In his diary of May 19, 1917, he wrote:

Give the German liberals every possible encouragement so that they can tell the German people, "Here is your immediate chance for peace because the offer comes from your enemies, who will treat with you any time you are in condition to express your thoughts through a representative government. On the other hand, the present government is offering you peace through conquest, which, of necessity, has all the elements of chance and cannot be relied upon."¹⁰

In continuance of such a policy the President in his Flag Day speech of June 14, 1917, appealed to the German people.

We are not the enemies of the German people.... They did not originate or desire this hideous war...we are vaguely conscious that we are fighting their cause, as they will some day see it, as well as our own. They are themselves in the grip of the same sinister power that has now at last stretched its ugly talons out and drawn blood from us.¹¹

This speech had very little effect in Germany. But the President was soon given another opportunity to reiterate his fundamental thesis that there was an essential difference between the German people and their warmongering government.

⁹Seymour, Intimate Papers, Vol. III, p. 133.

¹⁰Ibid., Vol. III, p. 132.

¹¹Baker and Dodd, Presidential Messages, I, 61-62.

In Germany, Erzberger, who was in touch with Ottokar Czernin, the Austrian Foreign Minister, had prepared the way for the mediation of Pope Benedict XV by getting, in conjunction with the party leaders of the Left and Center, the Peace Resolution of July 19, 1917, through the Reichstag.

This resolution called for "a peace of understanding and permanent reconciliation of peoples". It came out against "forced territorial acquisitions" and against political, economic, and financial oppression. It also declared in favor of freedom of the seas and the "creation of international judicial organizations".¹² This resolution was passed by 212 votes against the 126 votes of the Right and the Independent Socialists (who wanted a more far-reaching statement).

In August, the Pope made his appeal for peace based on the principles of complete restoration of occupied territory, disarmament, and international arbitration.¹³ On the twenty-fifth of the same month, Wilson publicly answered the Pope in a speech in which he highlighted three main ideas; that the word of the present German leaders was worthless, an appeal to the German people to throw off these leaders and express themselves, and an offer to Germany of

¹²Lutz, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 282-283.

¹³K. Forster, The Failures of Peace (Washington, D.C. : 1941), pp. 128-129.

assurances as to its economic integrity.¹⁴

But Wilson realized that it was necessary to formulate war aims more distinctly and concretely than had been done. It was not only important to defeat Germany, but also to prepare a definite program for peace. It was from this realization that the so-called Inquiry was born.

In August, 1917, five months after America's entry into the war, Colonel House, at Wilson's request, gathered together a body of experts who were to collect data which might be needed eventually at a peace conference. This group of men was drawn chiefly from the faculties of universities and was under the direction of Dr. Sidney E. Menzes, President of the City College of New York and Colonel House's brother-in-law. On this Inquiry were men such as Mr. Walter Lippmann, Dr. Isaiah Bowman, Professor Charles H. Haskins, Professor R. H. Lord, Professor Charles Seymour, and Professor James F. Shotwell. This group of experts became a sort of second State Department.

The general world political situation in late 1917 did not allow a continued emphasis on the beat Germany theme, for a new dimension had been added to the world scene. In March, 1917, the Tsarist regime fell and a new government of Liberal-Socialist flavor took over in Russia. Internal corruption, the dry-rot of three

¹⁴Baker and Dodd, op. cit., p. 93-96.

hundred years of the Romanov dynasty, and extreme war-weariness and revulsion to war on the part of the Russian people had brought the end of Imperial Russia.

The Allied powers completely misinterpreted the significance of what was happening in Russia. They welcomed the substitution of a democratic government for the autocracy of the Tsar as this removed the apparent contradiction which was posed by the alliance of democratic powers with such an autocracy. It also removed a great stumbling block to the participation of an idealistic President and a democratic America in the war. The provisional governments of Prince Lvov and later of Alexander Kerensky were committed to the continuance of the war on the side of the Entente. It was precisely this insistence on war to the end which caused their downfall in turn.

The situation in Russia at this time was unstable, fluid, and explosive. Besides the Provisional Government, another body had sprung up which soon exercised considerable governmental power. It was the Petrograd Soviet of Workers', Soldiers', and Peasants' Deputies. Although not officially a government, it was recognized by the soldiers and industrial workers of Petrograd as their governing authority. It was these workers and soldiers who had toppled the Tsar's regime. This Soviet on March 27, 1917, issued a proclamation to the peoples of the world appealing to the working class that

they take steps to end the war.¹⁵ On May 15 the Petrograd Soviet issued another manifesto to the Socialists of all countries which reiterated the March 27 proclamation and urged that the Socialists of the world take steps to force their respective governments to adopt a "platform of peace without annexations or indemnities, on the basis of the self-determination of peoples".¹⁶

At this time an international socialist conference was held at Stockholm to examine the possibilities for peace. The conference was a failure for, although Russian, German, Austrian, Dutch, Scandinavian, and Bulgarian delegates met there in July, the English, French, Belgian, and American delegates were forbidden to attend by their respective governments. However, labor circles in both England and France were greatly disturbed by the meeting and their governments' refusal to allow attendance.

In October the Entente powers announced that an Inter-Allied conference would commence in Paris on November 10. But by November, the Petrograd Soviet was under the control of the Bolsheviks and the desire for peace on the part of the Russian people was so great that a coup d'etat led by Vladimir Lenin was possible and the Provisional Government of Kerensky was toppled. On the evening of

¹⁵A. F. Kerensky, The Catastrophe (New York: D. Appleton & Company, 1927), p. 170.

¹⁶Seymour, American Diplomacy, p. 279.

November 8, a decree of peace was passed by the new government.

This decree again called for "an immediate peace without annexations and without indemnities" and stated that the

... Government abolishes secret diplomacy and in its part expresses the intention to conduct all negotiations absolutely openly before the entire people; it will at once publish in full the secret treaties concluded or confirmed by the Government of landowners and capitalists...

and "the Government proposes to all the governments and peoples of all belligerent countries to conclude an armistice immediately".¹⁷

Although the position of the new regime was, to say the least, precarious, the Bolsheviks on November 20 addressed a formal request to the Allied ambassadors to consider immediate peace negotiations.¹⁸ At this time the Inter-Allied Conference was being held at Paris. The original purpose of the conference had been to discuss coordination of military and economic efforts. Now it had to consider these most pressing of diplomatic problems; namely, how could the defection of Russia from the war be prevented; and, if not, how could the adverse effect of the publication of the secret treaties and the appeal for peace to labor in Britain and France by the Bolsheviks be combatted?

It seemed absolutely necessary now to Wilson and House to

¹⁷W. H. Chamberlin, The Russian Revolution (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1935), pp. 472-474.

¹⁸Seymour, American Diplomacy, p. 278.

achieve coordinated war aims with the Allies. Lord Lansdowne in England pleaded for such an Allied statement, and in France Aristide Briand, the ex-Premier, advocated the statement of some concrete war aims.¹⁹ But the Allied war leaders could not agree on any combined statement for reasons peculiar to each. On November 31 Colonel House, who represented Wilson in Paris, submitted a manifesto to the conference.

The Allies and the United States declare that they are not waging war for the purpose of aggression or indemnity. The sacrifices they are making in order that militarism shall not continue to cast its shadow over the world, and that nations shall have the right to lead their lives in the way that seems to them best for the development of their general welfare.²⁰

But the leaders of England, France, and Italy in various degrees opposed the issuance of this manifesto. The decision was reached not to issue a joint declaration but to leave this to the individual powers.

It was from this failure at Paris to state war aims that the Fourteen Points resulted. On December 1, House cabled Wilson urging him to postpone any statement on foreign affairs until he, House, returned to the United States.²¹ He had in mind that Wilson should make the needed statement of war aims. President Wilson,

¹⁹Ibid., p. 280.

²⁰Seymour, Intimate Papers, p. 282.

²¹Ibid., p. 286.

on getting House's report, agreed that something had to be done. The Bolsheviks had already released the texts of the secret treaties, and on December 13, the Manchester Guardian published the essential texts of these treaties. Allied war sacrifices could not now so readily be justified on the grounds of international morality and something had to be done to reinvigorate the enthusiasm of labor circles. Also, as the Bolsheviks had concluded an armistice with the Germans on December 15, there was urgent need to influence the Russian situation favorably for the Allies.

Peace negotiations between the Russians and the Central Powers opened on December 24 at Brest-Litovsk. The chief negotiators for Russia were Adolph Joffe, a revolutionary intellectual, and Lev Kamenev, Leon Trotsky's brother-in-law. For the Central Powers, Baron Richard Kuehlmann, as Foreign Minister, represented Germany and Count Ottokar Czernin, the Austro-Hungarian Foreign Minister, represented the Dual Monarchy. As official advisor and actual chef de delegation, Major General Max Hoffman, who represented the German High Command, completed the list of the principal negotiators for the Central Powers.

On the opening day the Russians presented their proposals for the basis of the peace, one which they hoped would include all the warring nations. These proposals adhered closely to the ideals of the Bolshevik peace proposals of November 8; namely, no forceful expropriation of territories, no indemnities, and self-determination

of all peoples.

On Christmas Day, the Central Powers answered through the voice of Czernin, agreeing in principle to the Russian formula. In Germany the answer of December 25 caused a great deal of press and public reaction. The Center and Left parties of the Reichstag Majority greeted the situation favorably because it appeared to them an adherence to the Resolution of July 19. The parties of the Right considered December 25 as a day of infamy. It was to them a sell-out of Germany's rights -- a betrayal of the men in the field.

The Russians, for their part, misunderstood the gist of the Central Powers' acceptance and considered that, in effect, Russia would keep Russian Poland, Lithuania, and Courland. This was never the German intention, for her negotiators felt that for military and diplomatic reasons large portions of Western Russia had to accrue to Germany. On December 28, they submitted the first two articles of the preliminary peace which stated their willingness to evacuate all occupied Russian territory after the peace, but also demanded recognition that the populations of Lithuania, Courland, Eastern Livonia, and Poland desired secession from Russia.

The "peace without annexations" was out the window. The disparity between the German and Russian concepts of self-determination were too great. December 28 saw the end of the first stage of negotiations. At the insistence of the Russians, who desired a general peace, it was agreed that a ten-day period would be allowed

in which the Entente could agree to join in negotiations. This period was to end on January 4, 1918.

In Germany public opinion on the events of December 28 was divided. This time it was the Right which was jubilant and the Center and Left which were indignant. Being much more attuned to the mentality of the outside world because of their Catholic and international socialist connections, they knew that the apparent hypocrisy of the German policy would be used by the Entente to bring further onus on Germany. Prince Max of Baden wrote in his Memoirs:

On twenty-eighth December, 1917, we made our irreparable mistake. We gave the impression to the whole world and to the German masses that in contrast to the Russian attitude, our agreement to the national right of self-determination was insincere and that annexationists designs lurked behind it.²²

It was in this background of Brest-Litovsk that the Fourteen Points came into existence. The general situation required a definite formulation of Allied war aims and the German mistake at Brest was too good a propaganda opportunity to miss. So, on January 5, 1918, in a little more than two hours of steady work, the Fourteen Points were drafted. Colonel House, the President's alter ego, was with him at the time.

Much has been said and written about the strange nature of

²²J. W. Wheeler-Bennett, The Forgotten Peace, Brest-Litovsk, March 1918. (New York: W. Morrow & Co.), 1939. p. 127.

Woodrow Wilson. He has often been accused of messianic tendencies and his Calvinist background has often been brought up as an explanation for his actions. But no matter what the impulses and motivations of this unusual man were, one thing can be said for him; he tried and came forth with something concrete and inclusive while others fumbled and engaged in platitudes. The Fourteen Points were the best formulation of peace aims which had been expressed during the war. It took three and a half years of blood-letting for the cards to be put on the table.

But before January, 1918, various points touched upon by Wilson had been brought up by Entente and Central Powers statesmen and had been debated in the press of the various nations. On December 18, 1916, before America's involvement in the war, the President had suggested to the belligerent powers the desirability of an early statement of their conceptions of the necessary terms of peace. In response, the Allies made a formal and detailed reply in which they named as necessary terms for peace the following:

The restoration of Belgium, Serbia, and Montenegro, with compensations due them; the evacuation of the invaded territories in France, Russia, and Roumania, and with just reparation; the reorganization of Europe guaranteed by a stable regime and based at once on respect for nationalities and on the right to full security and liberty of economic development possessed by all peoples, small and great, and at the same time upon territorial conventions and international settlements such as to guarantee land and sea frontiers against unjustified attack; the restitution of provinces formerly torn from the Allies by force, or against the wish of their

inhabitants; the liberation of the Italians, as also of the Slavs, Roumanes, and Checho-Slovaks from foreign domination; the setting free of the populations subject to the bloody tyranny of the Turks; and the turning out of Europe of the Ottaman Empire as decidedly foreign to Western civilization.²³

In November, 1917, the prominent British Conservative and ex-Foreign Secretary, Lord Lansdowne, wrote a letter to the Daily Telegraph pleading for an early peace and giving his basis for it.

1. Britain does not desire the annihilation of Germany as a Great Power;
2. Britain does not seek to impose upon the German people any form of government other than that of their own choice;
3. Britain does not desire to deny Germany of her place among the commercial powers;
4. Britain is ready to discuss the question of the freedom of the seas;
5. Britain desires an international agreement for the peaceful regulation of international disputes.²⁴

These points of the Lansdowne letter were eagerly seized by those in Germany who were committed to a constructive German peace program, such as Prince Max of Baden.

The next month, on December 28, another statement was made in which war aims were listed; this time it was the Special

²³G. Harvey, "The Genesis of the Fourteen Commandments", North American Review, CCIX, February, 1919, p. 146.

²⁴Max of Baden, The Memoirs of Prince Max of Baden, Trans. W. M. Calder and C. W. H. Sutton (2 vol., New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1928), I, 170.

National Labor Conference meeting at London which formulated a program. Among the points touched were "the suppression of secret diplomacy", hostility toward "all projects for an economic war", the reparation by the German Government "of the wrong admittedly done to Belgium", the undoing of "the crime against the peace of the world...in 1871", support of Italian claims, the freedom of the Balkan people "to settle their own destinies", the "neutralizing" of Armenia, Mesopotamia and Arabia, and the establishment of "a supranational authority, or League of Nations".²⁵

Yet another statement was to be made before the famous Fourteen Points Speech. Before the Trades Union Congress on January 5, the same day that Wilson and House were drafting the Fourteen Points, Lloyd George outlined the following ideas: A limitation of the "burden of armaments"; a solution of colonial problems which would regard "the wishes and interests of the native inhabitants"; the support of "the new democracy of Russia" if the new rulers of Russia did not "take action independent of their Allies"; support of "legitimate claims of the Italians"; the granting of "genuine self-government" to the Austro-Hungarian nationalities; "the restoration of Serbia, Montenegro, and the occupied parts of Roumania"; the neutralization of the Dardanelles and the recognition of the "separate national conditions" of the non-Turkish nationalities in the Turkish

²⁵Harvey, op. cit., pp. 147-150.

Empire; the institution of an independent Poland; and, lastly, an attempt to "establish, by some international organization, an alternative to war as a means of settling international disputes".²⁶

When the news of the Lloyd George speech reached Wilson, he was, at first, inclined to abandon his own as superfluous. Wilson for a while "thought the terms which Lloyd George had given were so nearly akin to those he had worked out that it would be impossible for him to make the contemplated address before Congress".²⁷ However, House was able to dissuade him and the address was delivered. The similarity between Lloyd George's and Wilson's ideas has led many to believe that the President based his on the Prime Minister's. We know by the documents that the President's address was already drafted when Lloyd George was speaking. It is not at all strange that two different men should deliver such similar speeches at approximately the same time independently of each other. They were both struggling with the same problems under similar circumstances. After all, these were the ideas which were floating around at that time.

To make his speech, Wilson utilized a report which had been prepared by the Inquiry. The first part of the Inquiry's report

²⁶D. Lloyd George, War Memoirs of David Lloyd George, (6 vol., Boston: Little, Brown & Company, 1936), Vol. V, pp. 67-72.

²⁷Seymour, American Diplomacy, p. 287.

outlined the diplomatic situation and the points which needed emphasis in the diplomatic offensive against Germany. The President was urged to

... show the way to Liberals in Great Britain and in France, and therefore restore their natural unity of purpose. The Liberals will readily accept the leadership of the President, if he undertakes a liberal diplomatic offensive, because they will find in that offensive an invaluable support for their internal domestic troubles.

The second part of the report consisted of a statement of terms on eight territorial issues: Belgium, Northern France, Alsace-Lorraine, Italian frontiers, the Balkans, Poland, Austria-Hungary and Turkey. The report ended with a proposal to develop the Allied nations into a League of Nations.

Whether this League is to be armed and exclusive or whether there is to be a reduction of armaments and a cordial inclusion of Germany will depend upon whether the German Government is, in fact, representative of the German democracy.²⁸

The Fourteen Points may be divided into two categories; those dealing with the construction of a new rational world order, or points of principle, and those dealing with readjustment of territories. Points One, Two, Three, Four, and Fourteen are of the former type, while Points Seven through Thirteen are of the latter. Points Five and Six have elements of both.

Point One, calling for "open covenants of peace, openly

²⁸Ibid., p. 285.

arrived at", was, of course, a concession to the new type of diplomacy which the Russians had instituted at Brest and a reaction to the disclosure of the "secret treaties".

Point Two, which dealt with freedom of the seas, was of great import to blockaded Germany and also a statement of the principle for which the United States had gone to war. Wilson, however, was aware that this point would evoke British opposition.

Point Three, which called for the removal of economic barriers, was of great interest to Germany for they felt very strongly the threat of economic war against them. This point caused Wilson much anxiety as he feared Senate opposition.

Point Four, which called for disarmament, was acceptable in principle to all nations in a war-weary world.

Point Five on the

...absolutely impartial adjustment of all colonial claims, based on a strict observance of the principle that...the interests of the populations concerned most have equal weight with the equitable claims of the government whose title is to be determined...

was ambiguous but of interest to Germany which wanted her colonies back.

Point Six, which called for an evacuation of Russia and assistance "of every kind" was written with special care, as it was in a sense the Russian problem which was the raison d'etre of the Wilsonian program.

Point Seven, the restitution of Belgium, was of utmost

importance as it was a conditio sine qua non of the Allies.

Point Eight, on evacuation of French territory and righting of the "wrong done to France by Prussia in 1871", caused Wilson a great deal of difficulty. The first draft of the points carried no reference to Alsace-Lorraine. A second draft was very ambiguous, "...If Alsace and Lorraine were restored to France, Germany should be given an equal opportunity."²⁹ This point was only put in its final form on the day before the speech. However, its wording was indefinite, although Wilson later interpreted it himself as meaning the return of those provinces to France.

Wilson must have had great qualms over this point. He was certainly aware that if his program floundered, it would be mainly because of the Alsace-Lorraine problem. Was he quite honest when the point was framed? Did he make it so indefinite in the hope that a compromise could be made? Was he guilty of faulty memory later when he interpreted the point definitively? Unfortunately, we will never know the answers to these questions. We can only surmise.

Point Nine on Italian claims to Austrian territory, was a recognition of Italy's reason for fighting.

Point Ten, which called for the autonomous development of the nationalities of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, was so framed that a break-up of the Empire was not called for.. This was a

²⁹Ibid., p. 286.

recognition of the important role of the Dual Monarchy in Central Europe.

Point Eleven, concerning the Balkans, was the only one which was shown to any representative of the Allied Governments before the speech was delivered. The head of the Serbian Mission in the United States, Vesnitch, criticized it because it did not call for the break-up of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.³⁰

Point Twelve advocated the sovereignty of non-Turkish nationalities in the Turkish Empire and international control of the Dardanelles. This point was of great interest to Great Britain, France, and Russia, which were very conscious of their positions in the Middle East.

Point Thirteen, on the establishment of an independent Poland, was framed closely as possible to a declaration of the Polish National Council which had been presented to the Inter-Allied Conference in Paris. This point was of great personal interest to Colonel House because he was greatly influenced by Jan Paderewski who was acting as the American Agent for the Polish National Council.

Lastly was Point Fourteen which called for the establishment of a "general association of nations" or League of Nations. This was an idea which had caused much comment on both sides since the beginning of the war. As early as Autumn, 1915, Wilson was thinking

³⁰Seymour, Intimate Papers, Vol. III, pp. 334-335.

about a League of Nations.

In the United States at that time, there was a League to Enforce Peace which sponsored the idea. Also, the letters of Sir Edward Grey, who advocated the idea, aroused Wilson's interest. In a speech given on May 16, 1916, he had called openly for a League of Nations and on January 22, 1917, had advocated a concert of nations to defend the rights of small nations.³¹ This last point, then, had occupied the President's thoughts for some time and eventually it became an idee-fixee for which some of the other points were modified.

The speech was delivered before a joint session of Congress on January 8, 1918. The President opened by reviewing the Russian situation:

The Russian representatives (at Brest-Litovsk) presented not only a perfectly definite statement of the principles upon which they would be willing to conclude peace... The representatives of the Central Powers, on their part, presented an outline of settlement which, if much less definite, seemed susceptible to liberal interpretation until their specific program of practical terms was added.

He continued by asking the Germans the most embarrassing questions:

With whom are the Russian representatives dealing? For whom are the representatives of the Central Empire speaking? Are they speaking for the majorities of their respective parliaments or for the

³¹Seymour, American Diplomacy, p. 259.

minority parties, that military and imperialistic minority which has so far dominated their whole policy and controlled the affairs of Turkey and of the Balkan States which have felt obliged to become their associates in this war?

Then came words of sympathy and support for Russia and her people:

They call to us to say what it is that we desire, in what if in anything our purpose and spirit differ from theirs, and I believe that the people of the United States would wish me to respond, with utter simplicity and frankness. Whether their present leaders believe it or not, it is our heartfelt desire and hope that some way may be opened whereby we may be privileged to assist the people of Russia to attain their utmost hope of liberty and ordered peace.

Then, after a short justification of America's role in the war, the Fourteen Points were laid down. The speech ended on a note of reassurance to the German people:

We have no jealousy of German greatness and there is no thing in this program that impares it. . . . We do not wish to injure her or to block in any way her legitimate influence or power. . . . We wish her only to accept a place of equality among the peoples of the world--the new world in which we now live--instead of a place of mastery.³²

In America, the speech was enthusiastically welcomed. The New York Tribune, an anti-Wilson paper, declared that "the President's words are the words of a hundred million. . . Today, as never before, the whole nation marches with the President."³³

³²Baker and Dodd, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 155-162.

³³New York Tribune, January 9, 1918.

In England, France, and Italy, the enthusiasm was qualified by a realization that some of the terms, such as the points on freedom of the seas in England and Alsace-Lorraine in France, could be interpreted unfavorably for those nations.

The chief criticism which cautious thinkers may be disposed to make upon it (referring to the President's speech),

said the Times,

is that, in its lofty flight to the ideal, it seems not to take sufficient account of certain hard realities of the situation. . . . Some of the proposals which Mr. Wilson puts forth almost appear to assume that the reign of righteousness upon the earth is already within our reach.³⁴

The Russians at first were lukewarm but later became somewhat hostile. In that country, for which the speech was largely intended, millions of posters, handbills and pamphlets were distributed by American agents who were operating openly at that time.

The reaction of the small national groups in the Austro-Hungarian Empire was somewhat unfavorable. Thomas Masaryk, the Czech leader, considered Wilson's allusions to Austria-Hungary as pro-Austrian.³⁵ On one thing the Allies were agreed, however, the speech was a tremendous weapon in the diplomatic arsenal of the Entente. Even the Bolsheviks used it in their propaganda to their

³⁴The Times, (London), January 19, 1918.

³⁵T. G. Masaryk, The Making of a State (London: Frederick Stokes Company, 1927), p. 265.

prisoners-of-war and to German troops at the front. Its full effect on Germany was delayed, but nevertheless potent from the very beginning.

CHAPTER II
THE IMMEDIATE GERMAN REACTION
TO THE FOURTEEN POINTS

January 1918

In practically all sectors of German public opinion, the immediate reaction to Wilson's peace program was conditioned by two important factors. The first was the realization that his message of January 8 had immediate political purposes besides being a definite statement of war aims which could be used as a basis for peace negotiations. It must be remembered that the reaction was not only to the Fourteen Points as such, but also to the speech in which the points were framed. That speech had obviously three immediate purposes. The first was to influence the course of things at Brest-Litovsk favorably for the Allies. The second was to heighten the political warfare within Germany by using the apparent contradiction between the December 24 and the December 28 statements at Brest. The third was to stiffen the war spirit of the Entente Liberals which was flagging due to the disillusionment caused by the "secret treaties" disclosure. These purposes were not unrecognized by the Germans, as the press comment which follows will demonstrate.

The second conditioning factor was the fact that Germans of

almost all factions resented deeply the previous public utterances of the American President, and considered America's entry into the war as unjust and prompted by selfish interests. Wilson's previous speeches were, therefore, as far as the Germans were concerned, sanctimonious and hypocritical--a proof of his bad faith. His apparent change of emphasis, then, was in many quarters considered doubly dangerous.

Added to the above was the fact that the speech had come only three days after that of Lloyd George and gave the appearance of some devious concerted plan on the part of the Allies. Despite the above factors, however, the reaction was varied, ranging from cautious and qualified approval to complete rejection and condemnation.

The first reports of the speech appeared in the German press on January 10, 1918, and the text was printed in part or in toto in most newspapers. Comment on the speech took the form in many cases of a continuation of earlier reaction to Lloyd George's speech. The two speeches were often compared, and similarities and differences were stressed. The most favorable comment came from the Majority Socialist press. The official organ of the Social Democrats, the Vorwaerts, in a long editorial, said:

If Lloyd George's speech greatly differed from the previous utterances of Entente leaders and especially his own warm-blooded utterances, that is still more the case with Wilson's, which in comparison with his former pronouncements appears an example of statesmanlike moderation. Wilson's peace program is fine, despite many doubtful details, but the effect in Germany will be

prejudiced by the excitement over his earlier speeches and by the mistrust that the speech is only a diplomatic maneuver to lure the Russian again into the bloody swamp of war... The speech is not proof that the Entente is ready to conclude the peace which Wilson has outlined. Lloyd George's speech includes points discussable by the Central Powers, but not acceptable in the present form, which Wilson presents in an attenuated form.¹

The editorial went on to mention specifically the question of Alsace-Lorraine which could only be reconsidered if the attempt was renounced to alienate portions of the German people from the Reich.

On the next day, an editorial in the same paper again brought up the German objection to alienation of any German territory in the east and west, but in general it was very receptive to the idea of using Wilson's program as a basis to start pourparlers.

It is ridiculous to say that a danger of a general peace conference lies in the fact that the enemy would demand annexations at Germany's cost, and be able to realize these demands. We are protected therefrom by Wilson's promise, "We do not wish to injure Germany", as well as by Germany's strong position.²

It can be seen from the above comment that the official attitude of the Social Democrats was agreeable to the general conditions set down in the Fourteen Points except those which concerned a possible separation from Germany of Alsace-Lorraine and Polish

¹Vorwaerts, January 10, 1918.

²Ibid.

Prussia. The difference between the reception to Wilson's program and that afforded to Lloyd George's was considerable. Wilson's program was called fine (schoen), while the earlier program had been characterized as having "intrinsic imperialistic tendencies".

Other Socialist newspapers followed in somewhat the same vein, seeing in Wilson's program a step forward. The mildly Socialist Munchener Post linked the speech with the ambivalent position of the German Government.

Wilson has with extraordinary cleverness seized upon the acute differences at present prevailing in Germany over the peace question in order to shake the confidence of the German peace policy. The contradictions existing between the declarations of December 25 and December 28 show that a life-and-death struggle is now proceeding between the peace Majority of July and the military annexationist party. Even now we do not know what party the Imperial Government has decided to support, and inconceivable confusion prevails in the direction of German foreign policy. At a moment when conditions of the East are pressing for a rapid and firm decision, Egyptian darkness enshrouds the real peace aims of the German Government. Before Wilson's demands can be discussed, however, the Government must declare whether it is striving for a peace without annexation or for a peace with military guaranties.³

The Mannheimer Volkstimme found the Wilsonian program acceptable in part and said that heavy concessions on both sides were necessary before peace negotiations could be opened. It also saw in Wilson's use of the Brest-Litovsk situation a pressing reason for a

³Munchener Post, January 10, 1918.

German return to the December 25 basis of negotiation in the East.⁴ A thoughtful editorial appeared in the Schwaebische Tagwacht of January 10. It pointed out the uniqueness of the Fourteen Points as being the first attempt of the Entente to formulate war aims clearly. The paper found the points basically different from Lloyd George's program.

This is a document of the highest political importance, being the first manifesto by any Government opposed to the Central Powers in which an attempt is made to state with clearness the war aims of the Entente. . . . it seems to us that no single point of Wilson's program is so worded as to make negotiation impossible. It is true his demands for the separation of the Polish provinces of Germany and Austria, and the surrender of Alsace-Lorraine cannot be accepted by the Central Powers but Wilson does not say these demands must be fulfilled as a condition sine qua non. We dispense with discussions of details, which agreeably differ in tone from his earlier utterances, and confine ourselves to saying that the tone and contents of the document constitute an important step toward accommodation with the Central Powers, and the Russian Revolution, and that it is unintelligible to us how the Pan-German papers can call it a new edition of Lloyd George's speech on war aims. We see very material differences of intention and contents between the two speeches; in fact, we consider Wilson's message as an open disavowal of Lloyd George's war speech. We deem it only possible, but necessary for the Central Governments to examine in all seriousness the question whether Wilson's message cannot form a bridge on which the two hostile groups can meet for direct discussion. In no case can any questions of form be permitted to stand in the way of such an examination.

This was, of course, a highly sophisticated view of the situation and

⁴Mannheimer Volkstimme, January 10, 1918.

summed up very succinctly the views of many Germans who were sensitive enough to realize the true import of Wilson's message.

Not all of the Socialist press was as receptive as the above comment would indicate. The Hamburger Echo lashed out at the Pan-Germans and militarists for providing Wilson the opportunity of splitting Germany down the middle. It thereby pointed up the destructive warlike nature of the speech rather than its constructive or peace-engendering qualities.

Wilson never spoke so well-informedly or so falsely. The message shows him as a peace and war angel. He is better informed than last summer, but apparently has read only Pan-German papers. The National Party which all decent Germans merely scorn, has operated more effectively abroad and has furnished weapons to the enemy. The military party should be called the war party which wants no peace of understanding. But such parties exist in all countries, and, recognizing this, Wilson's scornful question concerning whom the German delegates at Brest represent deserves calm rejection. Wilson's main object is a political offensive with an expected effect on the German people. It serves, however, to strengthen Germany's connection to its Allies. The peace program is based upon the Central Powers' defeat and includes no word of an indemnity to Greece or the right of self-determination for Ireland. Wilson would like to hear German demands contradicting this, so that he might leave the responsibility for the contrivance of the war on Germany. The falseness of the peace program which begins with declarations everyone could agree to, is shown by its one-sidedness.⁵

Thus we see the German sensitivity crop up. Perhaps it was a reaction

⁵Hamburger Echo, January 10, 1918.

based on a guilt feeling, especially over Belgium, that caused this paper to bring up such irrelevant things as an indemnity to Greece and freedom for Ireland in a peace settlement. The fact remains that among leftist and moderate groups such a feeling existed and to irritate it often evoked hostility. To the Germans, Wilson was all too ready to cast out the mote in the German eye.

Prince Alexander von Hohenlohe, the German Pacifist leader, was impressed by the speech. From Switzerland, where he conducted his activities during the war, he came forth with a proposal to overcome the great stumbling block of Alsace-Lorraine. He noted editorially in the Neue Züricher Zeitung that Wilson's references to Alsace-Lorraine were expressed in general terms and suggested that the question might possibly be settled by guarantees of far-reaching autonomy or a referendum.

In any case, the door is open to negotiations on this point, but the demand for a new Poland, including all Polish territory, is entirely unacceptable to Germany, as Posen lies at the Gates of Berlin.

In conclusion, he observed:

The peace negotiations have begun not merely at Brest Litovsk but on the question of a general peace. They are not proceeding at a green table under diplomatic secrecy, but before the whole world through speeches appearing in the newspapers. Perhaps this modern method will reach the end more quickly. In any event, stones that are rolling cannot be held back. War profiteers, war fanatics may shriek; munitions capitalists may employ their billions to poison public opinion in the effort to prolong the war, but there is one thing stronger than all the billions, more powerful than the sword, and that is the spirit of peace coming

from all nations, which nothing can withstand. President Wilson's message may gain an honorable place in history as the cause of the nations turning back on the way to the abyss.⁶

Further favorable comment came from the liberal Frankfurter Zeitung which found that Wilson's peace program was prompted "by the plain desire to have peace, if possible, without further bloodshed". A great resemblance between Wilson's and Lloyd George's speeches was noted in their moderate tone and disavowal of the intention to destroy Germany. As for the points themselves, the paper found Point Five vague and the Alsace-Lorraine statement obscure.

For us the possession of Alsace-Lorraine is not wrong, but an indispensable condition of our national integrity and freedom. We believe that Lloyd George and Wilson purposely used language susceptible of another interpretation than the territorial adhesion of Alsace-Lorraine to France, and the disappointment in France bears us out. . . . Apart from the vagueness and the wording of the demand respecting Turkey and the Balkans, the program contained a number of points acceptable to Germany and her allies as a basis of peace negotiations. Other demands are unacceptable and it seems as if the President who formulates them is too little conscious of whom he is addressing and the actual results produced by the World War.⁷

Even the editors of this enlightened organ were sensitive to what they considered Wilson's presumptuousness and were impressed by the apparently excellent position of German arms at that time.

⁶Neue Züricher Zeitung, January 11, 1918.

⁷Frankfurter Zeitung, January 10, 1918.

Another liberal organ, the Munchener Neuste Nachrichten, saw the message as an attempt to influence the Russian and German peoples and therefore doubly dangerous and requiring careful treatment by Germany.

It is essential that a clear and unequivocal reply giving Germany's war aims be made. The message is intended to confuse the Bolsheviks and the German people. It is evident how excellently the recent Pan-German maneuvers have aided Wilson in distinguishing between the constitutional government and the military party. Many of Wilson's conditions are acceptable, others are too vague to allow positive answers. It is certain that Germany cannot unconditionally evacuate the occupied territory before the conclusion of peace, and the only acceptable solution of the Alsace-Lorraine question is that Germany voluntarily grant the country a Constitution giving her full equality with the other German States. The conditions regarding Poland are unacceptable, while Italy can hope only for the restitution of the position before the war. Austria will effect her own autonomy constitutionally, and this cannot be a peace condition, while the autonomy of non-Turkish nationalities under Turkish sovereignty is probably acceptable. Count Hertling, (the German Chancellor), must make an immediate and unequivocal reply to President Wilson's message and prove to him that Germany must not be mistaken for some South American country where the internal and foreign policy of the country is made known through military pronouncements.⁸

Perhaps the author of the above comment was writing with tongue in cheek, for the irony of the situation was, as events soon proved, that the state of the civil government in Germany had indeed sunk to the level of a South American country.

⁸Munchener Neuste Nachrichten, January 10, 1918.

As we move from left to right, the press reaction became less favorable. The papers of the Center, those which supported the government, became uniformly suspicious of and hostile to the speech, although they recognized some slight virtue in it.

The speech brings everything to the French and British which they wish, namely, support in their claims to Alsace-Lorraine and fulfillment of English plans of conquest in Asia Minor,

said the liberal Berliner Tageblatt of January 10.

Many of the fourteen peace articles Germany could absolutely subscribe to,

continued that paper,

such as disarmament, the League of Nations, freedom of the seas, and no secret diplomacy; but these aims are unrealized if hatred and bitterness are piled up and if the Americans are determined to fight to the end for the Entente annexationists' solution of territorial questions.

The Germania, the official organ of the Center Party, took the opportunity offered by the Vorwaerts comment to attack the Social Democrats. Quoting out of text, it said:

The Vorwaerts call this speech "an example of statesmanlike moderation". We are of another opinion. It's true that Wilson doesn't talk so big today as one is used to hear him do. But, all in all, he acts as though he was the victor over a beaten Germany. Therefore, the message, which should be highly regarded in war-frenzied America, makes upon us as little an impression as his earlier speeches.⁹

⁹Germania, January 10, 1918.

The other leading organ of the Center Party, the Koelnische Volkszeitung, which had followed a pro-annexationist policy all during the war, was even more hostile than the Germania.

We cannot consider it the duty of the German press,
stated this paper,

faithfully to print every word that comes from the lips of this puffed-up fellow, except when practical considerations and German interests are concerned. This refusal is the more justified toward his latest message, since it contains insolent insinuations which do not possess the slightest actual value.

The above was given as an explanation of the paper's failure to print Wilson's speech in full. In further comment, the paper found the two speeches of the Allied statesmen complimentary and rejected out-of-hand the proposals on Alsace-Lorraine and Poland. It interpreted Point Eight as requiring the "severance from the German Empire of Alsace-Lorraine, which is nine-tenths inhabited by Germans."¹⁰

The semi-official Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung called the speech "a symphony of will to no peace" and considered the speech an attempt to "divide the people (German) into two camps".¹¹ The Vossische Zeitung, the oldest newspaper in Berlin and fairly liberal, entitled its editorial, "The Anglo-Saxon Menace".

Whoever wishes to draw his conclusions from

¹⁰Koelnische Volkszeitung, January 10, 1918.

¹¹Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung, January 11, 1918.

the sympathetic and close cooperation of the two Anglo-Saxon powers will see in Wilson's peace message an absolutely necessary tactical supplement to the Saturday speech of Lloyd George... Naturally the proposal of Wilson concerning Belgium agrees with Lloyd George's. His formula for the solution of the Alsace-Lorraine question is just as equivocal as Lloyd George's... The key to the difference between the American and the English formula lies in the greater role which Wilson assigns to the proposed League of Nations.¹²

If the moderates in Germany were unable to see much virtue in Wilson's speech of January 8, the Pan-Germans and annexationists responded even more unfavorably. Some of the more moderate annexationist papers, such as the Kreuz Zeitung tried to be detached and unemotional in their analysis. For instance, the Kreuz Zeitung considered the message as aimed at the Russians and being "substantially the same as Lloyd George's. It is ridiculous for him to say", the paper continued, "that his program contains nothing prejudicial to Germany's greatness." The editorial then asked for a refutation of Wilson's distinction between the German people and the military party by the Government's avoidance of friction between the military and political authorities.¹³

Much of the press comment from the right was not as moderate as the above. To a great extent it was monotonous and primitive, showing only rare glimpses of light and understanding, and

¹²Vossische Zeitung, January 10, 1918.

¹³Kreuz Zeitung, January 10, 1918.

these moments of understanding appear to be only accidental. There seems to run a strain of paranoic distrust and hate of all opposition, both foreign and domestic. "All in all there is nothing new in Wilson's message", said the Deutsche Tagezeitung, a Berlin daily representing North German agricultural interests. According to the editorial, the speech showed that Wilson believed that the Reichstag Majority (Hungerfriedensmehrheit or Hunger Peace Majority, as they called it) could be used as the instrument of Germany's enemies.¹⁴ On January 11, the Deutsche Zeitung of Berlin, an annexationist daily, took the opportunity presented by the Vorwaerts article to attack the anti-annexationist parties. Under the headline "An Echo of Scheidemannism in Wilson's Message", that paper said:

By their fruits shall ye know them! One fruit of Scheidemannism or, what is practically the same, Erzbergerism and Kuehlmannism, shows in Wilson's newest speech. The main point is: Wilson greets the leaders of the Reichstag Majority of July 19 as his allies (Bundesgenossen), as advocates of the same true democratic peace the representative and champion of which he claims to be. The good will that the party of Scheidemann gains thereby so pleases the Vorwaerts that it shows its thanks by praising the "fine and attractive peace program" that Wilson has disclosed... it is true that to all appearances it does not like the return of Alsace-Lorraine to France. The Vorwaerts does not want that to happen entirely unconditionally. And what is more, it considers Wilson's speech as an example of statesmanlike moderation... As long as Wilson and his allies can depend upon Scheidemann's Social-Democracy as well as on a German Government party

¹⁴Deutsche Tagezeitung, January 10, 1918.

they will not stop considering our government as weak and keep encouraging themselves to continue the war until Germany is annihilated.

The sensation-mongering Lokal Anzeiger of Berlin termed the message as a peace program full of hypocrisy. It was aimed, so it claimed, at the reorganization of the world so that Germany would sink to a power of the second rank after having been deprived of three provinces, which owed their wealth and prosperity to German civilization and labor.¹⁵ The industrialist Koelnische Zeitung interpreted the Fourteen Points Speech and Lloyd George's speech as attempts to influence the Russian situation:

The Russians are about to sign a separate peace and become friends of the Quadruple Alliance. One must pretend to be generous and full of love for humanity and try to hamper the matter-of-fact negotiations at Brest-Litovsk in order to hearten the weak. . . For this reason only have Wilson and Lloyd George Spoken. Fortunately, however, intrigues and machinations do not bring world peace, but deeds and decisive blows. The latter have brought us to meet the Russians at Brest-Litovsk, and we shall pick there the fruit that is ripe.¹⁶

The National Liberal Magdeburgische Zeitung, another annexationist organ, called the message "the height of arrogance", but considered it and the Lloyd George speech as productive of good effects in Germany as they would help to open the eyes "of idealists in Germany to the fact that no impression can be made on a phalanx

¹⁵Lokal Anzeiger, January 11, 1918.

¹⁶Koelnische Zeitung, January 11, 1918.

like the Entente by means of kindness and sentimentality".¹⁷ Other annexationist papers were equally unreceptive. The Hamburger Nachrichten on January 10 blasted the opposition in its comment:

Wilson speaks scornfully of German peace offers and peace feelers and open attempts to play the Reichstag Majority against the military authorities-- the Reichstag Majority which is England's tool in the diplomatic war against Germany. Its business is to serve enemy ends, as is plainly evidenced from Wilson's peace program. However, the resolution of July 17 (July 19) demands no annexations and no indemnities while Wilson's program demands indemnities to France and Belgium and the alienation of Alsace-Lorraine and Prussian and Austrian provinces, Serbian access to the sea of Austrian expense, and the partition of Turkey, in fact, annexations in all directions. Then came cryptic words about controlling waters by international treaty... Wilson demands that the Reichstag Majority treasonably betray their brothers-in-arms, so that the Entente may accomplish their predatory war aims. Wilson's speech is a warning which shows where the false policy of the Reichstag Majority has brought Germany.

Its editorial of the next day commented that the phrase in Point Two about exceptions to freedom of the seas said not whether these exceptions included the North Sea and the Baltic, two bodies of water in which a Hamburg newspaper would have great interest. This second editorial again attacked the Reichstag Majority. "German democracy and Social Democracy welcome such meddling (Wilson's attempt to influence German internal affairs) as allies", maintained the paper, "which show how burningly necessary in Germany is a

¹⁷Magdeburgische Zeitung, January 10, 1918.

firm hand sure of its goal." The paper finished by demanding annexations.

The above comments contain the meat of the right-wing reaction to the January message. To the military annexationists, Wilson's words were a trap to be avoided, a trap which was all the more dangerous because of the universal appeal of their high sounding phrases. It was aimed specifically at encouraging the Russians to continue to fight and thus deprive Germany of her gains in the East. It was also considered to be an encouragement to the Majority parties to continue and strengthen their activities toward concluding what was to the Right a treasonable peace.

After the first few days, editorial comment on the Fourteen Points died out in the German press. Most attention at this time was being paid to the Brest-Litovsk negotiations. It took the official replies of the German and Austro-Hungarian governments to revive discussion on the points.

These answers to the speeches of Lloyd George and Wilson were made on the same day, January 24. Before the main committee of the Reichstag, the Imperial Chancellor, Count Hertling, outlined his government's views while the Austro-Hungarian Foreign Minister, Count Czernin, did the same before the Austrian Reichsrat. The bearded septagenarian in Berlin, after some preliminary remarks about Brest-Litovsk, proceeded to comment on each of the points. On the First Point he said, "History shows that it is we, above all

others, who would be able to agree to foregoing publicity of diplomatic agreements." This point was acceptable.

Point Two, freedom of the seas, met with German approval. The Chancellor took the stand, however, that such freedom was impossible while England controlled the international water routes with its strategic bases. The removal of economic barriers as stated in Point Three was also acceptable as was Point Four concerning disarmament. On Point Five, the settlement of all colonial claims and disputes, the Chancellor declared that some difficulties would be encountered in realizing this claim, and that England should be induced to make clear her position. The Sixth Point, which dealt with the problem out of which the Wilson message had sprung, Russia, was unacceptable to the German Government as, since the Allies had eschewed the opportunity of joining negotiations, the eastern peace was now a matter between Russia and the Central Powers solely.

The Belgium question, as embodied in Point Seven, was one which was to be settled at the peace conference, although the Chancellor did disclaim any intention of annexation. On the French situation, Point Eight, the Chancellor had this to say:

The occupied parts of France are a valuable pawn in our hands. Here, too, forcible annexation also forms no part of official German policy. The conditions and methods of procedure to be adopted in the evacuation, which must take into account Germany's vital interests, must be agreed upon between Germany and France. I can only again express by accentuating the point that there can never be any question of the dismemberment of the Imperial German territory.

Under no fine phrases of any kind shall we permit the enemy to take the Reichsland from us, which has ever more intimately linked itself to Germanism, and which has in a highly gratifying manner and ever increasing measure developed in the economic respect and at the present time more than 87 per cent of the population of the Rhineland speak the German mother tongue.¹⁸

Thus we have stated officially what must have been the deepest feelings of the majority of Germans outside Alsace-Lorraine itself. It was this question, namely Alsace-Lorraine, which had been in the past, was at the time of the presentation of the Fourteen Points, and would be in the future, the greatest stumbling block to peace.

Points Nine, Ten, and Eleven, which dealt with the Italian frontiers and the question of nationalities in the Dual Monarchy and the various Balkan States, Hertling left to the Austro-Hungarian Foreign Minister to answer, reiterating, however, that where German interests were involved that nation would "vigorously defend them" and stressed German solidarity with the Dual Monarchy. As for the Turkish question embodied in Point Twelve, Germany considered the integrity of the Turkish Empire her concern. The Imperial Chancellor assured Turkey of support, especially in the question of the Straits. On the Thirteenth Point, the unification of Poland, the Chancellor stated that such was already the case for the Central Powers had liberated the Poles from Tsarism and a kingdom had

¹⁸Vorwaerts, January 25, 1918.

been established. The last point, the proposal for a League of Nations, was acceptable and the Chancellor specifically observed:

As regards to this point, I am sympathetically disposed, as my past political activity shows, toward every idea which eliminates for the future the possibility and probability of wars, and which will promote peace and harmonious collaboration between nations. If the idea of an association of nations, as suggested by President Wilson, proves on closer examination to be really conceived in a spirit of complete justice, and complete impartiality toward all alike, then the Imperial Government is gladly ready, after all other pending questions have been settled, to begin the examination of the basis of such an association of nations.¹⁹

After some brave words in which the favorable military situation was noted and the exploits of the military were praised, the Chancellor asked that both Lloyd George and Wilson should come forth with new proposals. Although many of the proposals of the two Allied statesmen were acceptable, others were too vague and had to be made more concrete before they could be considered.

While Count Hertling was addressing the Main Committee of the Reichstag, Count Czernin made his answer to the Austrian Reichsrat. From the moment that the Fourteen Points were published, he had realized their true potential and had decided to take the first opportunity to make a conciliatory gesture.²⁰ The January 24 speech was that opportunity. The Foreign Minister on Point One expressed

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰O. Czernin, In The World War (New York: Harper and Brothers, Publishers, 1920), pp. 209-216.

"serious doubts" as to whether open diplomacy was "always the most practical and quickest way to reach a result." He approved of Points Two, Three, and Four and had no comment to make on Point Five. To Point Six, he replied that Austria-Hungary had no desire for Russian territory, and on Point Seven he said,

So far as these possessions concern her allies, whether in the case of German possessions, Belgium or Turkey, Austria-Hungary, faithful to her engagements, will go to the extreme in defense of her allies. She will defend the pre-war possessions of her allies as she would her own.²¹

The Eighth Point was not discussed by Count Czernin as it was strictly a point concerning Germany. His avoidance of taking a stand on this all important point was obviously for the purpose of keeping the matter open for discussion in any possible negotiations. To the Ninth Point he gave, quite naturally, a negative answer. The same was done with Point Ten and Eleven. Point Twelve had already been covered in his answer to Point Seven.

To the Thirteenth Point he commented, "We also are supporters of the creation of an independent Polish State." The last point was acceptable to the Foreign Minister and he said of it, "In this idea of a League of Peoples the President would probably meet with no opposition in this monarchy."²²

²¹Vorwaerts, January 25, 1918.

²²Ibid.

Despite the apparent adverse reaction to many of the points, the Foreign Minister's speech was actually a bid for the opening of negotiations. In line with his plan, the most significant part of the speech was in its conclusion.

Austria-Hungary and the United States practically agree, and not only in great principles with regard to the new arrangement of the world after the war. Our views are approaching on several concrete questions. The differences, I think, are not so great that discussion about these points should not lead to a clarification. The situation accordingly is that Austria-Hungary and the United States are two belligerents whose interests are less incompatible than they seem. It is obvious to me that an exchange of views between the two countries might form a starting point for conciliatory discussions between all the states which have not yet entered into peace negotiations.²³

In Berlin a parliamentary debate followed the Chancellor's speech in which the various party leaders expressed their own opinions and the positions of their individual parties. Karl Trimborn, a Center Party deputy, welcomed the speech in its entirety. Scheidemann for the Social Democrats had some caustic statements to make.

The speaker speaks (referring to a part of the Chancellor's speech) of the success of the U-boat war. It is true that it is not without results, but the surest success was the entry of America into the ranks of our enemies. America has now taken Russia's place. . . The Wilsonian message offers in most of its points a unified groundwork for negotiations. Only two strife filled questions remain; Alsace-Lorraine must remain German. . . . We must find a solution for Turkey without being unfaithful to our trust. . . . Should we continue the war just because we don't want to negotiate

²³Ibid.

over Poland. . . . We just don't understand (referring to the Social Democrats) if the enemy has contemptuously refused our own peace proposals, we must not fall into the same error or we will be to blame. No one says that we should accept the Wilsonian proposals without investigating them. The conditions are still here to reach an understanding. On both sides illusions must be given up and things must be seen as they are. The complete restitution of Belgium is our duty, naturally on conditions that the enemy respect the integrity of German territory. In the speech of the Imperial Chancellor one finds a clever diplomat but no statesman.²⁴

On the second day of the debate, Count Kuno Westarp of the Conservative Party said,

The Conservative Party agrees with the Centrum, Progressives, and National-Liberals, as well as with the Chancellor, that the speeches of Lloyd George and Wilson do not form a suitable basis for peace negotiations in the west.²⁵

Erzberger of the Center Party interpreted the Chancellor's speech quite differently than did Westarp. He saw in it a beginning of negotiations but was not entirely pleased with its contents. Before the Reichstag he observed:

Peace can only be had by way of understanding. The differences between Wilson and Lloyd George are still very great, and the Chancellor rightly addresses himself more to Wilson than to Lloyd George. Hertling's speech was in fact the opening of conversations between statesmen. Czernin's speech does not conflict with Hertling's but develops it further; it is to be hoped new proposals will soon come. Why could not something

²⁴Deutsche Zeitung, January 25, 1918.

²⁵Ibid.

positive be said about the Belgian question instead of a negative statement? Naturally we have a free hand, but it is well to say what we wish to make of this freedom... If no peace accommodation comes now, it is again demonstrated that the Entente is to blame.²⁶

The press reaction to the speeches of the twenty-fourth of January again varied with the political coloration of the newspaper. In general, the liberal press saw in the Chancellor's speech a masterpiece of equivocation and in the Foreign Minister's a ray of hope. The moderate press found both Hertling's and Czernin's answers to Lloyd George and Wilson satisfactory and complimentary, while the rightist press sometimes commented unfavorably on the Chancellor's speech and saw no virtue in the Foreign Minister's.

The Vorwaerts of January 25 had this to say:

To any journalist of average ability it is a very easy matter to interpret the Chancellor's speech as a concession to annexationism or, if he chooses, as an extremely peace-loving manifesto. In this respect it is absolutely a masterpiece...

In somewhat the same vein the Mannheimer Volkstimme observed:

The Chancellor failed absolutely in the two main objects required, first, to counteract the excellent impression left in the neutrals and the English and Entente peoples by Lloyd George and Wilson; second, to make a clear declaration regarding the Central Powers' war aims... Hertling should have briefly and emphatically declared that Germany still holds to the Reichstag Resolution, and while unable to accept all of Lloyd George's

²⁶Ibid.

and Wilson's proposals, finds them a sufficient basis for immediate peace negotiations.²⁷

The Schwaebische Tagwacht found the two statemen's speeches complimentary, although the Imperial Chancellor had not spoken clearly on the situation.

Unfortunately it cannot be said that the Chancellor's speech brought the clarity expected by the German people. . . The best that can be said of Hertling's speech is that it has at least not slammed the doors leading to negotiations and has not actually destroyed the existing peace possibilities. Czernin's speech materially supplements Hertling's. His suggestion of an exchange of views between Austria and America can hardly be made without the knowledge of the German Chancellor, so that it must be considered as a declaration of the readiness of the Central Powers to enter peace conversations on the basis of Wilson's message. . . it would have helped matters a great deal if the German Chancellor had given unequivocal expression of the same intentions as Czernin.²⁸

From Switzerland Prince Hohenlohe viewed the Foreign Minister's speech as making a good impression but added, "It would nevertheless be an illusion to believe peace is very near. Count Czernin's own words prove he himself is under no such illusion."²⁹

In the liberal press Hertling's reply was not always greeted with unreserved commendation. The Frankfurter Zeitung commented:

The speeches of Hertling and Czernin leave

²⁷Mannheimer Volkstimme, January 25, 1918.

²⁸Schwaebische Tagewacht, January 25, 1918.

²⁹Neue Zuricher Zeitung, January 26, 1918.

the impression that the way to peace is open. However, the speech of the Chancellor has not brought the clarity necessary to thwart the efforts of the annexationist politicians (Gewaltpolitiker)."³⁰

Similarly the Muenchener Neuste Nachrichten observed:

Wilson's message showed a desire to discover a basis for agreement. The Chancellor should have formulated his answer clearly and promptly. This he has not actually succeeded in accomplishing.³¹

Theodor Wolff, the Editor of the Berliner Tageblatt, viewed Czernin's reply as a moderating force which might bring Hertling's and Wilson's views closer to each other.

Czernin's statement that an exchange of views between Austria and America might form a basis for conciliatory pourparlers between all belligerent nations at war will undoubtedly strengthen the unmistakably increasing peace movements in America, and may even suffice to weaken the obstructive effects of Hertling's speech and strengthen its part which makes for peace; for it is plain to anybody that there is a long distance between Wilson's points and Hertling's points. Hertling's speech alone will scarcely conjure up peace, but it is possible that Czernin may yet lead Hertling there too.³²

Thus we see that liberal comment was not pleased with the failure of Hertling to be more receptive to Wilson's points, although it did not accuse him of being equivocal.

³⁰ Frankfurter Zeitung, January 25, 1918.

³¹ Munchener Neuste Nachrichten, January 25, 1918.

³² Berliner Tageblatt, January 25, 1918.

As was to be expected, the moderate press showed pleasure in the two statesmen's speeches. The Germania considered the speeches as an indication that negotiations for a general peace had already begun, while the Koelnische Volkszeitung followed suit by observing:

The impression that certain relations are being established between Vienna and Washington is strengthened when one recalls that both Hertling and Czernin exhaustively discussed Wilson's message. Whether or not the two statesmen in Berlin and Vienna had special reason for devoting so much attention to that message is beyond the knowledge of the public. But if in Vienna they are reckoning with the possibility of reaching any understanding between the Western and the Central Powers through Wilson, then it stands to reason that Wilson's Fourteen Points are not regarded as the minimum conditions from which the President and his Allies would under no circumstances depart, for as they stand they are in part quite unacceptable to the Central Powers. This view has been expressed in Berlin as well as in Vienna.

The paper continued by speculating on the reasons for Wilson's formulation of the points:

If we look for the reasons why Wilson actually seeks to make that possible which previously he had maintained was impossible, these must be found in the more than ever hopeless war prospects of the Entente and in the growing longing for peace in the countries. That Wilson, on account of his great influence in the Entente councils is in a position to throw his word as a decisive weight into the Entente war scales, is common knowledge to all who remember the boundless expectations which greeted the entrance of the United States into the war.³³

³³Koelnische Volkszeitung, January 27, 1918.

The Norddeutsche Zeitung said that Hertling gave a clear explanation of German policy in his speech and that the nation stood behind the Chancellor.³⁴ The Vossische saw cooperation between the Central Powers' Foreign Ministries in Czernin's offer to negotiate.³⁵

While the moderate press was pleased with the two speeches and considered them complimentary, the annexationist press saw in Count Czernin's speech a feature detrimental to Germany. The Deutsche Tageszeitung thundered, "Czernin's offer of a separate negotiation to the United States can only be taken as an imperilment of Germany's vital interests."³⁶ The Hamburger Nachrichten observed:

Czernin is not immediately concerned with Germany's interests, but ought not to oppose Austro-Hungarian interests to Germany's which he does in declaring Wilson's proposals acceptable to Austria-Hungary.³⁷

The Taegliche Rundschau was more caustic than the above papers.

Victorious Germany, which has born the heaviest burdens of the war is therefore in tow of Austria, which is to negotiate a Wilson peace for Germany. Could anything worse be expected of a collapsed Germany? We reject the proposed division of labor--Germany to carry on the war and assume its burdens, and Austria to carry on

³⁴Norddeutsche Zeitung, January 25, 1918.

³⁵Vossische Zeitung, January 25, 1918.

³⁶Deutsche Tageszeitung, January 25, 1918.

³⁷Hamburger Nachrichten, January 26, 1918.

peace negotiations with Wilson, Germany's worst enemy. Agreement between Vienna and Washington is confirmed by the fact that both Hertling and Czernin took up Wilson's message in detail. The public doesn't know whether Berlin and Vienna statesmen had special reasons for devoting so much attention to the message.³⁸

The reaction to Hertling's speech itself in the annexationist press ranged from moderate approval of the Chancellor's failure to accept the Wilson program as a basis for negotiations to condemnation for not refusing the program out-of-hand. For example, the Hanoversche Kurier saw the speech as a review of "commonplace matters" and approved of the Hertling bid for further proposals from the Entente.³⁹ In contrast, the Leipziger Neuste Nachrichten was vociferous in its disapproval of Hertling's message.

Hertling's reply to Wilson was entirely inappropriate. The only way to surprise a Yankee is to shake one's fist at him. A reply of this sort would make Wilson sit up and take notice. Hertling should have demanded that America furnish guarantees that the extensive election corruption in the United States, which vitiates the democratic suffrage, shall be remedied, that social legislation and laws for the prevention of accidents be introduced, that America participate in colonial readjustment on condition that the Philippines, Hawaii, Guam, Haiti, Puerto Rico, and St. Thomas are evacuated, and that American troops are withdrawn from the Panama Canal. It must be made plain to America that if the Monroe Doctrine is to be respected, she must reciprocally abstain from all interference in

³⁸Taegliche Rundschau, January 25, 1918.

³⁹Hanoversche Kurier, January 25, 1918.

European affairs; this is the only way to talk to America if we want understanding.⁴⁰

Thus again we see the German pique at being preached at by the leader of a nation which many Germans considered as unfit to assume the role of world saviour.

From the press and parliamentary comment in the month of January touching the Fourteen Points, we can see that the speech had at least gained one of its major objectives. It had heaped more fuel on the conflagration inside Germany. The split between the Socialists and Liberals and their government was widened. The Fourteen Points had given to these groups a way out, a means to end the slaughter and build a rational world order. When their government did not take advantage of this, it made it difficult for these groups to support it. The Danish newspaper, the Tydbatt, reported on January 23 that the Fourteen Points were considered in many German circles as a suitable basis for the regulation of society in the future. The same paper also reported that, together with the events at Brest, the January 8 speech had prepared the ground for Bolshevik tendencies.⁴¹ Mr. Carl Ackerman, Colonel House's representative in Switzerland, observed that the Fourteen Points Speech had had the most important effect of any public address since the United States had entered the war. These

⁴⁰Leipziger Neuste Nachrichten, January 26, 1918.

⁴¹Great Britain, War Office, Daily Review of the Foreign Press, January, 1919, p. 683.

were the reasons he gave for his opinion:

It separated absolutely, and I think permanently, the people and the Liberals from the Annexationists, the Military Leaders and the War Industrial magnates; it forced the Austro-Hungarian Government to recognize the peace movement in that country and cemented the Dual Monarchy to the German Liberal party; it gave more momentum to the revolutionary movement, which is under way in Germany, than the Russian revolution; it increased the possibilities of success for the present confidential negotiations which are taking place with Bulgaria; and it made a tremendous impression upon the small European neutrals. . . The war has reached the decisive period.⁴²

Ackerman's appraisal of the situation was correct. The scene was set for great developments. Wilson, and to an extent, Lloyd George, had offered the first inclusive program for world peace. The Chancellor of the main Central Power nation had commented at length on the program and had even asked for a clarification. The Foreign Minister of the second Central Power nation had asked publicly for a rapprochement. Also, large segments of the German and Austrian populations were ready to talk peace. It was now Wilson's turn to answer, which he did before a joint session of Congress on February 11, 1918.

⁴²Seymour, Intimate Papers, Vol. III, pp. 355-357.

CHAPTER III

THE LOST CHANCE

February and March 1918

But before Wilson could answer, another reply was given the Central Powers, one which was not designed to lessen Germany's resistance. On February 4, after reviewing the German and Austrian speeches, the Allied Supreme War Council at Versailles issued a declaration in answer to Hertling and Czernin. The essence of the answer is contained in the following paragraph:

The Supreme War Council gave the most careful consideration to the recent utterances of the German Chancellor and the Austro-Hungarian Minister of Foreign Affairs, but was unable to find in them any real approximation to the moderate conditions laid down by the Allied Governments. This conviction was only deepened by the impression made by the contrast between the professed idealistic aims with which the Central Powers entered upon the present negotiations at Brest-Litovsk and their now openly disclosed plans of conquest and spoilation. Under the circumstances, the Supreme War Council decided that the only immediate task before them lay in the prosecution with the utmost vigour, and in the closest and most effective co-operation, of the military efforts of the Allies, until such time as the pressure of that effort shall have brought about in the enemy Governments and peoples a change in temper which would justify the hope of the conclusion of peace on terms which would not involve the abandonment, in face of an aggressive and unrepentant militarism, of all the principles of freedom, justice and the respect for the Law of

Nations which the Allies are resolved to vindicate.¹

President Wilson, in his Four Principles Speech of February 11, 1918, found Hertling's speech vague, confusing, full of equivocal phrases, and leading to no clearly defined goal. "His discussion," said the President, "and acceptance of our general principles lead him to no practical conclusions. He refuses to apply them to the substantive items which must constitute the body of any final settlement."² Wilson, after reviewing the points wherein the Chancellor had failed, reiterated the purpose of America's participation in the war.

The United States has no desire to interfere in European affairs or to act as arbiter in European territorial disputes. . . But she entered this war because she was made a partner, whether she would or not, in the sufferings and indignities inflicted by the military masters of Germany against the peace and security of mankind and the conditions of peace will touch her as nearly as they will touch any other nation to which is entrusted a leading part in the maintenance of civilization.³

In contrast to his reply to Hertling, Wilson said that, "Count Czernin seems to see the fundamental elements of peace with clear eyes and does not seek to obscure them."⁴ The high water mark of his

¹ Lloyd George, op. cit., p. 47.

² J. B. McMasters, The United States in the World War (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1929), Vol. I, pp. 450-51.

³ Ibid., pp. 452.

⁴ Ibid., p. 453.

speech was his clarification of the Fourteen Points. He said:

After all, the test of whether it is possible for either Government to go any further in this comparison of views is simple and obvious. The principles to be applied are these: .

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

Second, That peoples and provinces are not to be bartered about from sovereignty to sovereignty as if they were mere chattels and pawns in a game, even the great game, now forever discredited, of the balance of power. But that--

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

Fourth, That all well-defined national aspirations shall be accorded the utmost satisfaction that can be accorded them without introducing new or perpetuating odd elements of discord and antagonism that would be likely in time to break the peace of Europe, and consequently the world. A general peace erected upon such foundations can be discussed. Until such a peace can be secured we have no choice but to go on.⁵

The press response in Germany to the Four Principles

Speech was again varied.

It must be determined... whether President Wilson's remark as to there being no obstacle to an immediate discussion of peace is only a diplomatic move or really a redeeming word for mankind,

⁵ Ibid., pp. 453-454.

commented the Vorwaerts. "German answer ought and must be no other than that we are also ready for peace discussions forthwith."⁶ The liberal Berliner Tageblatt stressed the apparent contradiction between Wilson's conciliatory speech and the Versailles declaration. "Mr. Wilson's new speech," observed that paper, "shows an inclination to continue the peace discussion, but that can only be of practical value when the policy of the Entente as a whole decides in favor of a general peace."⁷ The semi-official Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung brought up the same consideration.

Mr. Wilson must first win over his own Allies for his principles of which hitherto they would not hear. It would be a good thing if Mr. Wilson, who claims that he does not desire to interfere in European affairs or act as world arbitrator in European territorial disputes, returned in course of time to the Monroe Doctrine which was formerly regarded by the United States as sacred.⁸

The annexationist Taegliche Rundschau saw Wilson's words as a trap.

President Wilson has this time used more civilized language than usual, but neither his old tactics of arousing hatred against Germany's aristocracy, nor his attempts to sow dissension between the Central Powers have been abandoned, nor has he lost sight of his main aim, which is the establishment of an Anglo-American world dominion

⁶Vorwaerts, February 13, 1918.

⁷Berliner Tageblatt, February 13, 1918.

⁸Norddeutsche Allgemeine, February 13, 1918.

under the trading name of the community of nations.⁹

The immediate raison d'etre of the Fourteen Points was, as has been said before, the Russian situation. It was in February that events in the east took a turn which detrimentally affected the international exchange of views in the west. The negotiations at Brest had been proceeding during January and had finally come to the point where, on January 28, the Bolshevik delegates, lead by Trotsky, returned home to lay the German terms before the Soviet. On January 30, they returned to Brest. On February 10, they broke off negotiations by refusing to sign the treaty and formally withdrawing Russia from the war. This was the policy of "no peace, no war". Trotsky boldly announced to the world:

The peace negotiations are at an end. . .
Russia, for its part, declares the present war with
Germany and Austro-Hungary, Turkey, and Bulgaria at an end.¹⁰

This seemingly suicidal policy was undertaken to influence and precipitate the world revolution. On February 18, after giving the Russians seven days to return and resume negotiations, the German forces began their advance. It was impossible for the Russians to resist, so the next day, February 19, Lenin and Trotsky issued a wireless proclamation denouncing the invasion but declaring their willingness to sign a peace on the terms dictated by the Central Powers

⁹Tageliche Rundschau, February 13, 1918.

¹⁰McMasters, op. cit., p. 455.

On February 23, the Imperial Government, through Kuehlmann, made a new peace offer, the terms of which were more severe than the previous ones. These terms were accepted and a new delegation went to Brest. On March 3, the treaty was signed and the German advance was stopped. By the terms of this treaty, Finland, Estonia, Livonia, Courland, Lithuania, Poland, the Ukraine, and Russian Armenia were separated from Russia. The peace of no-annexation was dead.

Chancellor Hertling replied to Wilson in a speech on February 28. In this address he touched on the situation in the east, for it certainly needed explanation if it was not to affect adversely a rapprochement between the belligerents in the west. But before doing so, he turned to the Four Principles. He accepted Principle One saying, "Who would contradict this?" Principles Two and Three also could "be unconditionally assented to." Then he went on:

Now in the fourth clause he demands that all well-defined national aspirations should be accorded the utmost satisfaction that can be accorded them... Here also I give assent in principle, and I declare therefore, with President Wilson, that a general peace on such a basis is discussable.

But Hertling made the provision that these principles "must be definitely recognized by all States and nations" and not only America and Germany.¹¹

The Chancellor then proceeded to explain the German position regarding Russia:

Our war aims from the beginning were the

¹¹Ibid., p. 454.

defense of the Fatherland, maintenance of our territorial integrity, and the freedom of our economic development. Our warfare, even when it must be aggressive in action, is defensive in aim. I lay special stress on that subject just now in order that no misunderstanding shall arise about our operations in the east. After breaking off the peace negotiations by the Russian delegation on February tenth we had a free hand against Russia. The sole aim of the advance of our troops, which was begun seven days after the rupture, was to safeguard the fruits of our peace with the Ukraine. Aims of conquest were in no way a determining factor. . . . We do not intend to establish ourselves for example, in Esthonia, or Livonia. In Courland and Lithuania our chief object is to create organs of self-determination and self-administration.¹²

This apologia was, of course, necessary. However, it did not hold water as far as the Allies were concerned. German actions had spoken louder than German words. To Wilson, it was now absolutely clear that the military controlled Germany. The question put forth in the Fourteen Points Speech had been answered.

But in pursuance of the opportunity offered by the international dialog, the German Government acted to start discussions. On the basis of both the Fourteen Points and the Four Principles, the German Foreign Ministry sent two unofficial agents to Switzerland to speak to Dr. George D. Herron who was an unofficial American representative there. The Germans were Conrad Haussmann and Professor Ludwig Quidde, the former an advisor to Hertling and the latter a pacifist. They stated to Herron Germany's desire for peace

¹²Ibid., p. 455.

and her willingness to make it on the basis of the principles of February 11. When the more specific Fourteen Points were reviewed, however, they hedged on Point Eight, the Alsace-Lorraine question. These talks came to naught, partly because the American representative did not believe in the Germans' sincerity.¹³

Paralleling the move of the German Foreign Ministry to open discussions on the basis of the Fourteen Points, Czernin made attempts of his own. During the first week of August, Dr. Heinrich Lammasch, an Austrian Liberal, was sent to Switzerland where he had several long conversations with Dr. Herron. He expressed to the American his Emperor's wish for peace and determination to reform the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Dr. Herron found the Emperor's plan insufficient and urged Lammasch to persuade the Emperor to extend his contemplated reforms.¹⁴ On February 19, Czernin increased his efforts by sending to Wilson, through the King of Spain, an offer of peace based on the President's speech of February 11. There was no mention, however, of the Fourteen Points.¹⁵ In conjunction with these approaches to the Americans, conversations were

¹³M.P. Briggs, George D. Herron and the European Settlement (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1932), pp. 44-52; E. Dahlin, French and German Public Opinion on Declared War Aims 1914-1918 (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1933), pp. 131-132.

¹⁴Seymour, Intimate Papers, Vol. III, p. 372.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 373.

started with the British. General Jan Smuts, the South African statesman, and Count Mensdorff, the Austrian diplomat, attempted to find some basis of negotiations.¹⁶ All these attempts were unavailing. Czernin explained their failure as follows:

So long as Italy wishes to annex Austrian territory and France declares that she will not make peace without acquiring Alsace-Lorraine, peace with these powers is impossible. If, however, they abandon their aims of conquest, the Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs sees no obstacle to the conclusion of peace at once.¹⁷

Wilson was shocked by the enforced peace of Brest-Litovsk. This shock is amply shown by his message of sympathy to the Pan-Soviet Congress which had assembled in Moscow to ratify the peace:

May I not take advantage of the meeting of the Congress of the Soviets to express the sincere sympathy which the people of the United States feel for the Russian people at this moment when the German power has been thrust in to interrupt and turn back the whole struggles for freedom and substitute the wishes of Germany for the purpose of the people of Russia?¹⁸

As far as Wilson was concerned, Brest-Litovsk was the answer to his peace proposals. One year after America's entry into the war, on April 6, 1918, the President in a speech at Baltimore took up the gauntlet which he considered had been thrown down by German actions

¹⁶Lloyd George, op. cit., pp. 21-35, 48-54.

¹⁷Seymour, Intimate Papers, Vol. III, pp. 379-381.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 420.

in Russia. He declared:

I am ready, ready still, ready even now, to discuss a fair and just and honest peace at any time that is sincerely purposed....But the answer... came from the German commanders in Russia, and I cannot mistake the meaning of the answer.¹⁹

In conclusion, he set down the future course of the United States as follows:

Germany has once more said that force and force alone, shall decide whether justice and peace shall reign in the affairs of men, whether right as America conceives it or dominion as she conceives it shall determine the destinies of mankind. There is, therefore, but one response possible for us: Force, force to the utmost, force without stint or limit, the righteous and triumphant force which shall make right the law of the world and cast every selfish dominion down in the dust.²⁰

The President's interpretation of the German actions in the east made the Fourteen Points a dead issue for the time being. They had been designed for numerous purposes. Firstly, to save the Russians and the Allies from the consequences of a German victory in the east. This they failed to do. Germany has her eastern peace and a free hand in the west. Secondly, the Fourteen Points were aimed at increasing the political warfare within Germany. This they did most effectively. Thirdly, they were intended to placate the liberal and labor forces within the Allies. This they did. However, their long

¹⁹Baker and Dodd, op. cit., p. 202.

²⁰Ibid.

range and basic purpose, anyway as far as Wilson was concerned, of serving as a blueprint for a general peace and a rational world order, was not accomplished. Much had to pass and many had to die before they came to the fore again.

CHAPTER IV

GERMANY LOSES THE WAR

When Germany went to war in 1914, the plan was to gain a quick victory in the west while holding in the east. But when German plans were upset by the miscalculations of the military and French resistance, trench warfare of position instead of movement set in. A new strategy was, therefore, forced upon the Germans: a decision in the west had to wait while German efforts were concentrated on the eastern front. With the overthrow of the Tsarist regime in March, 1917, it became manifest that the German policy had borne fruit. The Peace Treaty of Brest-Litovsk gave the German military the chance it had wanted all through the war, a free hand to concentrate on the western front. They were disentangled in the east, and although they felt it necessary to keep about a million men there on occupation duty, forty new divisions were available for operations in France. For the first time in years the Germans boasted of a numerical superiority in the west, and this superiority of about 200,000 men gave General Ludendorff great hope of being able to crush the Allies before American help became effective.

The German offensive operations began with an artillery bombardment on March 21, 1918, in the Arras sector in Picardy. The

Kaiserschlacht was on. The initial German efforts were rewarded with considerable success. Within Germany there was an increase of annexationist prestige and activity. The Pan-German League, at a meeting on April 14, adopted a resolution which stated:

The German people must demand from the sense of duty of the Reichstag that it give up the decision of July 19, 1917, and following this historical events, stand for the war aim which arises out of the military situation.¹

On August 9, General August Keim, a Pan-German leader, addressing the Army League, demanded the annexation of Belgium.² Ten days later the Vaterlandspartei held a general meeting which resulted in a manifesto similar to that of the Pan-Germans.³ In this same month, the Vossische Zeitung circulated a questionnaire among the leaders of German industry, asking their aims regarding France. Men such as Ernest von Borsig, August Thyssen, and Albert Voegler declared in reply that the iron districts of Briey and Longwy in France should be annexed by Germany as they were of vital importance to Germany's economic development.⁴ Also, at this time, Jacob Reichart, the secretary of the Union of German Iron and Steel Industrialists

¹Vossische Zeitung, April 15, 1918.

²Kreuz Zeitung, April 10, 1918.

³Great Britain, War Office, Enemy Press Supplement, III, May 2, 1918, p. 1081.

⁴Vossische Zeitung, April 7, 1918.

(Verein Deutscher Eisen-und Stahlindustrieller) wrote two pamphlets pointing out the necessity of annexing French iron ore regions.⁵ In general, the German industrialists welcomed the German victories as promising a great future for them.

Both Hindenburg and Ludendorff shared the optimism of the Pan-Germans and industrialists. Hindenburg wrote to Alfred Hugenberg on March 31, 1918, that "the events of the past months prove that the kind of victory we need for Germany's political and economic future can no longer be wrested from us."⁶ On April 16, he joined the Pan-Germans in urging the Reichstag to declare itself "for a strong German peace, which alone can preserve us from a future war."⁷ Not all the support for westward annexation during this period came from the military and the industrialists. The leader of the Christian labor unions, Adam Stegerwald, said in April that "if we are able to conclude a powerful peace, we want such a peace under all circumstances." Also, the organ of the Christian metal and foundry workers' union, the Deutsche Metallarbeiter, on April 6, 1918, demanded the

⁵J. Reichert, Aus Deutschlands Waffenschmiede (Berlin, 1918), pp. 107-109; J. Reichert, Was sind uns die Erzbecken von Briey und Longwy? (Berlin, 1918), passim.

⁶O. Kriegk, Hugenburg (Leipzig: 1932), p. 40.

⁷Reichstag, Vol. 311, p. 4574.

annexation of Briey and Longwy.⁸

It was difficult, in light of military successes and internal agitation, for the Reichstag Majority to withstand the many requests for repudiation of the July 19 Peace Resolution. As usual, it was only the Socialists who maintained their support of the declaration intact. In the Center and Progressive Parties, there was a desertion of the Peace Resolution. Speakers of both these parties claimed that Germany now had a free hand in making a peace as the Allies had refused to accept Germany's peace offers. Reichstag deputy, Karl Trimborn of the Center Party, at a meeting of that party in the Rhineland, declared in April that his party would approve any peace settlement in the west as it had done in the east.⁹ On the other hand, Erzberger in May published a declaration of adherence to the Resolution.¹⁰ Among the Progressives, deputy Otto Fischbeck in April published an article advocating that the party disassociate itself from the Peace Resolution. This article was supported by his colleagues, Ernst Mueller-Meiningen and Gerhart von Schulze-Gaevernitz.

⁸ Germany, Die Ursachen des Deutschen Zusammenbruches in Jahr 1918 (Das Werk des Untersuchungsausschusses der Deutschen Verfassungsgebenden Nationalversammlung und des Deutschen Reichstages, 1919-1929. Vierte Reihe. 12 Vol., Berlin, 1925-1930), Vol. VII, p. 34,

⁹Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung, April 7, 1918.

¹⁰Germania, May 3, 1918.

However, the majority of the party under Friedrich Naumann declared its adherence to the July 19 Resolution.¹¹ The Brest-Litovsk Treaty and the initial successes in the west had effectively vitiated the strength of the Resolution. Only the Left, as a group, held fast in support of it. Gustav Stresmann came very near to the truth when he said on March 10, 1918, to a meeting of the National Liberal Party: "Practically we have brought it to this, that a conclusion of peace, in opposition to the policy of July 19, has been agreed to by all the bourgeois parties."¹²

The optimism felt by the military-annexationists was to be short lived. The first attacks had been successful, but by the end of March, after about one week, the German attacks had spent their force. The plan had been to exploit a gap between the French and the British armies and to decisively defeat the British. This was not accomplished and by April 5, 1918, the first German offensive had come to a halt. The net effect was about a quarter of a million casualties on both sides, causing a deficit which the Germans, unlike the Allies, could not make up. But Ludendorff was not to be put off. He opened another offensive on April 9 to the north in the Armentieres sector. This, like the previous one, brought initial success to the

¹¹C. Haussmann, Schlaglichter (Frankfurt a. M.: Frankfurt Societaets-Druckerei, 1924), 1. 187.

¹²Berliner Tageblatt, March 11, 1918.

German arms. The high point was reached by the taking of the pivot of Mount Kemel on April 25. Despite this, there was no breakthrough and Ludendorff called the offensive off on April 30. The total casualties of both offensives on both sides were about equal, 331,797 for the Allies and 348,300 for the Germans, but, as said before, the manpower deficit worked to the disadvantage of the Germans.

The effect of the two offensives was such as to require a month of recuperation before new major operations could be launched. During this period of waiting, doubts as to the outcome of the military actions in the west appeared among the German people. In May, Conrad Haussmann wrote to Colonel von Haeften, the Army representative in the Foreign Ministry, as follows:

The public doesn't read the Army communiqués anymore. It is uncertain about the offensive, whether it is still going on or whether it is to start all over again. Public opinion in the villages and cities is very quiet.¹³

By May 27 Ludendorff was ready again, and on that morning, an artillery barrage opened the new offensive. As before, the Germans had great initial successes. They easily took the ridge of the Chemin des Dames and by June 3, they had reached the Marne east of Chateaux-Thierry, an advance of thirty miles. The success had been so unexpected that the offensive had to be stopped on June 6 because of supply difficulties. A second offensive was launched on June 9.

¹³Haussmann, op. cit., p. 197.

Strong French opposition and counter-attacks broke the German offensive and it was called off on the 13th. As a result of the two offensives, the French and British, and also some Americans who first saw action in May, suffered 162,803 casualties as against 169,481 for the Germans. It was in June that the rate of American reinforcement had reached 250,000 a month.

During the rest of June and until the middle of July, the western front saw only minor though bloody actions, among which was the capture of the Belleau Woods by the American Second Division. The last of the great German offensives, the drive toward Paris, came in the latter part of July.

Despite the initial successes of the Spring offensives, it soon became clear to the German military leaders that peace in the west could not come by military measures alone. As early as April, Ludendorff had recognized that "the enemy's resistance was beyond our strength".¹⁴ On June 1, Crown Prince Rupprecht of Bavaria, the German commander in Belgium, had written to Hertling informing him of the impossibility of a German victory as American aid was giving the Entente a manpower advantage. The Crown Prince broached the idea of a political offensive to supplement the military. He suggested "that the only way to bring peace is to declare our desire to maintain

¹⁴E. Ludendorff, Meine Kriegserinnerungen (Berlin: E. S. Mittler und Sohn, 1929), p. 485.

the independence of Belgium inviolate."¹⁵ In his reply of June 5, Hertling expressed agreement with the ideas of the Crown Prince but postponed action until

a succession of blows destroying the military might of France and England would finally result in a powerful movement directed against those governments, a movement that... would lead to the opening of peace negotiations.¹⁶

Among the civilians, a desire for a peace offensive was growing. In early May, Hermann Stegemann, an astute observer of military and political matters, observed that Germany's position was "excellent but hopeless because she had not made a special declaration on Belgium before the military offensive began". He considered that such a declaration "would either have made the offensive superfluous or else would have increased its effectiveness one hundred-fold."¹⁷ The press took up the question of a political offensive. On May 22, the Neue Preussische Zeitung advocated the idea. A few days later, Vorwaerts (June 3) and the Koelnische Zeitung (June 3) followed suit. The annexationist press sharply opposed such proposals with the remarkable exception of the Kreutz Zeitung which printed a series of editorials in favor of a negotiated peace.¹⁸

¹⁵Ursachen, Vol. II, pp. 191-192.

¹⁶Ibid., pp. 192-193.

¹⁷Max of Baden, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 303-304.

¹⁸Kreutz Zeitung, June 5, 1918.

Colonel Haeften also realized that the time had come for diplomatic moves as well as military ones. On June 3, he drafted a plan for a peace offensive which was to precede the new military offensive and form an adjunct to it. Germany was not to ask for peace outright, but there was to be well concealed Government sponsorship of public manifestations of the desire for peace.¹⁹ He obtained Ludendorff's approval of the plan and tried to get the approval of the civilian authorities.²⁰ In his discussions with Hertling, Kuehlmann, and Frierich von Payer (the Vice Chancellor), he ran into difficulty over the Belgian situation.²¹ The plan was almost impossible to put into effect as long as the Imperial Government and the Army Command could not agree on this question. Although it was not carried out, the plan had so impressed Kuehlmann that he independently took a step to precipitate a peace offensive. On June 25, before the Reichstag, he declared that "without some exchange of views...an absolute end can hardly be expected from military decisions alone, without recourse to diplomatic negotiations."²²

This pessimistic admission of the failure of the military measures brought immediate reaction from the Right and the military.

¹⁹Ursachen, Vol. II, p. 342.

²⁰Ibid., pp. 195-196.

²¹Ibid., p. 197.

²²Reichstag, Vol. 312, pp. 5611-12.

Count Kuno Westarp in the Reichstag attacked the speech as a threat to Germany's morale at home and on the front.²³ The Army Command felt that the effects of the Foreign Minister's speech were dangerous, and to counteract them, it gave out that it had been painfully surprised by it. Haeften's plan was now completely disregarded. Both Hertling and Kuehlmann tried to quiet the furor by explanations before the Reichstag. However, no action on the Government's part could now save Kuehlmann. The Army Command had decided that his dismissal was of paramount importance. Hindenburg told Hertling that he could no longer work with the Foreign Minister while Ludendorff held the same views. "In view of the serious danger to the nation's morale through Kuehlmann's speech," wrote the First Quartermaster General later, "speedy action was required if the press was to be reassured at once and kept from coming to false conclusions about our military situation."²⁴ Therefore, on July 8, Kuehlmann was dismissed. This was a major victory for the annexationists and the military. The military duomvirate of Hindenburg and Ludendorff had again demonstrated that they were the real rulers of Germany, as they had done the previous July (1917) when they had forced the dismissal of Bethmann-Hollweg as Imperial Chancellor.

²³Ibid., pp. 5634-5635.

²⁴E. Ludendorff, Urkunden der Obersteheeresleitung ueber ihre Taetigkeit, 1916-1918 (Berlin: E. S. Mittler und Sohn, 1920), pp. 491-492.

On July 9, Admiral Paul von Hintze, who was then Minister to Norway, was named to the Foreign Ministry. The new Foreign Minister, before he assumed office, "put to General Ludendorff the formal and carefully framed question whether he was certain of final and definite victory over the enemy. . . The General replied, 'That I can answer with a decided yes!'"²⁵

After the June offensive, the French Intelligence had come to the conclusion that the Germans could not attack in force again until July 15 at the earliest, and that the attack would again come "...in the direction of Paris by the valleys of the Oise and the Marne." This was an almost perfect evaluation, as on July 15 the Germans launched an offensive on the Rheims-Soissons front. The Germans had managed to acquire a considerable local superiority in both infantry and artillery, but as the French, who were aided by nine American divisions, were ready, the shock of the German attack was absorbed. On July 16, it had been stopped. On July 18, Foch launched a carefully prepared counter-attack, making effective use of tanks. By the 6th, day of August, the second battle of the Marne had ended in a German defeat. Germany had lost all chance of military victory. The race to beat the effect of American reinforcement was lost. Ludendorff said:

The attempt by a German victory to make

²⁵Germany, Amtliche Urkunden zur Vorgeschichte des Waffenstillstandes, 1918 (Berlin: 1924), Document 2.

the people of the Entente desirous of peace before the arrival of American reinforcements was wrecked. The Army's striking power was not adequate to give the enemy a decisive blow.... I was now quite aware that thereby our whole situation had become serious.²⁶

However, Ludendorff still had hope that the German forces could withstand the Allied attacks. "Five times thus far during the war I had to withdraw my troops, and still was able in the end to beat the enemy. Why shouldn't I succeed a sixth time?"²⁷

While the military situation in the west was deteriorating during July and August, the German home front was suffering the ravages of disease and famine. The desire for peace on the part of the populace was increasing rapidly. Early in July the Spanish Influenza was spreading among the troops and the civilian population. The epidemic struck 80,000 children in Berlin alone. The potato ration was cut in July. In Vienna the food shortage was so great that appeals for help were sent to Germany. Military traffic on the railroads prevented the importation of food from the Ukraine and Rumania. On July 6, the bread ration was cut although it had just been reduced in June. People were warned that meatless weeks were soon to be introduced.

²⁶Ursachen, II, 80; Ludendorff, Kriegserinnerungen, pp. 534-540.

²⁷G. F. Hertling, Ein Jahr in der Reichskanzlei (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herdersche Verlagshandlung, 1919), p. 146; Ursachen, II, 222.

Beside food shortages, other commodities were becoming scarce. Coal went up in price by three marks a ton in July. Metal shortages led to the melting down of public monuments in Berlin and the confiscation of metal from private homes. In July the shortage of clothing caused the confiscation of table linens from hotels and restaurants to make underwear for the needy. Discarded clothing had to be handed over to the Government under threat of a year's imprisonment or a thousand marks' fine.

Needless to say, the above mentioned conditions resulted in a lessening of morale among the German people. Beside grumbling, more overt action was taken by many. Strikes increased in number, and in at least one case troops were used against strikers.²⁸ As Germany entered the fifth year of war in August 1918, it became increasingly evident that both the home front and the military one were cracking. On August 10, the Vorwaerts pointed out the true situation:

The people now are apprised of the fact that it is impossible to succeed in a war of many years' duration against a coalition of the entire world. It is now time to abolish the military dictatorship in Germany and to let the entire world see Germany's better side so that the war can be brought to a happy end.

If it took the above mentioned accumulation of miseries to

²⁸H. R. Rudin, Armistice 1918 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1944), pp. 13-14.

make the German people realize that the war could not end in a German victory, it took a sharp blow on the head to get the idea across to Ludendorff, Germany's real master. On August 8, the French and British attacked in the Amiens sector, the British using over 400 tanks. The magnitude of the battle and the extent of the German defeat can be seen in the fact that the Germans lost 28,000 men in one day, 15,000 of them captured, while the British lost 9,000 men and about two-thirds of their tanks. The Germans fell back and only stopped retreating only when they reached the old trenches on the Somme four days later. In the ten days between August 6 to 15, the Allies lost 46,000 men while the Germans lost 75,000, about 20,000 of them prisoners. The disproportionate number of prisoners was indicative of the state of morale among the German troops. Retiring German troops, upon meeting fresh troops going to the front, called them strike-breakers. Ludendorff was shocked by the events of August 8 and called it "the black day of the German Army in the history of this war".²⁹

In the face of the military debacle developing in France, the German press closed ranks. Both the Left and the Right called on the people to unite in face of danger. The Vorwaerts of August 11 warned of defeatism, while the socialist Internationale Korrespondenz commented: "Regarding one thing, it must be quite clear. That is,

²⁹Ludendorff, Kriegserinnerungen, pp. 547-550.

that the way to peace is...by the attainment of a German victory."³⁰ Similarly, the Rheinische Westfaelische Zeitung, an annexationist organ, said: "Hindenburg and Ludendorff have proved scores of times that they are army leaders of great resources. But one point we must keep clearly in mind: that the road to peace can only lead through German victory."³¹

In view of the military situation, a conference of the civilian and military leaders of Germany was immediately called. On August 13, von Hintze met with Ludendorff at Spa and received assurances of Germany's ability to fight a defensive war. Although the Quartermaster General now admitted that he was uncertain of obtaining a peace through offensive action, he fully expected to bring the Allies to terms by a strategic defense on French soil. At the Crown Council meeting the next day, the internal, external, and military situations were reviewed. As a result of their deliberations, it was decided to make an attempt to get a peace. "We must be on the watch," said the Kaiser, "for the opportune moment at which to arrive at an understanding with the enemy." It was decided to wait until "the next success on the western front" to inaugurate the peace moves which von Hintze was now advocating.³²

³⁰Intenationale Korrespondenz, August 11, 1918.

³¹Rheinische Westfaelische Zeitung, August 13, 1918.

³²Amtliche Urkunden, Document 1; Ursachen, II, 227-234.

On the third day of the meetings, August 15, Kaiser Karl of Austria and his Foreign Minister, Count Stephan Burian, who had replaced Czernin, joined the discussions. Their purpose was to get German cooperation on a direct appeal for peace. The Germans prevailed upon them to wait.

In the German press, there was a misreading of the purpose of the conference. It was considered as called to discuss only routine matters. The Hamburger Fremdenblatt commented: "Germany and Austria-Hungary wish to bring this jointly conducted war of defense to a successful conclusion. Therefore, the meeting of monarchs is no sensational event, but the natural result of the alliance."³³ Germania similarly observed: "The meeting of the two Emperors was arranged... for the purpose of discussing... a closer alliance between Germany and Austria-Hungary."³⁴

After the Crown Council deliberations, von Hintze began to prepare the ground for peace moves. He was handicapped by the same factor which had prevented Haeften's plan from being carried out; the inability of getting the supreme command to agree to a statement on Belgium which would be acceptable to the Allies. On August 19, von Hintze tried unsuccessfully to get a concession on the matter

³³Hamburger Fremdenblatt, August 15, 1918.

³⁴Germania, August 18, 1918.

from Ludendorff.³⁵ On August 24, Hertling and von Payer drafted a statement which Ludendorff and Hindenburg approved. This declaration made the restoration of Belgium dependent on the return of Germany's colonies. Even this qualified declaration was not to be made public formally; it had to be concealed in a speech made by von Payer in mid-September.³⁶

Meanwhile, the leaders of the Austro-Hungarian Empire could wait no longer in their search for peace. Despite their promise to the Germans, Count Burian contacted the Bulgarian and Turkish governments and got their support for a direct appeal. The Germans then tried to get the Austrians to refrain from such an appeal, but on September 14, Burian issued a note asking for a general peace conference. It was called for the belligerents to open immediately "confidential, non-binding conversations over the fundamental principles of a peace treaty".³⁷ Wilson cut the move short by replying:

The Government of the United States... has repeatedly and with entire candor stated the terms upon which the United States would consider peace and can and will entertain no proposal for a conference upon a matter concerning which

³⁵Ursachen, Vol. II, pp. 236-238, 382-383.

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷United States, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1918, Supplement 1 (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1928), Vol. I, pp. 309-310.

it has made its position and purpose so plain.³⁸

For the most part, the German press received the Austrian note as a good move, although doubt was expressed as to its effectiveness. The Vorwaerts saw its possible harmful effects. To counteract them, it was necessary that "the good effects be developed". That paper continued:

Austria-Hungary's démarche will be welcomed by the widest circles of the German people, and many hopes will be placed in it. It is necessary here to utter a warning against over-hasty optimism.³⁹

The National Liberal Boersen Zeitung placed no great hopes in the démarche.⁴⁰ The liberal Vossische Zeitung saw the note as an imperilment of peace possibilities because it created a fissure in the solid front against the Entente.⁴¹ The Lokal Anzeiger commented: "We cannot, after the experiences we have hitherto had with our peace proposals, help feeling thoroughly sceptical." Some of the right-wing press expressed anger.⁴² The Rheinische Westfaelische Zeitung felt that it was unfortunate that, as a newspaper, the organ was "not in a position" to express itself on "the action of our ally

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹Vorwaerts, September 16, 1918.

⁴⁰Boersen Zeitung, September 16, 1918.

⁴¹Vossische Zeitung, September 16, 1918.

⁴²Lokal Anzeiger, September 15, 1918.

as it deserves."⁴³

Despite the attempts to interpret it favorably, however, the Austro-Hungarian note shocked the Germans and helped greatly to accelerate the decline of German civilian and military morale. On the home front, every third week now was a meatless one and milk and butter prices were rising. On September 17, it was reported that tobacco supplies would be exhausted by the end of the year. Tuberculosis and influenza were spreading and even cholera was reported in Berlin.⁴⁴ As usual, the opposition to the Government was lead by the Social Democrats. This opposition was centered around the failure to do away with the three-class franchise system in Prussia. Although Hertling and the Kaiser had expressed support for such a change, the three-class system became the rallying point of the Reichstag Majority. In April the franchise bill had been introduced in the Prussian House of Deputies. On the second reading, it was changed so as to rob it of its purpose by replacing its equal franchise provisions with a system of plural franchise. The bill was passed in this adulterated form on July 4, but this did not halt a heated debate on the subject. In September, the Vorwaerts linked the question to the international problem of peace making. It said that the question was not only a Prussian and a German one but also an

⁴³Rheinische Westfaelische Zeitung, September 16, 1918.

⁴⁴Rudin, op. cit., p. 35.

international one, for there was no other way to rid Germany of Prussian militarism which "must go before all Germany, not only Prussia, is ruined by its influence".⁴⁵

To improve the morale of the people, a series of speeches by high officials were made. At Karlsruhe Prince Max of Baden called for national unity in the search for peace. On September 10, the Kaiser addressed the Krupp workers at Essen, exhorting them to continue the fight. But the most important speech was that of von Payer, made on September 12. In it he denied that Germany wanted western annexations and stated specifically that: "We can even evacuate Belgium just as soon as we get to it." He spoke in favor of a League of Nations, the return of Germany's colonies, freedom of the seas, disarmament, and stated that, although Germany was the aggrieved party, she would not demand indemnities.⁴⁶

Von Payer's speech was greeted with praise by the liberals because it was a step toward peace. The Progressive Boersen Kurier remarked: "The speech is free from expressions which can be given different meanings, so that the enemy will find it necessary to reply as openly to the precise delimitation of German war aims."⁴⁷ A sour note was struck, however, by the Vorwaerts which, under

⁴⁵Vorwaerts, September 2, 1918.

⁴⁶Frankfurter Zeitung, September 13, 1918.

⁴⁷Boersen Kurier, September 13, 1918.

the heading "Dangers in the New Program", thought that von Payer's speech did not really offer a lasting solution. "It is impossible to get rid of the problems raised by the World War by everything in the west becoming as before and everything in the east remaining as created by the war."⁴⁸ The annexationist press showed hostility and considered the speech as a "national scandal" and a "diplomatic and political catastrophe".⁴⁹

While the domestic situation was deteriorating rapidly, the military situation was growing worse. A new offensive was being launched by the Allies against a weakened Bulgaria. Late in September, the British on the Saint Quentin front and the French and the Americans on the Meuse-Argonne renewed their attack. Bulgaria was about to give up, and in the west German troops were surrendering in large numbers. Signs of low morale even appeared among the officers. On September 25, Premier Malinow of Bulgaria asked the Allies for an armistice.

On September 24, a session of the Main Committee of the Reichstag was called. The Chancellor stated that he approved of Wilson's Fourteen Points and the Four Principles. He especially advocated disarmament, a League of Nations, and freedom of the seas.⁵⁰

⁴⁸Vorwaerts, September 13, 1918.

⁴⁹Berliner Tageblatt, September 13, 1918.

⁵⁰Frankfurter Zeitung, September 25, 1918.

Von Hintze stated that Germany was ready for peace but, although he accepted it, he disagreed with the timing of Austria's peace move. Scheidemann was most caustic in his criticism of the Government. He attacked the Chancellor as being weak for he had been "unable to prevent what we do not want. . . the war must be ended to keep us from being smashed".⁵¹

It was becoming apparent to both the civilian and military authorities that conditions were such as to require an end to hostilities as rapidly as possible. The idea arose of approaching Wilson in peace efforts. Ludendorff suggested to von Hintze that he contact the Americans for negotiations. On September 23, three Foreign Ministry experts submitted to von Hintze a memorandum which stated that the "most important prerequisite for the coming peace is the formation. . . of a new Government on a broad national base". The memorandum continued:

The new Government formed in this way should approach President Wilson at the opportune moment with a request to undertake the restoration of peace and for this purpose to all belligerents that plenipotentiaries be sent to Washington. If it be the wish of our military authorities, it should be suggested to the President that he invite the belligerents, possibly at the same time, to conclude an armistice. Our request to Mr. Wilson should be accompanied by the declaration that Germany, and possibly the Quadruple Alliance also, is ready to base peace negotiations on the President's familiar Fourteen Points.⁵²

⁵¹Ibid.

⁵²Ursachen, II, 251; Amtliche Urkunden, Document 12.

While the Foreign Ministry was planning a reorganization of the Government, public criticism of the Government in general and the Chancellor in particular was growing. The Vossische Zeitung on September 23 suggested that the Reichstag come to a decision on a policy to end the war. The Berliner Tageblatt demanded that the Chancellor resign as he had not been strong enough to keep the military out of politics.⁵³ Theodor Wolff, the editor of that paper, observed of the Chancellor's speech:

Count Hertling's speech does not contain the slightest hint of that reform of the Empire, of questions of democratization and parliamentarization or of any of the abundant ideas arising today in the midst of our people. How could he mention them to those to whom these things are so infinitely strange? A new day is dawning, whether one likes it or not.⁵⁴

The Center Party was being pushed to accept the inclusion of the Social Democrats in the Government. The Germania hoped "that the future course of events will result in a renewed strengthening of Count Hertling's cabinet..."⁵⁵ The Frankfurter Zeitung called for the formation of a new Government by the three main parties, the Social Democrats, the Center, and the People's Party.⁵⁶ On the 25th of

⁵³Berliner Tageblatt, January 26, 1918.

⁵⁴Ibid., January 25, 1918.

⁵⁵Germania, January 25, 1918.

⁵⁶Frankfurter Zeitung, January 25, 1918.

September, the Internationale Korrespondenz blasted the Center Party as follows:

The Socialist Party has declared its readiness to enter a new Government under definite conditions. That means that representatives of Social Democracy will in no case enter the exhausted Government of the exhausted Chancellor. The Center wants no new Government and no new Chancellor at present. The consequences of this attitude for the continuance of the Reichstag Majority cannot yet be estimated.

A full fledged parliamentary crisis was developing.

Meanwhile, within the Government things were moving rapidly. The Foreign Ministry's plan for an appeal to Wilson required time to reorganize the Government so as to avoid the appearance of precipitate action. Parliamentary methods were being used to achieve this. However, the Army Command had come to conclusions of its own. On September 28, Hindenburg and Ludendorff agreed that the military situation was such as to require an immediate armistice.⁵⁷ On the next day at Spa, Ludendorff described the military situation in terms which gave von Hintze the impression that only an armistice could save the Army. That same day Ludendorff and Hindenburg told the Kaiser that the Army needed an armistice. The Foreign Minister recommended that Wilson be asked to summon a peace conference on the basis of the Fourteen Points, and that an armistice be requested.⁵⁸ The Kaiser approved and later in the day the first step

⁵⁷Ursachen, II, 256, 365.

⁵⁸Ibid., pp. 264-265.

was taken in organizing a government acceptable to Wilson by the resignation of Hertling.

The insistence of the Army Command on an immediate armistice at the same time that the civilian authorities were trying to change the Government caused a great deal of difficulty. Ludendorff and Hindenburg, with their usual myopia, could not understand that Wilson meant what he had said when he had insisted that a responsible government must be set up to supercede the military autocracy before negotiations could be entered into. "The Field Marshall and I," said Ludendorff, "were not aware of the trend of opinion in Berlin (the opinion of the civilian authorities as to governmental reform) when we decided upon the armistice and peace proposals in the evening of September 28."⁵⁹ Ludendorff on October 1 insisted that a note be sent at once, and on October 2, he informed the Government that the Army could not wait forty-eight hours longer.⁶⁰ It was under such pressure that the new Government was formed.

⁵⁹Ludendorff, Urkunden, p. 523; Ursachen, II, 365.

⁶⁰Amtliche Urkunden, Documents 21, 22, 23, 27.

CHAPTER V

GERMANY SUBMITS TO THE FOURTEEN POINTS

October 1918

The man chosen to form the new Government, institute constitutional changes, and arrange for an immediate armistice was Prince Maximilian of Baden. Although he was an aristocrat and a military man, he had a great deal of experience in parliamentary government and a reputation for liberalism. He was the cousin of the Kaiser, heir to the throne of Baden, and for eleven years he had been the president of the Baden Diet. He had served as a general officer in 1914, and after retiring from the Army because of illness, had devoted his time to Red Cross work which had improved the condition of foreign prisoners in Germany and of German prisoners abroad. His public dialog with Lord Lansdowne in the press made him a well known advocate of a peace of understanding. As a negotiator, he was probably as acceptable to the Allied Powers as anyone in Germany. The former American Ambassador to Germany at the time, James Watson Gerard, said of him:

The Prince... is one of the few high Germans who seems to be able to think like an ordinary human being... Putting forward a man of Prince Maximilian's personality and views in the position of Chancellor... means a very definite attempt to seek peace and an abandonment of the Pan-German policy.

Prince Max had a different idea of his role than that possessed by Ludendorff and Hindenburg. He and other informed people knew that his role as Chancellor was to be only an interim one. Ludwig Alpers, a Reichstag deputy, summed up the Prince's position exactly when he said: "Prince Max will now become Chancellor but cannot remain so for long. He will have the opportunity to perform only one duty, conclude peace, and with that his mission will be ended."¹ However, although the Prince knew he had to ask for an armistice, he did not expect to have to do so immediately. His idea was to proceed in an orderly manner with governmental reorganization and then go on to the business of peace making.

When he came to Berlin on October 1, Haeften and von Hintze lost no time in enlightening him as to what the Army Command expected of him. At first he fought against sending a note as he needed time to reorganize the Government and was uncertain about the advisability of accepting the Fourteen Points as a basis for peace, for he suffered from no illusions as to what the possible consequences of such an acceptance were for the Empire. "An armistice offer", wrote the Prince, "made any such peace step as I had contemplated impossible. I begged him (Haeften) to get General Ludendorff to change his mind. I must at least demand a fortnight to prepare the political

¹H. P. Hanssen, Diary of a Dying Empire, trans. O. O. Winther (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1955), p. 313.

ground at home and abroad."²

On the morning of October 3, Prince Max warned Hindenburg personally of the danger of dispatching a note and proposed that he instead, in his first speech to the Reichstag, give a detailed program of war aims in "close, but not undignified correspondence" with Wilson's points and then request negotiations on that basis.³ The Chancellor realized that such a move, although it would take longer, would avoid the psychological shock that a note would have. Hindenburg would not yield in his demand, upon which the Prince agreed to dispatch the note "only on the condition, that the Supreme Command states in writing... that the military situation on the western front no longer admits of a postponement of the dispatch of the note."⁴

The Field Marshall sent his reply the same day:

The Supreme Command insists on its demand that a peace offer be made at once... the situation becomes daily more critical and may force the Supreme Command to take momentous decisions.... Every day wasted costs thousands of brave soldiers their lives.⁵

Consequently, the note was sent on the night of October 3.

"I fought against the note," said the Prince before the Council of Ministers on October 6, "first because I thought the time was premature;

²Max of Baden, op. cit., II, 51.

³Ibid., p. 18.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid., p. 19.

secondly, because I wished to turn to the enemy in general. Now we must quietly consider the consequences." To Scheidemann he later said, "I sent it because I was forced to by the Supreme Command. I was opposed to this over-hasty cry for rescue, but have taken all the responsibility."⁶

The German note was sent through the Swiss Government over the personal signature of the Imperial Chancellor.

The German Government requests the President of the United States of America to take steps for the restoration of peace, to notify all belligerents of this request, and to invite them to delegate plenipotentiaries for the purpose of taking up negotiations. The German Government accepts, as a basis for the peace negotiations, the program laid down by the President of the United States in his message to Congress of January 8, 1918, and his subsequent pronouncements, particularly in his address of September 27, 1918. In order to avoid further bloodshed, the German Government requests the President to bring about the immediate conclusion of an armistice on land, on water and in the air.⁷

The German people were first informed of the note on October 5, when the new Imperial Chancellor addressed an extraordinary session of the Reichstag. The Prince and his aides had exercised great care in preparing the speech. The first draft contained a detailed analysis of the Fourteen Points. When it was read to the

⁶Amtliche Urkunden, Document No. 35, P. Scheideman, Der Zusammenbruch (Berlin: Verlag fuer Sozialwissenschaft, 1921), p. 184; Max of Baden, op. cit., p. 22.

⁷Foreign Relations, 1918, Supplement 1, I, 338.

cabinet, it was opposed unanimously on grounds that an attempt to interpret the President's mind would only offend him and delay peace. The speech was, therefore, rewritten.⁸

The revamped speech avoided any attempt to interpret or investigate the nature of the Fourteen Points. The first part of the speech was an outline of the new Government's policy of constitutional reform and peace. He specifically mentioned Alsace-Lorraine by announcing the intention to give that province the status of an independent state within the German Empire. But the most important part of the speech came last, the admission that the war was lost.

For months a continuous, terrible, and murderous battle has been raging in the west. Thanks to the incomparable heroism in our Army, which will live on as an immortal, glorious page in the history of the German people... the front is unbroken.... But, just because we are inspired by this feeling and this conviction, it is also our duty to make certain that the murderous and bloody struggle be not protracted for a single day beyond the moment when the close of the war seems possible for us.... I have, therefore, not waited until this day to take an active step to further the idea of peace. Supported by the consent of all duly authorized institutions of the Empire and by the consent of all our allies acting together with us, I sent on the night of October 4-5 (actually the night of October 3-4) through the mediation of Switzerland, a note to the President of the United States of America, in which I asked him to work for the restoration of peace and to communicate to this end with all the belligerent states.... It is directed to the President of the United States because, in his message of January 8, 1918, and in his later proclamations and especially in his speech in New York on September 27, he proposed a program for

⁸Max of Baden, op. cit., pp. 31-42.

general peace which we can accept as a basis for negotiation. I have taken this step toward salvation not only of Germany but of all humanity, which has been suffering for years through the war, because the thoughts regarding the future well-being of the peoples which were proclaimed by Mr. Wilson are in accord with the general ideas cherished by the new German Government and by the overwhelming majority of our nation.⁹

The speech left the Reichstag stunned. However, that body maintained its discipline. No debate on the Chancellor's move followed. Friedrich Ebert, the Social Democrat, moved that discussion be postponed. The motion was carried and the Reichstag was adjourned. The only discordant note to be sounded at this meeting came from the Pole Wladislaus Seyda who, in opposing the move to adjourn, brought up Polish claims.¹⁰

While the German leaders were deciding to ask for an armistice, there was a realization in the Allied camp that the conflict was approaching a conclusion. Wilson and House knew that, if the Wilsonian program were to be a success, it was necessary to get the Allies' consent to it. House wrote to Wilson, "As the Allies succeed, your influence will diminish. . . . Therefore I believe that you should commit the Allies now to as much of your programme as possible."¹¹ It was decided, therefore, that the inauguration of the Liberty Loan Drive

⁹Amtliche Urkunden, Document No. 34a; Max of Baden, op. cit., p. 370.

¹⁰Lokal Anzeiger, October 5, 1918.

¹¹Seymour, Intimate Papers, pp. 64-67.

would be the ideal time to make a public bid for such a commitment. Consequently, in a speech given at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York City on September 27, 1918, Wilson made his statement of the Five Particulars:

First, the impartial justice meted out must involve no discrimination between those to whom we wish to be just and those to whom we do not wish to be just. It must play no favorites....

Second, no special or separate interest of any single nation or any group of nations can be made the basis of any part of the settlement which is not consistent with the common interest of all.

Third, there can be no leagues or alliances or special covenants and understandings within...the league of nations.

Fourth, and more specifically, there can be no special selfish economic combinations within the league and no employment...of economic boycott...except as the power of economic penalty...may be vested in the League of Nations....

Fifth, all international agreements and treaties of every kind must be made known in their entirety to the rest of the world.¹²

For some unknown reason, the report of this speech was delayed in Germany. It was, however, disclosed to the German people on October 5, the same day that the Chancellor made his Reichstag address announcing his peace move.

The liberal and left press in Germany welcomed the Chancellor's speech, as it promised long advocated reforms and was an

¹²Ibid., pp. 68.

attempt at a peace of understanding. Ebert said, "October 5 is really regarded as the turning point in German history. It is the birthday of German democracy."¹³ However, the papers almost unanimously warned that the war was not over. The Vossische Zeitung reminded the nation that its fate was now "placed in the hands of President Wilson"; there was no assurance that peace would follow from this first step.¹⁴ The Vorwaerts of October 5 said:

It can in no wise be assumed that President Wilson's Fourteen Points in his speech of January 8, 1918, are disposed of by the Five Points of the new speech. Amongst these Fourteen Points, twelve were acceptable from the beginning, and two relative to Alsace-Lorraine and Poland were difficult of settlement. Meanwhile, it may be noted that the realization of the old Social Democratic demand to grant autonomy to Alsace-Lorraine means in practice a big concession, and that free navigation on the Vistula and guaranteed access to the sea has been promised to the new Poland.

In its issue of October 6, the paper reprinted the Fourteen Points and commented:

It cannot be denied that the Wilson program contains details foreign to our accustomed ideas and feelings, but it offers us such great advantages also that the sacrifices are justified. Wilson's program must be considered as a whole. It means the final abandonment of might in politics on all sides, and the victory of the new international justice, and as such is acceptable to the new Germany which is ready to co-operate in the construction of a new world.... What does it matter when all land is to belong, so to

¹³Rudin, op. cit., p. 85.

¹⁴Vossische Zeitung, October 5, 1918.

speak, to all, and when one can get cotton, copper,
 and petroleum just as well from foreign countries
 as from one's own country, and when one can sell
 cotton goods, nails, and machines abroad just as
 well as at home, and when no danger of war menaces
 these assured peaceful relations? That is in the
 main the purport of President Wilson's program,
 and this is therefore as a whole acceptable; much
 more as a whole than in isolated detached parts.

Thus the Social Democrats managed to avoid the full admission that
 the acceptance of the Wilsonian program meant alienation of Reich
 territory by emphasizing the advantages to be gotten from the pro-
 gram as a whole.

Theodor Wolff, in the Berliner Tageblatt, expressed con-
 cern whether Wilson, now that military success was within his grasp,
 would be as idealistic as he formerly was.

It is unthinkable that Wilson can mistake
 in our new Chancellor's peace offer the sincerity,
 the warm humanitarianism, the sense of justice,
 and the feeling of freedom. But is not Wilson
 blinded by the sun of military success? Clemenceau
 already declares that no peace is possible. Will
 Wilson oppose the patriarch who attempts to dictate
 his reply. ¹⁵

The most interesting and thoughtful comment was that which
 appeared in the Vossische Zeitung under the heading "A Dark Day".
 It was written by Walther Rathenau, the German industrialist-
 intellectual.

Our démarche¹ was over hasty. . . . The
 answer will come, it will be negative and

¹⁵ Berliner Tageblatt, October 7, 1918.

humiliating, and will demand too much. We must not be surprised if the immediate evacuation of the west, if not of Alsace-Lorraine, is demanded. President Wilson's Eighth Point will be interpreted as an abandonment of Lorraine at least, and probably also of Alsace. Danzig may be meant as a Polish port. The restoration of Belgium and Northern France may run to a disguised war indemnity of fifty billions. Was that taken into account?

The article concluded by declaring: "We want peace but not subjection." Rathenau recommended a levee en masse to prepare for an unfavorable answer.¹⁶

The Koelnische Zeitung called the Prince's speech in actuality a "call of the people for an honorable peace". The paper did, however, point out that there were certain discrepancies between the Government's program and Wilson's.¹⁷

In the annexationist press, both Wilson's Five Particulars Speech and the Chancellor's speech were attacked. The Post observed:

Wilson's points have a fair sound, and the Germans have no reason to avoid discussion. The closing statement as to the final triumph of justice and fair dealing, translated from Wilsonian phraseology into plain language, means a brutal profession of Lloyd George's knock-out policy.... our democrats have wished the experiment.... We do not believe that democratic America, England, and France will be in the least conscious of the democratic ideal when the German democrats come to them as petitioners.¹⁸

¹⁶Vossische Zeitung, October 7, 1918.

¹⁷Koelnische Zeitung, October 6, 1918.

¹⁸Post, October 5, 1918.

The Taegliche Rundschau connected the Wilson speech with "the new peace proposal of the princely democrat". The paper surmised that the new foreign policy was framed with the Fourteen Points in mind. Commenting further on the Five Particulars Speech, it said: "The whole speech awakens the gravest doubts because of the new insults to Germany coined for the benefit of his audience."¹⁹ In the Berliner Tageszeitung, the annexationist stalwart Ernst Reventlow said: "Unvanquished Germany requests peace and grants the enemy chief full authority as only the vanquished may and can. If the present defeatist sentiments prevail, the loss of the war and the German future are inevitable."²⁰

However, there was some acceptance of the new conditions in the chauvinistic-annexationist press. The Lokal Anzeiger gave its qualified approval of the Chancellor's action.

A statesman rejecting the present peace offer would reject the offer of the German people. It is impossible to express more clearly that the program of the enemies' moral leader has been accepted. Wilson's Points Eight and Thirteen, however, may be considered to be rejected as contradicting the July Resolution which now, as before, the whole German nation regards as the basis of peace negotiations. If the Entente now rejects Germany's maximum concessions they cannot, as in Wilson's speech of January 8, claim that their program contains nothing limiting Germany's greatness.²¹

¹⁹Taegliche Rundschau, October 5, 1918.

²⁰Berliner Tageszeitung, October 6, 1918.

²¹Lokal Anzeiger, October 6, 1918.

In the same vein, the three chauvinist and anti-American newspapers in Hamburg grudgingly accepted the Chancellor's action.

The Hamburger Nachrichten commented:

Wilson's proposals relating to Alsace-Lorraine and Poland are rather serious for Germany. It will be easy to defend the German standpoint that the western and eastern provinces are integral parts of Germany, as we are not conscious of any injustice to France, and the eastern provinces, especially the old Hanseatic town of Danzig, are not unquestionably populated by Poles.

The paper then attacked Catholic South Germany for interfering in North German affairs by saying:

The government, in which the Center Party plays the biggest part, explains its well-known program in which Prussia is to be considered an imperial province and governed by the Reichstag. If the Government succeeds in bringing us a prosperous peace, we will gladly give it our acknowledgement.²²

The Hamburgischer Korrespondent assumed that the Government action resulted from the deteriorated military, political, and economic position of the Quadruple Alliance. However, the paper blamed the Government for concealing the true situation and held it responsible for any "wave of pessimism" which would sweep over the nation.²³ The Hamburger Fremdenblatt supported the Chancellor's note and observed that

²²Hamburger Nachrichten, October 6, 1918.

²³Hamburgische Korrespondent, October 6, 1918.

Wilson would give the lie to the professions of his Fourteen Points and his previous speeches if he replies to this peace note in the same manner as has been hitherto done by the Entente, or if he merely cynically remarked that Germany's power of resistance must first be broken.²⁴

In at least some portions of the Pan-German and annexationist press then, there was an acceptance, with reservations, of the changed situation and of Wilson's program as the best way out of that situation.

In the United States and the Allied countries, public opinion was generally in favor of a direct refusal of Germany's offer. The press in the United States, which country was the "white hope" of the peace forces in Germany, was particularly bellicose. In the United States Senate, such big guns as Senators Henry Cabot Lodge and Miles Poindexter declared "that an armistice now would mean the loss of the war".²⁵ If Wilson had not felt that the cause of humanity would be best served by taking up the opportunity offered, peace would not have been made. An additional factor complicated the picture for Wilson. Congressional elections were to be held in November. A lesser man might have bowed to expediency.

After consultation with House, Robert Lansing, and Joseph Tumulty, Wilson sent a reply on October 8. The note, while not accepting categorically the German proposals, intimated strongly

²⁴Hamburger Fremdenblatt, October 6, 1918.

²⁵New York Tribune, October 8, 1918; Seymour, Intimate Papers, IV, 76.

that the United States would consider it seriously. The note asked whether the Germans accepted the Fourteen Points and the subsequent addresses as a basis for peace. Discussions on the points was to be held only to determine the practical details of their application. This was not as much a question as a notification that there would be no discussion of the meaning of the Fourteen Points themselves. Also, the President called for an evacuation of Belgium and France as a preliminary to an armistice. Finally he asked the Chancellor if there had really been a change in the constitution of the German Government.²⁶

The note was published in the German newspapers on October 10. The Vorwaerts expressed the view that as a result of the reply, there was an improvement in the chances for peace and reflected that peace negotiations could not be hurried. Commenting on the President's first question, it said: "In saying that we accept a program as the basis of discussions, we declare that we adopt it in principle and that it is only a question of the execution of details."²⁷

In discussing Wilson's answer, the Berliner Zeitung am Mittag, while acknowledging Wilson's good faith, cast doubt on the willingness of his allies to accept his program.

Up to the present we have not heard anything

²⁶Foreign Relations, 1918, Supplement 1, I, 343.

²⁷Vorwaerts, October 11, 1918.

which shows that they have considered their views, as they must also do. The English and French press, almost without exception, storms and rages, and it does not need a very fine ear to distinguish that they are raging against an honest and straightforward application of Mr. Wilson's points.... The question, therefore, arises whether the other leaders of the Entente are ready to enter into peace discussions on the basis of Mr. Wilson's program.²⁸

The Frankfurter Zeitung was more specific than most comment by bringing up Points Eight and Thirteen:

Two questions now come under consideration for Germany. Mr. Wilson will have to agree, particularly as regards to Alsace-Lorraine, to a solution which does not open new wounds. In the Polish question it cannot be overlooked that more Germans than Poles live in territories which were formerly parts of the Kingdom of Poland.²⁹

Walther Rathenau continued his opposition and considered the demand for evacuation of occupied territory as a demand equivalent to unconditional surrender which would make it easier for the Allies to increase their demands on Germany. Prince Max himself was relieved by the answer, having feared an unhappy outcome to the step which he had taken against his will.³⁰

Although the Wilson note had not been negative, it did hold conditions which meant the definite defeat of Germany. To accept the evacuation stipulation would leave Germany with no bargaining position

²⁸Berliner Zeitung am Mittag, October 10, 1918.

²⁹Frankfurter Zeitung, October 12, 1918.

³⁰Max of Baden, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 65-66.

at any conference. A careful and studied reply was necessary. Therefore, on the same day that the note was received, October 9, a conference of the military and civil authorities was called. Ludendorff was not coherent for he described the military situation as unfavorable yet expressed the idea that the Army would not collapse and that he could hold the front for three months more. From the conference the Prince gathered that the Army wanted the negotiations continued although it meant evacuation. As a consequence, a reply was drafted which accepted the President's conditions. It was sent on October 12. The Fourteen Points were accepted as a basis for peace and assurances were asked that the other Allied Governments agreed with them. It expressed willingness to evacuate Allied territories and left it to the President to "occasion the meeting of a mixed commission for making the necessary arrangements concerning the evacuation". The note also informed the President that "the Chancellor... speaks in the name of the German Government and of the German people".³¹

In commenting on the German answer, the press of the Government block emphasized the fact that the note had met with the full approval of the Army Command as well as all the State Secretaries (cabinet members) and the Reichstag Majority. This was evidently done to combat the propaganda of the Pan-German press to the effect

³¹Foreign Relations, 1918, Supplement 1, I, 357-358.

that pacifists were behind the peace moves. The Frankfurter Zeitung prophetically gave the reason for destroying the legend before it became rooted.

It is necessary to oppose this view (of pacifist instigation) from the very beginning, a view which could develop into a dangerous legend, and it can be expressly confirmed that the Army Command has had no share in the construction of this legend.³²

The Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung explored the steps necessary for a "correct application" of the Fourteen Points.

The prohibition of the secret international agreements demands from the statesmanship of all parties participating the renunciation of an ancient method of the old Power-policy which up to the present had always been looked upon as indispensable. The freedom of navigation first of all makes the sea an element which unites all the nations; renunciation of the weapons of boycott in the commercial life of nations guarantees to the nations which are less favored on account of their geographical situation the certainty of being able to develop, and a new concept of the character of the colonies might balance the injustice of any historical developments. The combination of all the cultured nations into one union may become the means and the organ by which those principles may be accomplished, and general disarmament is a blessing....³³

The Progressive Party Boersen Kurier said of the reply that the acceptance of the Fourteen Points was a courageous acceptance of the situation. And it added "that President Wilson's principles impose

³²Frankfurter Zeitung, October 11, 1918.

³³Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung, October 13, 1918.

a check on the war aims of all Chauvinists under whatever banner they may serve....Our only aim now is a reasonable compromise."³⁴ The Vossische, in line with Rathenau's article, pointed out that as a result of the acceptance of Wilson's principles a number of questions which were "painful to the German patriot" arose. Both Alsace-Lorraine and German Poland were now international questions.³⁵ The Koelnische Volkszeitung hoped that in exchange for Germany's acceptance of the Fourteen Points and evacuation, Germany would receive the "advantages of a lasting peace".³⁶ Another Centrist paper, the Germania, saw in the acceptance of Wilson's principles and evacuation a rejection of the "pawn" theory of using occupied territory as a bargaining advantage in negotiations. In return for evacuation, Germany would receive "participation in the colonial possessions of the Great Powers, a safeguarding of freedom of the seas, and an open door to world trade. All this was guaranteed by President Wilson's Fourteen Points."³⁷ Evidently, the official organ of the Center Party had changed its opinion greatly since January, 1918.

Among the Pan-Germans and annexationists, the German

³⁴Boersen Kurier, October 13, 1918.

³⁵Vossische Zeitung, October 13, 1918.

³⁶Koelnische Volkszeitung, October 14, 1918.

³⁷Germania, October 14, 1918.

reply was greeted with consternation. The Conservative Party issued a declaration in the Reichstag denouncing the evacuation of the occupied area before an "honorable peace" was made.³⁸ The Bund der Landwirte, an organization of large landholders, issued a similar declaration.³⁹ The Lokal Anzeiger expressed shock at the Government's unconditional acquiescence in the proposal for an evacuation of occupied territories. The paper had some interesting observations to make on the acceptance of Wilson's principles:

Both these questions (Poland and Alsace-Lorraine) must be solved on the general principles which President Wilson drew up in his speech of February 12, the second of which says: "Provinces and peoples must not be bandied about from one state to another as if they are merely stones in a game." The third principle of the speech in question says: "Every solution of territorial questions which may arise on account of this war must be dealt with in the interests of and to the advantage of the people concerned, and not as a portion of a mere agreement or compromise in the claims of rival states." It certainly follows that the questions of Alsace-Lorraine and Poland must be solved by the application of these principles. And also the fourth of these principles is to be taken into account in the solution of these questions. This demands that the national claims should meet with the most far-reaching satisfaction possible, it is true, but a limit should be put to this satisfaction. The claims should not go so far as to lead to stipulations which might again disturb the peace of Europe.

Thus, with a prescience unusual for what was generally a yellow

³⁸ Daily Review, October 1918, p. 667.

³⁹ Deutsche Tageszeitung, October 13, 1918.

journalistic sheet, the Lokal Anzeiger touched on the problem which was to eventually damage Wilson's program, the inability to apply the Four Principles and subsequent declarations to the Fourteen Points.⁴⁰

As usual, Reventlow held out in his opposition to any peace other than a German victory:

Quite apart from its fundamental enormity, there is absolutely no compensation for our readiness to submit the question of Alsace-Lorraine and that of Prussian Poland to President Wilson's decision. . . . The German reply, in fact, so far as it can, puts the future of Germany and Alsace-Lorraine in the President's hands. . . . We, for our part, have not yet abandoned the hope that such a development of things will still be prevented before this "peace of justice" in the name of a League of Nations and a new era ruins the Empire.⁴¹

The Morgen Post considered the German reply an admission that the Alsace-Lorraine and the Polish questions were international ones and also an admission of Germany's defeat, a diplomatic one at that and not a military one.⁴²

In line with their changed stand, the three Hamburg newspapers gloomily greeted the German acceptance of Wilson's demands and relied on Wilson's good faith while casting doubt on that of his allies. The Hamburger Nachrichten hoped that the German

⁴⁰ Lokal Anzeiger, October 13, 1918.

⁴¹ Deutsche Tageszeitung, October 13, 1918.

⁴² Morgen Post, October 13, 1918.

negotiators would have some room to maneuver and perhaps save the old German towns in Poland for Germany. The paper hoped that the President's mention of opposition to any arbitrary power would apply to England, the enemy of the commercial and maritime interests of Hamburg.⁴³

When the President received the note on October 13, it at first seemed that the war was ended. However, after closer study it was realized that the problem was not that simple. The note, although it appeared as a complete capitulation, contained a veiled counter-proposal which could have had vital military results. A "mixed commission" to arrange the conditions of evacuation was proposed. Such a body could have been used by the Germans to delay evacuation and provide the tired German Armies with a much needed respite. This proposal was Ludendorff's idea and was in line with his purely military appraisal of the situation. Besides this difficulty, an event occurred which seriously threatened negotiations. On October 12, the day before the German reply was sent, a passenger-carrying Irish vessel, the Leinster, was torpedoed without warning by a German submarine. Among the 450 lives lost were 135 women and children

⁴³Hamburger Nachrichten, October 13, 1918. The mention of opposition to "arbitrary power" was a reference to Point Two of Wilson's Four Points Speech of July 4, 1918, at Mount Vernon, Virginia. These Four Points, together with the Four Principles of February 11, 1918, and the Five Particulars of September 27, 1918, were clarifications of the Fourteen Points. The Four Points are given in Appendix C.

and some Americans. "Since the days of the *Lusitania*", wrote Prince Max, "the sorrow and fury in England and America had never reached such heights."⁴⁴ In the United States, an almost universal cry went up for "unconditional surrender". Theodore Roosevelt called for a repudiation of the Fourteen Points. "These Fourteen Points", said the former President, "are couched in such vague language that many of them mean anything, or nothing, and have a merely rhetorical value, while others are absolutely mischievous."⁴⁵ Added to the hue and cry at home, the President had to face the discontent of the Allies, who had drafted a note to him urging that simple evacuation of invaded territory would not be a sufficient basis for an armistice.

The reply to the Germans was drafted on October 14, during a long conference. Wilson was uneasy and knew that he had to proceed carefully, beset as he was on all sides. "I never saw him more disturbed," said Colonel House. ". . . (He was) anxious not to close the door, and yet desired to make the note as strong as the occasion required."⁴⁶ Wilson's second note rejected the mixed commission idea. Terms of evacuation "must be left to the judgement and advice of the military advisors of the Government of the United States and the

⁴⁴Max of Baden, op. cit., p. 84.

⁴⁵New York Times, October 14, 1918.

⁴⁶Seymour, Intimate Papers, IV, 82-83.

Allied Governments." Any armistice granted was to provide "absolutely satisfactory safeguards and guarantees of the maintenance of the present military supremacy of the armies of the United States and the Allies in the field". There could be no agreement as long as German submarines continued to sink passenger ships and the retreating armies destroyed property. Finally, the note referred to Wilson's Mount Vernon speech of July 4, 1918, in which he had asked for the

"destruction of every arbitrary power anywhere that can separately, secretly, and of its single choice disturb the peace of the world. . . ." The power which has hitherto controlled the German nation is of the sort here described. . . . It is indispensable that the governments associated against Germany should know beyond a peradventure with whom they are dealing.⁴⁷

While waiting for the reply from Washington, the German home front was crumbling fast. The Pan-Germans organized demonstrations protesting the peace move. On October 16, a counter-demonstration of a thousand workers was held outside the Reichstag. A financial crisis was developing, banks were failing, and people were cashing in their war certificates. Quotations on industrial stocks were falling rapidly. A shortage of newsprint led to a restriction of the size of daily newspapers. On October 8, railway service was cut and people were warned against unnecessary travel. The same day the butter ration was reduced to twenty grams a week in Berlin. Disease continued

⁴⁷ Foreign Relations, Supplement 1, I, 538-539; Amtliche Urkunden, Document 48.

to spread. On October 15, 1,722 deaths from influenza occurred in the capital. Some 10,000 people were laid up with that disease alone, and many schools were closed because of it.⁴⁸

Wilson's second note caused consternation in the German camp. It was manifest that Wilson, as well as his allies, demanded a complete German defeat. Andre Tardieu, the French politician, wrote of the effect of the note:

In a single page the whole poor scaffolding of the Great German Staff is overthrown. The armistice and peace are not to be means of delaying a disaster and of preparing revenge. On the main question itself, the reply must be Yes or No! If it is No, war will continue, as it has gone on for the past three months, by Allied victories. If it is Yes, the military capitulation must be immediate and complete by the acceptance pure and simple of terms which will be fixed by the military advisors of the Allies alone.⁴⁹

Prince Max described the effects of Wilson's note in terms no less emphatic:

Not a word in this terrible document recalled the high office of arbitrator to which the President has aspired. . . . Wilson's note altered the situation in Germany fundamentally. The internal peace which had been newly cemented went to pieces. With our offer longing for peace became the ruling passion of the masses. Many had only dammed up their impatience into a momentary self-control. Only the supposed nearness of peace had kept them back from

⁴⁸Rudin, op. cit., p. 127.

⁴⁹A. Tardieu, The Truth About the Treaty (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1921), p. 54.

unpatriotic words and deeds. And now disappointment worked like the bursting of a dam.⁵⁰

The press of the Government parties was shocked. The Vorwaerts, which had been a leading advocate of the peace moves, warned the Allies of "overstraining the bow".⁵¹ Theodor Wolff expressed disappointment in Wilson for talking over the language of the power-politician. The Berliner Zeitung am Mittag ran an article by Reichstag Deputy Georg Gothein which evaluated Wilson's note as a death blow to a League of Nations.

The German people gave its adherence with full confidence to Mr. Wilson's Fourteen Points and is resolved to carry them out honestly if it meets with like confidence from the other side.⁵²

The liberal Frankfurter Zeitung said the note showed that the influence of Georges Clemenceau and Lloyd George had been at work.⁵³ The semi-official Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung hoped that despite the note the German Government would be "guided by a spirit of conciliation and by its desire for an end of bloodshed."⁵⁴

The anti-Government press was vociferous in its reaction. The nationalist Taegliche Rundschau called the note "the Caudine yoke

⁵⁰Max of Baden, op. cit., p. 89.

⁵¹Vorwaerts, October 16, 1918.

⁵²Berliner Zeitung am Mittag, October 16, 1918.

⁵³Frankfurter Zeitung, October 16, 1918.

⁵⁴Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung, October 16, 1918.

of Mr. Wilson".⁵⁵ The Pan-German Lokal Anzeiger said that Wilson seemed to have abandoned his idealism the first time it was put to the test.

He who is able to speak a word that would bring peace to the world and fails to do so, although all the conditions which he himself has laid down for the termination of the war have been fulfilled, is atleast as guilty as he who unchains war.⁵⁶

The Kreuz Zeitung said, "Even the Republicans (German advocates of a Republic) cannot agree to his demands. He wants to destroy us, not only our monarchs."⁵⁷

On October 16, encouraged by Wilson's harsh terms, the Conservative Party issued a manifesto stating that Wilson had left the people no choice but to continue the war. If not,

for generations to come every German citizen and peasant, every man of business and of property, and above all, every employee and laborer would be the wage slaves of our enemies.⁵⁸

On the same day, the Rheinische Westfaelische Zeitung reported that a association of Krupp officials had telegraphed the Chancellor that in view of Wilson's note he should take all measures necessary to organize a national defense.

⁵⁵Taegliche Rundschau, October 16, 1918.

⁵⁶Lokal Anzeiger, October 16, 1918.

⁵⁷Kreutz Zeitung, October 16, 1918.

⁵⁸Frankfurter Zeitung, October 17, 1918; Max of Baden, op. cit., pp. 411-413.

To counteract these moves, the Social Democrats issued a counter-appeal supported by the professors of the University of Berlin. The party admitted that "Germany and the German people are in danger of becoming a sacrifice to the lust for conquest found in the English and French chauvinists and imperialists...." The party claimed to be at work to get a peace of understanding and was participating in a peaceful revolution to transform the country into a democracy. It called on the people to oppose the Pan-Germans and Conservatives. "We are on the way to peace and democracy. All rebellious agitation blocks this way and serves the counter-revolution."⁵⁹

It took the German Government a week to answer. Ludendorff, who had instituted the armistice moves, had now changed his mind. Things had not developed as he had wished. Wilson had not done his bidding and given him a breathing spell in which to rest his armies. "...we should not accept any conditions that would appear to make a resumption of hostilities impossible," wrote Ludendorff.⁶⁰ On October 20, the day the third German note was sent, Hindenburg warned the Chancellor by phone that Wilson's terms meant complete defeat. But by this time the prestige of the military was low among the members of the Government. Ludendorff was especially suspect. His statements were vague and often contradictory. Whereas he had

⁵⁹Lutz, op. cit., pp. 400-403; Vossische Zeitung, October 18, 1918.

⁶⁰Amtliche Urkunden, Document 57.

painted a gloomy picture at the beginning of the month, he was now more sanguine, probably because he had learned that 600,000 reinforcements could be available in a short time by combing out the home front. Scheidemann remarked that his hopeful and happy condition was probably caused by the prospect of having so many new lives to feed to the death-dealing machines of the enemy. Hans Delbrueck, the German historian, maintained that "Ludendorff was such a muddlehead that he never did know what he really wanted".⁶¹ Wilhelm Solf, the new Foreign Minister, asked why there had been such a change in the situation after the Supreme Command had insisted on and supported a peace proposal.

Now an answer from Wilson has arrived which puts us face to face with the most serious decisions, and at once the picture undergoes a change--showing that we can now hold our own, that if we can survive the next four weeks, we shall even be in a much better position than before. . . . What is the real reason, a thing can be done now which a short time ago was declared impossible.⁶²

The Prince and his ministers, therefore, decided that they must yield to Wilson. The Prince felt that now that peace was within their grasp, the German people could think of nothing else. "Ludendorff. . . wanted to turn back; so did I," wrote Prince Max, "but

⁶¹Scheidemann, op. cit., pp. 180-187; Ursachen, III, 320.

⁶²Amtliche Urkunden, Document 62.

there was no room to turn."⁶³ Consequently, on October 18, he, together with his legal advisor, Dr. Simons, drafted the German reply. After two days of debate, during which his ministers tried to modify it, the note was finally sent on the evening of October 20. The note accepted the evacuation of occupied territories, asking the President "to bring about an opportunity for fixing the details". The note denied that the German Armies destroyed property and lives wantonly and stated that they "are under the strictest instructions to spare private property and to exercise care for the population to the best of their ability". While denying that the German Navy had ever purposely destroyed lifeboats, the German Government said it had ordered its submarine commanders not to sink passenger ships "in order to avoid anything that might hamper the work of peace". Lastly, the note stated that to eliminate every "arbitrary power that can... disturb the peace of the world", the German Government had laid before the Reichstag "a bill to alter the Constitution of the Empire so that the consent of the representatives of the people is required for decisions of peace and war".⁶⁴

The day previous to the sending of the German reply, October 19, the Germans learned what was in store for Austria-Hungary and perhaps for them. On that day, the President belatedly answered

⁶³Max of Baden, op. cit., II, 152.

⁶⁴Foreign Relations, 1918, Supplement 1, I, 381-395.

the Austrians who had also sent him an appeal for an armistice. He told them that, because of developments, he had to modify Point Ten of the Fourteen Points which had asked for "the freest opportunity for autonomous development" for the peoples of the Dual Monarchy. This autonomy was not enough for now "nationalistic aspirations" had to be recognized.⁶⁵ The Lokal Anzeiger said of this:

The great disillusionment that President Wilson's reply to Count Burian has been for the Austro-Hungarian people must be regarded by the German people as a very serious warning. President Wilson's act is irreconcilable with the fundamental basis of his program for peace.⁶⁶

The Frankfurter Zeitung stated that the note to Austria-Hungary indicated that Wilson did not feel himself bound to adhere strictly to the Fourteen Points.⁶⁷

The German newspapers printed the German note on October 21, many of them without making any comment. The Vorwaerts greeted the reply favorably, saying: "If our enemies are in earnest in their desire for a peace of democracy and impartial justice, then the way is open for them." The Frankfurter Zeitung stated that "if President Wilson seriously desires a cessation of bloodshed and destruction, it

⁶⁵Ibid., p. 368

⁶⁶Lokal Anzeiger, October 21, 1918.

⁶⁷Frankfurter Zeitung, October 20, 1918.

now lies in his hands." The Berliner Tageblatt wrote:

The note goes with dignity and in a dignified way into every question which Wilson has put forward. If Wilson rejects the peace of violence which the Entente nationalities desire, and wants a peace of reconciliation, then this note will offer him no occasion for a curt refusal.

The Koelnische Zeitung considered the U-Boat concession "an enormous one" and a "sufficient guarantee for him who is willing to reach an understanding". The Koelnische Volkszeitung saw in the note "far reaching concessions" and added that now President Wilson and the Entente must "proceed to concrete demands".

The press of the Right interpreted the note as a manifestation of weakness. "We have replied to the violence of President Wilson's note," said the Taegliche Rundschau, "with concessions and weakness." The Berliner Neuste Nachrichten declared that "Mr. Wilson has never desired peace" and it was "high time for the German Nation to wake up." The Deutsche Tageszeitung called the Government note "childish".

Prince Max appeared before the Reichstag on October 22 to open its first meeting since October 5. This was a most important one, for it was the first opportunity for many to express their opinions publicly. The Chancellor first reviewed his actions in regard to peace. He stated that it was not clear as yet from Wilson's notes whether or not the peace to come would be "a peace of right or a peace of force". Meanwhile, the German people must be prepared for the possibility "that the enemy Governments want to continue the war". "The nation," continued the Prince, "must not be led blindfolded to the conference

table." The people had the right to ask what Wilson's conditions meant for their future. The Chancellor did not agree with those who believed that Wilson's conditions "would mean subjection to a tribune hostile to Germany which would decide the question of right solely from the viewpoint of selfish interests". The heart of Wilson's program was the League of Nations, which required the surrender by nations of a part of their sovereignty if justice for all were to be realized.

If today in the hour of difficulty for our people I represent the idea of a League of Nations as a source of comfort and of new strength, I do not wish for a moment to brush aside the tremendous obstacles yet to be overcome.

The rest of his address dealt with internal reforms such as "universal, equal, direct, and secret suffrage" in Prussia, autonomy for Alsace-Lorraine, and the institution of responsible parliamentary government in Germany.⁶⁸

Unlike the previous meeting, this one could not avoid debate.

Gustav Stresemann, leader of the National Liberal party, expressed his support of the Government.⁶⁹ Westarp of the Conservative Party, on the other hand, rejected reform and called on the Government to

⁶⁸Reichstag, Vol. 312, pp. 6159-6161; Max of Baden, op. cit., II, 172-179.

⁶⁹Reichstag, p. 6172. Stresemann actually distrusted Wilson and felt that the Fourteen Points would be used by him to increase the demands on Germany. See his Vermaechtnis, der Nachlass (3 vol., (Berlin: Ullstein, 1932), Vol. I, pp. 12-13.

to rally the people in a last ditch struggle.⁷⁰ Ebert of the Social Democrats criticized the Government for not going far enough in its reform suggestions but complimented it for its answer to Wilson.⁷¹ Herold, speaking in the name of the Center Party, gave his party's full support to the Government.⁷² Probably the most thoughtful analysis of the whole situation was put forth by the Progressive leader, Friedrich Naumann:

In this serious phase of the fighting a double measure of the Fatherland's thanks is due to the Army. The old system did not make progress because it was unable to accomplish unity of Government and to embody the national ideal of liberty. The people thus lost the feeling of having a stable government, and abroad the feeling arose that we were not sincere. We were not insincere, however, but unorganized. In our new foreign policy, we must avoid ambiguity if we desire to enter the future league of mankind as a member with full rights. We, too, are of the opinion that peace will not be attained by military means alone, but that the diplomatic and moral means of all mankind must be employed. Even if the idea of a League of Nations appears to many as not yet technically reasonable, we must now treat this as a world problem. A nation that possesses such powers of labor, thought, and production as the German cannot be destroyed by those on the other side of the ocean. Let them try it; they will not succeed. But they can live in peace with us if they will.⁷³

At the close of the session, a resolution of confidence in the Chancellor

⁷⁰Ibid., pp. 6178-6180.

⁷¹Ibid., p. 6161.

⁷²Ibid., p. 6174.

⁷³Ibid., p. 6176.

was passed.

The next day the debate was resume, Hasse of the Independent Social Democrats was the first speaker. He seemed to take pleasure in the Government's predicament.

The Peace Resolution must at last be buried, thundered Hasse.

It cannot be brought into harmony with the President Wilson's principles. . . . We are in no way enthusiastic about President Wilson. His ideas, after all, will not change the capitalist order of society. The North Schleswig question should be solved before it becomes a peace problem. The Poles' desires are not just. Their state allegiance must be fixed in accordance with the free will of the population.⁷⁴

It was now the turn of the representatives of the national minorities in Germany to be heard. Deputy Stychel, speaking for the Poles, foresaw immediate difficulties between the Germans and his people in the construction of the new Polish State. "We welcome a peace of justice which is to exclude violence", observed the Polish leader.⁷⁵ Dr. Richlin, an Alsatian deputy, rejected the proposed autonomy for Alsace-Lorraine and placed his trust in the solution offered by President Wilson's Fourteen Points. "The Alsatian deputies support the assertion that the Alsace-Lorraine question has become an international one."⁷⁶ The Dane, Hans Hanssen, expressed the hope

⁷⁴Reichstag, pp. 6182-6190.

⁷⁵Ibid., pp. 6193-6197.

⁷⁶Ibid., pp. 6203-6204.

that North Schleswig would get the right to a plebiscite which was promised in Article V of the Treaty of Prague of 1866. Although the Fourteen Points did not mention North Schleswig, this fighter for freedom felt that the spirit of the program covered the Danish problem.⁷⁷

Solf, the Foreign Minister, answered the minorities at length. He admitted that both Alsace-Lorraine and the Polish question were included in the Fourteen Points and would, therefore, be settled at the peace conference. However, North Schleswig did not come under the points as the adherence of that area to Germany had been accepted by the Danish Government in the agreements made in 1878 and 1907. When the Foreign Minister chided the Poles for their ingratitude to Germany, one of the Polish deputies became so abusive that a member of the Right shouted, "Kick the dog out".⁷⁸

Debate continued into the next day. The Alsatian and Polish questions occupied a great deal of attention. The feeling of most of the German deputies, including the Independent Social Democrats, was best expressed by the Progressive, Georg Gothein.

I do not abandon hope that the Alsace-Lorrainers will again feel drawn toward Germany when German has become a people's state. The Polish demands do not correspond with President Wilson's message; the Polish manifesto is a direct distortion of the Thirteenth Point,

⁷⁷Ibid., p. 6205.

⁷⁸Ibid., p. 6206.

which speaks only of territory with an undoubtedly Polish population. We all desire a League of Nations, but no League of Nations is compatible with a peace of violence.⁷⁹

For the first time during the correspondence with Germany, Wilson consulted his cabinet for advice on how to answer the new German note. The President was deeply disturbed by the attitude of the American press. Demands for punishment of the Germans were the order of the day. His advisors, as a whole, thought that the German proposal should be accepted. Consequently, on October 23, the third American note was sent.

Having received the solemn and explicit assurance of the German Government that it unreservedly accepts the terms of peace laid down in his address to the Congress... on the 8th of January, 1918, and the principles of settlement enunciated in his subsequent addresses... and that this wish and purpose emanate, not from those who have hitherto dictated German policy... but from ministers who speak for the majority of the Reichstag and for the overwhelming majority of the German people; and having received also the explicit promise that the humane rules of civilized warfare will be observed... the President... feels that he cannot decline to take up with the Governments with which the Government of the United States is associated the question of an armistice.

The note ended by reiterating the point that the Allies would not deal with "the military masters and the monarchical autocrats of Germany."⁸⁰

Prince Max considered the note a shrewd bit of maneuvering.

⁷⁹Ibid., p. 6208.

⁸⁰Foreign Relations, 1918, Supplement 1, I, 381-383.

Its language was that used by one

who regards his enemy's resistance as broken. And the worst of it was... (that) our people have been so far broken that in this "humiliating" note with its "excessive demands", they will discover no incentive to fight to the bitter end.⁸¹

Ludendorff wrote that it was "a telling answer to our unmanly attitude".⁸² The members of the Conservative Party in the Reichstag addressed a resolution to the Chancellor stating:

Wilson's note made public today demands an unconditional surrender, the abdication of the Kaiser, the dismissal of the Army commanders, and our complete submission to a peace of force. Germany is first to be dishonored and disarmed, and then humiliated. The acceptance of these conditions would surrender every German for generations to a deprivation of political rights and to economic slavery.... German honor commands the Government to reject such demands; the security of the Empire requires the Government to summon the people to their final battle.⁸³

In the daily press opinion was divided. The Vorwaerts said:

For us Social Democrats, the situation is completely clear. The former constellation of power in the German Empire we always regarded as dangerous... and pressed for a radical change. The time has now come to draw the consequences ruthlessly demanded by the needs of the German people. After we have accepted President Wilson's program, it would be absurd to oppose it by armed force.⁸⁴

⁸¹Max of Baden, op. cit., II, 188.

⁸²Ludendorff, Erinnerungen, p. 611

⁸³Frankfurter Zeitung, October 25, 1918.

⁸⁴Vorwaerts, October 26, 1918.

The Frankfurter Zeitung pointed out that the Entente powers had never accepted the Fourteen Points and stated that the conditions for an armistice would be severe.

They are conditions which a free and brave people can accept only when it must and there is no sense in concealing the fact that these notes and answers from Wilson are certainly the most humiliating thing Germany has experienced since the days of Napoleon.⁸⁵

The nationalist Taegliche Rundschau found Wilson's demands for capitulation and the removal of monarchical and military authority intolerable. "We must", affirmed the paper, "whether we wish it or not, prepare for the final fight for life and honor."⁸⁶ The Lokal Anzeiger urged the Government to learn the exact armistice conditions immediately so as to know whether to accept or reject them.⁸⁷

Ludendorff and Hindenburg now took matters in their own hands and tried to save the nation from an outbreak of peace. A proclamation was issued to the troops on October 24 urging a rejection of Wilson's demands as "unacceptable to us soldiers".⁸⁸ As a consequence of this message to the troops, the First Quartermaster General was relieved of his command. Hindenburg remained. The Vorwaerts

⁸⁵Frankfurter Zeitung, October 25, 1918.

⁸⁶Taegliche Rundschau, October 25, 1918.

⁸⁷Lokal Anzeiger, October 25, 1918.

⁸⁸Amtliche Urkunden, Document 76b.

hopefully interpreted the dismissal as the "exclusion of the soldier from politics".⁸⁹

With the dismissal of Ludendorff, Prince Max was in a better position to send Wilson the kind of reply that he considered the situation demanded. On October 27, the fourth and final German note to Wilson was sent, a note which was a complete acceptance of Wilson's terms. The note stated that the peace negotiations were being handled by "a government of the people in whose hands rests... the authority to make decisions". The note concluded: "The German Government now awaits the proposals for an armistice, which is the first step toward a peace of justice, as described the President in his pronouncements."⁹⁰

As usual, the press interpreted the October 27 note according to the lights of its party affiliation. The Vorwaerts declared the note contained an appeal to the sense of justice of peoples:

A people of seventy millions cannot be exterminated, and for the future now about to be decided remain valuable as a friend and dangerous as an enemy. We have promised of our own free will and of our own convictions to enter a League of Nations which shall correspond to the principles of Mr. Wilson. In this voluntary step we have much to give the world that could never be attained by compulsion. Even without arms we should not be defenseless.⁹¹

⁸⁹Vorwaerts, October 27, 1918.

⁹⁰Foreign Relations, 1918, Supplement 1, I, 395-396; Amtliche Urkunden, Document 85.

⁹¹Vorwaerts, October 28, 1918.

The Berliner Tageblatt described the note as an "acknowledgement of a receipt". It warned against illusions and declared: "If we, without knowing the peace conditions, allow ourselves to become completely defenseless, later on they will take from us not only Danzig but much more besides."⁹² The Munchener Neuste Nachrichten, rebelling at the idea of an armistice which would leave Germany helpless, said: "The German people's government proposed an armistice on the basis of the principles announced by Wilson for a peace of justice and reconciliation; it never offered to lay down its arms."⁹³ The Koelnische Zeitung considered that the road to peace lay through the offering of acceptable conditions to Germany. It lamented, however, that "the attitude of Wilson's allies to the Fourteen Points was not clear."⁹⁴

At the time, it seems that the consequences of Germany's actions in asking for an armistice were dawning on many Germans. They knew that their country would be defenseless as a result of the armistice and their only protection was a favorable application of Wilson's principles. The idea of a League of Nations particularly appealed to them. It seemed that such a body, in which Germany would participate, might be able to overcome the hates engendered by war and allow to Germany her place in the sun. Meetings were

⁹²Berliner Tageblatt, October 28, 1918.

⁹³Munchener Neuste Nachrichten, October 28, 1918.

⁹⁴Koelnische Zeitung, October 28, 1918.

held in Germany to support such a world organization. Two such meetings were held in Berlin on October 28 under the sponsorship of the People's Association for Freedom and Fatherland. Dr. Bernhard Dernberg, the ex-Colonial Minister, spoke of the history of the idea of a League of Nations and traced it back to Immanuel Kant. He said that Wilson's Fourteen Points covered the same ideas as did Kant's writings on the subject. However, he opposed a League of Nations whose only purpose was to impose peace conditions on Germany. The meeting ended with the passing of a resolution which supported a league which would allow Germany to develop and live. At the same time as the above mentioned meetings, the Executive Committee of the German Society for International Law was carrying on investigations and preliminary work for the creation of a league. To this organization belonged some of the most competent experts on international law in Germany.⁹⁵

It is unfortunate that there are so few indications of how the man on the street felt about the peace in general and the Fourteen Points in particular. Probably, at this point of the game, he wasn't thinking too much about Wilson's principles except as they seemed to give him his best chance to get out of a bad situation. The Germans, in October, 1918, were exceptionally war-weary. It is reported that on October 5, the Prince made his speech informing the Germans of

⁹⁵Daily Review, November 1918, p. 22.

the request for an armistice, the people on the streets of Berlin assumed a festive mood upon hearing the news. On October 9, Hans Hanssen, the Danish leader, reported the following:

I went to the Reichstag at five o'clock. (Robert) Lansing's first reply to the note sent to Wilson had just arrived, and it aroused much interest. It was eagerly discussed by the parties, which gathered in groups....

When I returned to the hotel, I met a business leader on my floor.

"How are things going?" he inquired, much interested. "Peace is coming," I replied. "The Government has decided to reply to Wilson favorably and to evacuate all occupied territories, but the terms will be severe: Germany will lose Alsace-Lorraine, the Polish territories, and possibly also North Schleswig, and will be obliged to pay a heavy war indemnity."

As I was about to continue, he said: "Many thanks for the good news! It is already being whispered that the peace will come to naught this time, and I was afraid of it."

A maid was standing outside my door. "How goes it?" she asked.

"Peace is coming. Perhaps you can dance at Christmans," I replied. "But it will be severe," and I repeated what I had said to the businessman.

"Thank God!" she burst out. "There are so many who really think it is taken seriously. What do I care about Alsace-Lorraine and all the rest, if only we can have peace. But no one is going to fight any more," she continued. "A major, who lives in 372, said to me yesterday, 'If we do not get peace now, under no circumstances will I go out again'." Thus speaks a Prussian major these days to a chambermaid... 96

⁹⁶Hanssen, op. cit., p. 334.

This vignette, as much as the opinions of statesmen, soldiers, and journalists, demonstrates the true feelings of the Germans. At that point of the game, most of them were glad to give us Alsace-Lorraine, North Schleswig, and Polish Prussia in order to have peace.

It is not the purpose of this work to go beyond October 1918 in investigating the German attitudes toward the Fourteen Points. By October, they had accomplished their purpose of bringing about the defeat of Germany. As a weapon they were as effective as many divisions. Many lives were saved because they gave the Germans and their allies a chance to get out of the war gracefully. As a charter of a new world order, they were not as effective. But that is another story.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS

The standard interpretation of the acceptance by the Germans of Wilson's Fourteen Points and his subsequent clarifying principles in October, 1918, is that it was a death-bed repentance. Germany was in extremis and therefore clutched at Wilson's program as a drowning man does at a straw. Like most such generalizations, this interpretation is only partly true. When the points were first declared, there were some sectors of German opinion which were ready to use them as a basis for negotiations. This group included the majority of the Left and a good portion of the Liberals. However, even this group, while giving consent to most of the program, took strong exception to Points Eight and Thirteen. Under no circumstances would they have accepted an interpretation of these points which would have meant the loss of Alsace-Lorraine and the alienation of sections of Poland inhabited mostly by Germans.

Among the Moderates there was a rejection of the Wilsonian program in January, 1918. However, this hostility was actually directed toward the speech itself and its maker, rather than toward the points themselves. Again Points Eight and Thirteen were the stumbling blocks. No unfavorable interpretation of them was

acceptable to the Center Party.

On the Right, among the militarist-annexationist groups, there was a direct refusal to find any virtue in the program at the beginning of 1918. Wilson himself was anathema and, therefore, his program was unacceptable. Also, acceptance of his plan would have meant giving up of the imperialist aspirations of the Right.

Three things vitiated the effect of the points in Germany from the very beginning. First, the Germans knew that the speech was a weapon of war. They knew that one of its objects was to increase the political warfare within Germany and thereby to weaken the German war effort. They were, consequently, on guard against the program.

Secondly, the Germans were aware that another objective of the speech was to save the Entente from the consequences of the Russian debacle. They knew that Wilson's words were aimed at placating liberal and labor criticism within the Entente caused by the "secret treaties" disclosure and the Allied refusal to allow attendance at the Stockholm Conference. The Germans also saw that the speech and the program were intended to hamper the peace negotiations at Brest. Naturally enough, there was resentment toward Wilson. He was a "peace and war angel" at the same time.

The third factor which made many Germans hesitate to accept the Fourteen Points in January was the obvious fact that America's allies were not enthusiastic about them and had not expressed

their adherence to them. The statement of the Allied Supreme War Council of February 4 made the situation even worse. What were the Germans to think?

In October, the situation was different. The majority of the Germans accepted Wilson's program. This was not because the loss of German held territory was any more palatable in October than it had been in January, but the points offered a way out of an impossible situation. This was the case with Stresemann who, though he accepted the program, had serious doubts of Wilson's good faith and realized that the points could be used to cripple Germany. Even in the Rightist press, although they remained mostly intransigent, there were some signs of a willingness to abide by the new world order.

Like so many statements of principle, there was a great deal of latitude in the interpretation of Wilson's program. Those who wished to see good for Germany in it, did so. Soon after the first German note, the Vorwaerts viewed the Fourteen Points as a guarantee of Germany's happy future among the community of nations. The Germania even interpreted Point Five as meaning the return of Germany's colonies. But by the time that Wilson's second note arrived, such Utopian thoughts had already been knocked out of the heads of those who still had them. That note and the American reply to Austria-Hungary indicated that the Fourteen Points would be interpreted harshly for Germany.

In contrast to January, it was now the Rightist press which made the most penetrating analysis of the meanings of the various points and principles. They saw more clearly than the Liberal press that drastic consequences would come from acceptance. This was mainly because the Fourteen Points of October were in essence different from those of January. Wilson's interpretation of Point Ten made that clear. A peace dictated to a defeated Germany would naturally be different from a negotiated peace. Consequently, more light was thrown on the exact meaning of the program by the annexationist press in October than by the liberal papers.

Many Germans have claimed since the fateful days of October, 1918, that they were betrayed by Wilson's program. "We now know that we were misled by President Wilson's Fourteen Points, held out to Germany for accepting the terms of this devastating truce," said Adolf Hitler in 1933.¹ As usual with that master of the big lie, there was a kernel of truth in what he said. Anyway, the Germans as a whole have felt that the program was never carried out in the spirit it should have been. They certainly were aware that there would be territorial losses and high indemnities to pay. This they did not want, but could not avoid. They did, however, hope fervently that they would be allowed to develop their national life as a full-fledged member of the family of nations. There was, in October and

¹Quoted from the Voelkischer Beobachter by the New York Herald Tribune, June 29, 1933.

after, a heart-felt reliance on an espousal of the League of Nations. The Germans hoped that they would receive understanding and forgiveness instead of hate and vengeance.

The saddest part of the story is that in October, 1918, the German Government had become democratic. Wilson's "consummation devoutly to be wished for" had taken place. The tragedy is that subsequent events would prove that the Allies would not treat German democrats any less harshly than German autocrats.

Actually, of all the warring peoples, it was those of the Central Powers who were really converted to the Fourteen Points in October, 1918. Certainly the Americans were not enthusiastic about them as they showed in November, 1918, when they in effect rejected them by defeating Wilson's party in the Congressional elections. Whatever their motives were, this fact is clear, the Germans had taken refuge in the Fourteen Points. The spirit of Wilson's program eschewed vengeance. A reading of the Entente and American press of the time indicates that vengeance was almost universally demanded. And that is what the Germans got at Versailles. How can the "guilt clause" be interpreted in any other way?

However, despite the miscarriage of the program, actual and fancied, it still lives on today. Any present day attempts to establish a rational world community owe their existence in part at least to the Fourteen Points of President Wilson.

APPENDIX A

THE FOURTEEN POINTS, JANUARY 8, 1918

1. 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.
2. Absolute freedom of navigation upon the seas, outside territorial waters, alike in peace and war, except as the seas may be closed in whole or in part by international action for the enforcement of international covenants.
3. The removal, so far as possible, of all economic barriers and the establishment of an equality of trade conditions among all the nations consenting to the peace and associating themselves for its maintenance.
4. Adequate guarantees given and taken that national armaments will be reduced to the lowest point consistent with domestic safety.
5. A free, open-minded, and absolutely impartial adjustment of all colonial claims, based upon a strict observance of the principle that in determining all such questions of sovereignty the interests of the populations concerned must have equal weight with the equitable claims of the government whose title is to be determined.
6. The evacuation of all Russian territory and such a settlement of all questions affecting Russia as will secure the best and freest co-operation of the other nations of the world in obtaining for her an unhampered and unembarrassed opportunity for the independent determination of her own political development and national policy and assure her of a sincere welcome into the society of free nations under institutions of her own choosing; and, more than a welcome, assistance also of every kind that she may need and may herself desire. The treatment accorded Russia by her sister nations in the months to come will be the acid test of their good will, of their comprehension of her needs as distinguished from their own interests, and of their intelligent and unselfish sympathy.
7. Belgium, the whole world will agree, must be evacuated and restored, without any attempt to limit the sovereignty which she enjoys in common with all other free nations. No other single act will serve as this will serve to restore confidence among the nations in the laws which they have themselves set and determined for the

government of their relations with one another. Without this healing act the whole structure and validity of international law is forever impaired.

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

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

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

11. Rumania, 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.

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

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

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

APPENDIX B

THE FOUR PRINCIPLES OF FEBRUARY 11, 1918

1. That each part of the final settlement must be based upon the essential justice of that particular case and upon such adjustments as are most likely to bring a peace that will be permanent.
2. That peoples and provinces are not to be bartered about from sovereignty to sovereignty as if they were mere chattels and pawns in a game, even the great game, now forever discredited, of the balance of power, but that,
3. Every territorial settlement involved in this war must be made in the interest and for the benefit of the populations concerned, and not as a part of any mere adjustment or compromise of claims amongst rival states; and
4. That all well-defined national aspirations shall be accorded the utmost satisfaction that can be accorded them without introducing new or perpetuating old elements of discord and antagonism that would be likely in time to break the peace of Europe and consequently of the world.

APPENDIX C

THE FOUR POINTS OF JULY 4, 1918

1. The destruction of every arbitrary power anywhere that can separately, secretly, and of its single choice disturb the peace of the world; or, if it cannot be presently destroyed, at the least its reduction to virtual impotence.
2. The settlement of every question, whether of territory, of sovereignty, of economic arrangement, or of political relationship upon the basis of the free acceptance of that settlement by the people immediately concerned, and not upon the basis of the material interest or advantage of any other nation or people which may desire a different settlement for the sake of its own exterior influence or mastery.
3. The consent of all nations to be governed in their conduct toward each other by the same principles of honor and of respect for the common law of civilized society that govern the individual citizens of all modern States in their relations with one another; to the end that all promises and covenants may be sacredly observed, no private plots or conspiracies hatched, no selfish injuries wrought with impunity, and a mutual trust established upon the handsome foundation of a mutual respect for right.
4. The establishment of an organization of peace which shall make it certain that the combined power of free nations will check every invasion of right and serve to make peace and justice the more secure by affording a definite tribunal of opinion to which all must submit and by which every international readjustment that cannot be amicably agreed upon by the peoples directly concerned shall be sanctioned. These great objects can be put into a single sentence. What we seek is the reign of law, based upon the consent of the governed and sustained by the organized opinion of mankind.

APPENDIX D

THE FIVE PARTICULARS OF SEPTEMBER 27, 1918

1. The impartial justice meted out must involve no discrimination between those to whom we wish to be just and those to whom we do not wish to be just. It must be a justice that plays no favourites, and knows no standards but the equal rights of the several peoples concerned.
2. No special or separate interest of any single nation or group of nations can be made the basis of any part of the settlement which is not consistent with the common interest of all.
3. There can be no leagues or alliances or special covenants and understandings within the general and common family of the League of Nations.
4. And more specifically, there can be no special, selfish, economic combinations within the League, and no employment of any form of economic boycott or exclusion except as the power of economic penalty by exclusion from the markets of the world may be vested in the League of Nations itself as a means of discipline and control.
5. All international agreements and treaties of every kind must be made known in their entirety to the rest of the world.

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