

## GETTING THE LEAGUE IDEA CLEAR IN RELATION TO IMPERIALISM

## § 1

It is idle to pretend that even at the present time the idea of the League of Free Nations has secure possession of the British mind. There is quite naturally a sustained opposition to it in all the fastnesses of aggressive imperialism. Such papers as the Times and the Morning Post remain hostile and obstructive to the expression of international ideas. Most of our elder statesmen seem to have learnt nothing and forgotten nothing during the years of wildest change the world has ever known. But in the general mind of the British peoples the movement of opinion from a narrow imperialism towards internationalism has been wide and swift. And it continues steadily. One can trace week by week and almost day by day the Americanization of the British conception of the Allied War Aims. It may be interesting to reproduce here three communications upon this question made at different times by the present writer to the press. The circumstances of their publication are significant. The first is in substance identical with a letter which was sent to the Times late in May, 1917, and rejected as being altogether too revolutionary. For nowadays the correspondence in the Times has ceased to be an impartial expression of public opinion. The correspondence of the Times is now apparently selected and edited in accordance with the views upon public policy held by the acting editor

for the day. More and more has that paper become the organ of a sort of Oxford Imperialism, three or four years behind the times and very ripe and "expert." The letter is here given as it was finally printed in the issue of the Daily Chronicle for June 4th, 1917, under the heading, "Wanted a Statement of Imperial Policy."

Sir,--The time seems to have come for much clearer statements of outlook and intention from this country than it has hitherto been possible to make. The entry of America into the war and the banishment of autocracy and aggressive diplomacy from Russia have enormously cleared the air, and the recent great speech of General Smuts at the Savoy Hotel is probably only the first of a series of experiments in statement. It is desirable alike to clear our own heads, to unify our efforts, and to give the nations of the world some assurance and standard for our national conduct in the future, that we should now define the Idea of our Empire and its relation to the world outlook much more clearly than has ever hitherto been done. Never before in the history of mankind has opinion counted for so much and persons and organizations for so little as in this war. Never before has the need for clear ideas, widely understood and consistently sustained, been so commandingly vital.

What do we mean by our Empire, and what is its relation to that universal desire of mankind, the permanent rule of peace and justice in the world? The whole world will be the better for a very plain answer to that question.

Is it not time for us British not merely to admit to ourselves, but to

assure the world that our Empire as it exists to-day is a provisional thing, that in scarcely any part of the world do we regard it as more than an emergency arrangement, as a necessary association that must give place ultimately to the higher synthesis of a world league, that here we hold as trustees and there on account of strategic considerations that may presently disappear, and that though we will not contemplate the replacement of our flag anywhere by the flag of any other competing nation, though we do hope to hold together with our kin and with those who increasingly share our tradition and our language, nevertheless we are prepared to welcome great renunciations of our present ascendancy and privileges in the interests of mankind as a whole. We need to make the world understand that we do not put our nation nor our Empire before the commonwealth of man. Unless presently we are to follow Germany along the tragic path her national vanity and her world ambitions have made for her, that is what we have to make clear now. It is not only our duty to mankind, it is also the sane course for our own preservation.

Is it not the plain lesson of this stupendous and disastrous war that there is no way to secure civilization from destruction except by an impartial control and protection in the interests of the whole human race, a control representing the best intelligence of mankind, of these main causes of war.

(1) The politically undeveloped tropics;

(2) Shipping and international trade; and

(3) Small nationalities and all regions in a state of political impotence or confusion?

It is our case against the Germans that in all these three cases they have subordinated every consideration of justice and the general human welfare to a monstrous national egotism. That argument has a double edge. At present there is a vigorous campaign in America, Russia, the neutral countries generally, to represent British patriotism as equally egotistic, and our purpose in this war as a mere parallel to the German purpose. In the same manner, though perhaps with less persistency, France and Italy are also caricatured. We are supposed to be grabbing at Mesopotamia and Palestine, France at Syria; Italy is represented as pursuing a Machiavellian policy towards the unfortunate Greek republicans, with her eyes on the Greek islands and Greece in Asia. Is it not time that these base imputations were repudiated clearly and conclusively by our Alliance? And is it not time that we began to discuss in much more frank and definite terms than has hitherto been done, the nature of the international arrangement that will be needed to secure the safety of such liberated populations as those of Palestine, of the Arab regions of the old Turkish empire, of Armenia, of reunited Poland, and the like?

I do not mean here mere diplomatic discussions and "understandings," I mean such full and plain statements as will be spread through the whole world and grasped and assimilated by ordinary people everywhere, statements by which we, as a people, will be prepared to stand or fall.

Almost as urgent is the need for some definite statement about Africa. General Smuts has warned not only the Empire, but the whole world of the gigantic threat to civilization that lies in the present division of Africa between various keenly competitive European Powers, any one of which will be free to misuse the great natural resources at its disposal and to arm millions of black soldiers for aggression. A mere elimination of Germany from Africa will not solve that difficulty. What we have to eliminate is not this nation or that, but the system of national shoving and elbowing, the treatment of Africa as the board for a game of beggar-my-neighbour-and-damn-the-niggers, in which a few syndicates, masquerading as national interests, snatch a profit to the infinite loss of all mankind. We want a lowering of barriers and a unification of interests, we want an international control of these disputed regions, to override nationalist exploitation. The whole world wants it. It is a chastened and reasonable world we live in to-day, and the time for white reason and the wide treatment of these problems is now.

Finally, the time is drawing near when the Egyptian and the nations of India will ask us, "Are things going on for ever here as they go on now, or are we to look for the time when we, too, like the Africander, the Canadian and the Australian, will be your confessed and equal partners?" Would it not be wise to answer that question in the affirmative before the voice in which it is asked grows thick with anger? In Egypt, for example, we are either robbers very like--except for a certain difference in touch--the Germans in Belgium, or we are honourable trustees. It is our claim and pride to be honourable trustees. Nothing so becomes a trustee as a cheerful openness of disposition. Great

Britain has to table her world policy. It is a thing overdue. No doubt we have already a literature of liberal imperialism and a considerable accumulation of declarations by this statesman or that. But what is needed is a formulation much more representative, official and permanent than that, something that can be put beside President Wilson's clear rendering of the American idea. We want all our peoples to understand, and we want all mankind to understand that our Empire is not a net about the world in which the progress of mankind is entangled, but a self-conscious political system working side by side with the other democracies of the earth, preparing the way for, and prepared at last to sacrifice and merge itself in, the world confederation of free and equal peoples.

## § 2

This letter was presently followed up by an article in the Daily News, entitled "A Reasonable Man's Peace." This article provoked a considerable controversy in the imperialist press, and it was reprinted as a pamphlet by a Free Trade organization, which distributed over 200,000 copies. It is particularly interesting to note, in view of what follows it, that it was attacked with great virulence in the Evening News, the little fierce mud-throwing brother of the Daily Mail.

The international situation at the present time is beyond question the

most wonderful that the world has ever seen. There is not a country in the world in which the great majority of sensible people are not passionately desirous of peace, of an enduring peace, and--the war goes on. The conditions of peace can now be stated, in general terms that are as acceptable to a reasonable man in Berlin as they are to a reasonable man in Paris or London or Petrograd or Constantinople. There are to be no conquests, no domination of recalcitrant populations, no bitter insistence upon vindictive penalties, and there must be something in the nature of a world-wide League of Nations to keep the peace securely in future, to "make the world safe for democracy," and maintain international justice. To that the general mind of the world has come to-day.

Why, then, does the waste and killing go on? Why is not the Peace Conference sitting now?

Manifestly because a small minority of people in positions of peculiar advantage, in positions of trust and authority, and particularly the German reactionaries, prevent or delay its assembling.

The answer which seems to suffice in all the Allied countries is that the German Imperial Government--that the German Imperial Government alone--stands in the way, that its tradition is incurably a tradition of conquest and aggression, that until German militarism is overthrown, etc. Few people in the Allied countries will dispute that that is broadly true. But is it the whole and complete truth? Is there nothing more to be done on our side? Let us put a question that goes to the very

heart of the problem. Why does the great mass of the German people still cling to its incurably belligerent Government?

The answer to that question is not overwhelmingly difficult. The German people sticks to its militarist imperialism as Mazeppa stuck to his horse; because it is bound to it, and the wolves pursue. The attentive student of the home and foreign propaganda literature of the German Government will realize that the case made by German imperialism, the main argument by which it sticks to power, is this, that the Allied Governments are also imperialist, that they also aim at conquest and aggression, that for Germany the choice is world empire or downfall and utter ruin. This is the argument that holds the German people stiffly united. For most men in most countries it would be a convincing argument, strong enough to override considerations of right and wrong. I find that I myself am of this way of thinking, that whether England has done right or wrong in the past--and I have sometimes criticized my country very bitterly--I will not endure the prospect of seeing her at the foot of some victorious foreign nation. Neither will any German who matters. Very few people would respect a German who did. But the case for the Allies is that this great argument by which, and by which alone, the German Imperial Government keeps its grip upon the German people at the present time, and keeps them facing their enemies, is untrue. The Allies declare that they do not want to destroy the German people, they do not want to cripple the German people; they want merely to see certain gaping wounds inflicted by Germany repaired, and beyond that reasonable requirement they want nothing but to be assured, completely assured, absolutely assured, against any further aggressions on the

part of Germany.

Is that true? Our leaders say so, and we believe them. We would not support them if we did not. And if it is true, have the statesmen of the Allies made it as transparently and convincingly clear to the German people as possible? That is one of the supreme questions of the present time. We cannot too earnestly examine it. Because in the answer to it lies the reason why so many men were killed yesterday on the eastern and western front, so many ships sunk, so much property destroyed, so much human energy wasted for ever upon mere destruction, and why to-morrow and the next day and the day after--through many months yet, perhaps--the same killing and destroying must still go on.

In many respects this war has been an amazing display of human inadaptability. The military history of the war has still to be written, the grim story of machinery misunderstood, improvements resisted, antiquated methods persisted in; but the broad facts are already before the public mind. After three years of war the air offensive, the only possible decisive blow, is still merely talked of. Not once nor twice only have the Western Allies had victory within their grasp--and failed to grip it. The British cavalry generals wasted the great invention of the tanks as a careless child breaks a toy. At least equally remarkable is the dragging inadaptability of European statecraft. Everywhere the failure of ministers and statesmen to rise to the urgent definite necessities of the present time is glaringly conspicuous. They seem to be incapable even of thinking how the war may be brought to an end. They seem incapable of that plain speaking to the world audience which alone

can bring about a peace. They keep on with the tricks and feints of a departed age. Both on the side of the Allies and on the side of the Germans the declarations of public policy remain childishly vague and disingenuous, childishly "diplomatic." They chaffer like happy imbeciles while civilization bleeds to death. It was perhaps to be expected. Few, if any, men of over five-and-forty completely readjust themselves to changed conditions, however novel and challenging the changes may be, and nearly all the leading figures in these affairs are elderly men trained in a tradition of diplomatic ineffectiveness, and now overworked and overstrained to a pitch of complete inelasticity. They go on as if it were still 1913. Could anything be more palpably shifty and unsatisfactory, more senile, more feebly artful, than the recent utterances of the German Chancellor? And, on our own side--

Let us examine the three leading points about this peace business in which this jaded statecraft is most apparent.

Let the reader ask himself the following questions:--

Does he know what the Allies mean to do with the problem of Central Africa? It is the clear common sense of the African situation that while these precious regions of raw material remain divided up between a number of competitive European imperialisms, each resolutely set upon the exploitation of its "possessions" to its own advantage and the disadvantage of the others, there can be no permanent peace in the world. There can be permanent peace in the world only when tropical and sub-tropical Africa constitute a field free to the commercial enterprise

of every one irrespective of nationality, when this is no longer an area of competition between nations. This is possible only under some supreme international control. It requires no special knowledge nor wisdom to see that. A schoolboy can see it. Any one but a statesman absolutely flaccid with overstrain can see that. However difficult it may prove to work out in detail, such an international control must therefore be worked out. The manifest solution of the problem of the German colonies in Africa is neither to return them to her nor deprive her of them, but to give her a share in the pooled general control of mid-Africa. In that way she can be deprived of all power for political mischief in Africa without humiliation or economic injury. In that way, too, we can head off--and in no other way can we head off--the power for evil, the power of developing quarrels inherent in "imperialisms" other than German.

But has the reader any assurance that this sane solution of the African problem has the support of the Allied Governments? At best he has only a vague persuasion. And consider how the matter looks "over there." The German Government assures the German people that the Allies intend to cut off Germany from the African supply of raw material. That would mean the practical destruction of German economic life. It is something far more vital to the mass of Germans than any question of Belgium or Alsace-Lorraine. It is, therefore, one of the ideas most potent in nerving the overstrained German people to continue their fight. Why are we, and why are the German people, not given some definite assurance in this matter? Given reparation in Europe, is Germany to be allowed a fair share in the control and trade of a pooled and neutralized Central

Africa? Sooner or later we must come to some such arrangement. Why not state it plainly now?

A second question is equally essential to any really permanent settlement, and it is one upon which these eloquent but unsatisfactory mouthpieces of ours turn their backs with an equal resolution, and that is the fate of the Ottoman Empire. What in plain English are we up to there? Whatever happens, that Humpty Dumpty cannot be put back as it was before the war. The idea of the German imperialist, the idea of our own little band of noisy but influential imperialist vulgarians, is evidently a game of grab, a perilous cutting up of these areas into jostling protectorates and spheres of influence, from which either the Germans or the Allies (according to the side you are on) are to be viciously shut out. On such a basis this war is a war to the death. Neither Germany, France, Britain, Italy, nor Russia can live prosperously if its trade and enterprise is shut out from this cardinally important area. There is, therefore, no alternative, if we are to have a satisfactory permanent pacification of the world, but local self-development in these regions under honestly conceived international control of police and transit and trade. Let it be granted that that will be a difficult control to organize. None the less it has to be attempted. It has to be attempted because there is no other way of peace. But once that conception has been clearly formulated, a second great motive why Germany should continue fighting will have gone.

The third great issue about which there is nothing but fog and

uncertainty is the so-called "War After the War," the idea of a permanent economic alliance to prevent the economic recuperation of Germany. Upon that idea German imperialism, in its frantic effort to keep its tormented people fighting, naturally puts the utmost stress. The threat of War after the War robs the reasonable German of his last inducement to turn on his Government and insist upon peace. Shut out from all trade, unable to buy food, deprived of raw material, peace would be as bad for Germany as war. He will argue naturally enough and reasonably enough that he may as well die fighting as starve. This is a far more vital issue to him than the Belgian issue or Poland or Alsace-Lorraine. Our statesmen waste their breath and slight our intelligence when these foreground questions are thrust in front of the really fundamental matters. But as the mass of sensible people in every country concerned, in Germany just as much as in France or Great Britain, know perfectly well, unimpeded trade is good for every one except a few rich adventurers, and restricted trade destroys limitless wealth and welfare for mankind to make a few private fortunes or secure an advantage for some imperialist clique. We want an end to this economic strategy, we want an end to this plotting of Governmental cliques against the general welfare. In such offences Germany has been the chief of sinners, but which among the belligerent nations can throw the first stone? Here again the way to the world's peace, the only way to enduring peace, lies through internationalism, through an international survey of commercial treaties, through an international control of inter-State shipping and transport rates. Unless the Allied statesmen fail to understand the implications of their own general professions they mean that. But why do they not say it plainly? Why do

they not shout it so compactly and loudly that all Germany will hear and understand? Why do they justify imperialism to Germany? Why do they maintain a threatening ambiguity towards Germany on all these matters?

By doing so they leave Germany no choice but a war of desperation. They underline and endorse the claim of German imperialism that this is a war for bare existence. They unify the German people. They prolong the war.

### § 3

Some weeks later I was able, at the invitation of the editor, to carry the controversy against imperialism into the Daily Mail, which has hitherto counted as a strictly imperialist paper. The article that follows was published in the Daily Mail under the heading, "Are we Sticking to the Point? A Discussion of War Aims."

Has this War-Aims controversy really got down to essentials? Is the purpose of this world conflict from first to last too complicated for brevity, or can we boil it down into a statement compact enough for a newspaper article?

And if we can, why is there all this voluminous, uneasy, unquenchable disputation about War Aims?

As to the first question, I would say that the gist of the dispute between the Central Powers and the world can be written easily without undue cramping in an ordinary handwriting upon a postcard. It is the second question that needs answering. And the reason why the second question has to be asked and answered is this, that several of the Allies, and particularly we British, are not being perfectly plain and simple-minded in our answer to the first, that there is a division among us and in our minds, and that our division is making us ambiguous in our behaviour, that it is weakening and dividing our action and strengthening and consolidating the enemy, and that unless we can drag this slurred-over division of aim and spirit into the light of day and settle it now, we are likely to remain double-minded to the end of the war, to split our strength while the war continues and to come out of the settlement at the end with nothing nearly worth the strain and sacrifice it has cost us.

And first, let us deal with that postcard and say what is the essential aim of the war, the aim to which all other aims are subsidiary. It is, we have heard repeated again and again by every statesman of importance in every Allied country, to defeat and destroy military imperialism, to make the world safe for ever against any such deliberate aggression as Germany prepared for forty years and brought to a climax when she crossed the Belgian frontier in 1914. We want to make anything of that kind on the part of Germany or of any other Power henceforth impossible in this world. That is our great aim. Whatever other objects may be sought in this war no responsible statesman dare claim them as anything but subsidiary to that; one can say, in fact, this is our sole aim, our

other aims being but parts of it. Better that millions should die now, we declare, than that hundreds of millions still unborn should go on living, generation after generation, under the black tyranny of this imperialist threat.

There is our common agreement. So far, at any rate, we are united. The question I would put to the reader is this: Are we all logically, sincerely, and fully carrying out the plain implications of this War Aim? Or are we to any extent muddling about with it in such a way as to confuse and disorganize our Allies, weaken our internal will, and strengthen the enemy?

Now the plain meaning of this supreme declared War Aim is that we are asking Germany to alter her ways. We are asking Germany to become a different Germany. Either Germany has to be utterly smashed up and destroyed or else Germany has to cease to be an aggressive military imperialism. The former alternative is dismissed by most responsible statesmen. They declare that they do not wish to destroy the German people or the German nationality or the civilized life of Germany. I will not enlarge here upon the tedium and difficulties such an undertaking would present. I will dismiss it as being not only impossible, but also as an insanely wicked project. The second alternative, therefore, remains as our War Aim. I do not see how the sloppiest reasoner can evade that. As we do not want to kill Germany we must want to change Germany. If we do not want to wipe Germany off the face of the earth, then we want Germany to become the prospective and trust-worthy friend of her fellow nations. And if words have any meaning

at all, that is saying that we are fighting to bring about a Revolution in Germany. We want Germany to become a democratically controlled State, such as is the United States to-day, with open methods and pacific intentions, instead of remaining a clenched fist. If we can bring that about we have achieved our War Aim; if we cannot, then this struggle has been for us only such loss and failure as humanity has never known before.

But do we, as a nation, stick closely to this clear and necessary, this only possible, meaning of our declared War Aim? That great, clear-minded leader among the Allies, that Englishman who more than any other single man speaks for the whole English-speaking and Western-thinking community, President Wilson, has said definitely that this is his meaning. America, with him as her spokesman, is under no delusion; she is fighting consciously for a German Revolution as the essential War Aim. We in Europe do not seem to be so lucid. I think myself we have been, and are still, fatally and disastrously not lucid. It is high time, and over, that we cleared our minds and got down to the essentials of the war. We have muddled about in blood and dirt and secondary issues long enough.

We in Britain are not clear-minded, I would point out, because we are double-minded. No good end is served by trying to ignore in the fancied interests of "unity" a division of spirit and intention that trips us up at every step. We are, we declare, fighting for a complete change in international methods, and we are bound to stick to the logical consequences of that. We have placed ourselves on the side of democratic

revolution against autocratic monarchy, and we cannot afford to go on shilly-shallying with that choice. We cannot in these days of black or white play the part of lukewarm friends to freedom. I will not remind the reader here of the horrible vacillations and inconsistencies of policy in Greece that have prolonged the war and cost us wealth and lives beyond measure, but President Wilson himself has reminded us pungently enough and sufficiently enough of the follies and disingenuousness of our early treatment of the Russian Revolution. What I want to point out here is the supreme importance of a clear lead in this matter now in order that we should state our War Aims effectively.

In every war there must be two sets of War Aims kept in mind; we ought to know what we mean to do in the event of victory so complete that we can dictate what terms we choose, and we ought to know what, in the event of a not altogether conclusive tussle, are the minimum terms that we should consider justified us in a discontinuance of the tussle. Now, unless our leading statesmen are humbugs and unless we are prepared to quarrel with America in the interests of the monarchist institutions of Europe, we should, in the event of an overwhelming victory, destroy both the Hohenzollern and Hapsburg Imperialisms, and that means, if it means anything at all and is not mere lying rhetoric, that we should insist upon Germany becoming free and democratic, that is to say, in effect if not in form republican, and upon a series of national republics, Polish, Hungarian, Serbo-Croatian, Bulgarian, and the like, in Eastern Europe, grouped together if possible into congenial groups--crowned republics it might be in some cases, in the case of the Serb for example, but in no

case too much crowned--that we should join with this renascent Germany and with these thus liberalized Powers and with our Allies and with the neutrals in one great League of Free Nations, trading freely with one another, guaranteeing each other freedom, and maintaining a world-wide peace and disarmament and a new reign of law for mankind.

If that is not what we are out for, then I do not understand what we are out for; there is dishonesty and trickery and diplomacy and foolery in the struggle, and I am no longer whole-hearted for such a half-hearted war. If after a complete victory we are to bolster up the Hohenzollerns, Hapsburgs, and their relations, set up a constellation of more cheating little subordinate kings, and reinstate that system of diplomacies and secret treaties and secret understandings, that endless drama of international threatening and plotting, that never-ending arming, that has led us after a hundred years of waste and muddle to the supreme tragedy of this war, then the world is not good enough for me and I shall be glad to close my eyes upon it. I am not alone in these sentiments. I believe that in writing thus I am writing the opinion of the great mass of reasonable British, French, Italian, Russian, and American men. I believe, too, that this is the desire also of great numbers of Germans, and that they would, if they could believe us, gladly set aside their present rulers to achieve this plain common good for mankind.

But, the reader will say, what evidence is there of any republican feeling in Germany? That is always the objection made to any reasonable discussion of the war--and as most of us are denied access to German

papers, it is difficult to produce quotations; and even when one does, there are plenty of fools to suggest and believe that the entire German Press is an elaborate camouflage. Yet in the German Press there is far more criticism of militant imperialism than those who have no access to it can imagine. There is far franker criticism of militarism in Germany than there is of reactionary Toryism in this country, and it is more free to speak its mind.

That, however, is a question by the way. It is not the main thing that I have to say here. What I have to say here is that in Great Britain--I will not discuss the affairs of any of our Allies--there are groups and classes of people, not numerous, not representative, but placed in high and influential positions and capable of free and public utterance, who are secretly and bitterly hostile to this great War Aim, which inspires all the Allied peoples. These people are permitted to deny--our peculiar censorship does not hamper them--loudly and publicly that we are fighting for democracy and world freedom; "Tosh," they say to our dead in the trenches, "you died for a mistake"; they jeer at this idea of a League of Nations making an end to war, an idea that has inspired countless brave lads to face death and such pains and hardships as outdo even death itself; they perplex and irritate our Allies by propounding schemes for some precious economic league of the British Empire--that is to treat all "foreigners" with a common base selfishness and stupid hatred--and they intrigue with the most reactionary forces in Russia.

These British reactionaries openly, and with perfect impunity, represent our war as a thing as mean and shameful as Germany's attack on Belgium,

and they do it because generosity and justice in the world is as terrible to them as dawn is to the creatures of the night. Our Tories blundered into this great war, not seeing whither it would take them. In particular it is manifest now by a hundred signs that they dread the fall of monarchy in Germany and Austria. Far rather would they make the most abject surrenders to the Kaiser than deal with a renascent Republican Germany. The recent letter of Lord Lansdowne, urging a peace with German imperialism, was but a feeler from the pacifist side of this most un-English, and unhappily most influential, section of our public life. Lord Lansdowne's letter was the letter of a Peer who fears revolution more than national dishonour.

But it is the truculent wing of this same anti-democratic movement that is far more active. While our sons suffer and die for their comforts and conceit, these people scheme to prevent any communication between the Republican and Socialist classes in Germany and the Allied population. At any cost this class of pampered and privileged traitors intend to have peace while the Kaiser is still on his throne. If not they face a new world--in which their part will be small indeed. And with the utmost ingenuity they maintain a dangerous vagueness about the Allied peace terms, with the sole object of preventing a revolutionary movement in Germany.

Let me put it to the reader exactly why our failure to say plainly and exactly and conclusively what we mean to do about a score of points, and particularly about German economic life after the war, paralyses the penitents and friends and helpers that we could now find in Germany. Let

me ask the reader to suppose himself a German in Germany at the present time. Of course if he was, he is sure that he would hate the Kaiser as the source of this atrocious war, he would be bitterly ashamed of the Belgian iniquity, of the submarine murders, and a score of such stains upon his national honour; and he would want to alter his national system and make peace. Hundreds of thousands of Germans are in that mood now. But as most of us have had to learn, a man may be bitterly ashamed of this or that incident in his country's history--what Englishman, for instance, can be proud of Glencoe?--he may disbelieve in half its institutions and still love his country far too much to suffer the thought of its destruction. I prefer to see my country right, but if it comes to the pinch and my country sins I will fight to save her from the destruction her sins may have brought upon her. That is the natural way of a man.

But suppose a German wished to try to start a revolutionary movement in Germany at the present time, have we given him any reason at all for supposing that a Germany liberated and democratized, but, of course, divided and weakened as she would be bound to be in the process, would get better terms from the Allies than a Germany still facing them, militant, imperialist, and wicked? He would have no reason for believing anything of the sort. If we Allies are honest, then if a revolution started in Germany to-day we should if anything lower the price of peace to Germany. But these people who pretend to lead us will state nothing of the sort. For them a revolution in Germany would be the signal for putting up the price of peace. At any risk they are resolved that that German revolution shall not happen. Your sane, good German, let me

assert, is up against that as hard as if he was a wicked one. And so, poor devil, he has to put his revolutionary ideas away, they are hopeless ideas for him because of the power of the British reactionary, they are hopeless because of the line we as a nation take in this matter, and he has to go on fighting for his masters.

A plain statement of our war aims that did no more than set out honestly and convincingly the terms the Allies would make with a democratic republican Germany--republican I say, because where a scrap of Hohenzollern is left to-day there will be a fresh militarism to-morrow--would absolutely revolutionize the internal psychology of Germany. We should no longer face a solid people. We should have replaced the false issue of Germany and Britain fighting for the hegemony of Europe, the lie upon which the German Government has always traded, and in which our extreme Tory Press has always supported the German Government, by the true issue, which is freedom versus imperialism, the League of Nations versus that net of diplomatic roguery and of aristocratic, plutocratic, and autocratic greed and conceit which dragged us all into this vast welter of bloodshed and loss.