

THE WAR AIMS OF THE WESTERN ALLIES

Here, quite compactly, is the plain statement of the essential cause and process of the war to which I would like to see the Allied Foreign Offices subscribe, and which I would like to have placed plainly before the German mind. It embodies much that has been learnt and thought out since this war began, and I think it is much truer and more fundamental than that mere raging against German "militarism," upon which our politicians and press still so largely subsist.

The enormous development of war methods and war material within the last fifty years has made war so horrible and destructive that it is impossible to contemplate a future for mankind from which it has not been eliminated; the increased facilities of railway, steamship, automobile travel and air navigation have brought mankind so close together that ordinary human life is no longer safe anywhere in the boundaries of the little states in which it was once secure. In some fashion it is now necessary to achieve sufficient human unity to establish a world peace and save the future of mankind.

In one or other of two ways only is that unification possible. Either men may set up a common league to keep the peace of the earth, or one state must ultimately become so great and powerful as to repeat for all the world what Rome did for Europe two thousand years ago. Either we

must have human unity by a league of existing states or by an Imperial Conquest. The former is now the declared Aim of our country and its Allies; the latter is manifestly the ambition of the present rulers of Germany. Whatever the complications may have been in the earlier stages of the war, due to treaties that are now dead letters and agreements that are extinct, the essential issue now before every man in the world is this: Is the unity of mankind to be the unity of a common freedom, in which every race and nationality may participate with complete self-respect, playing its part, according to its character, in one great world community, or is it to be reached--and it can only be so reached through many generations of bloodshed and struggle still, even if it can be ever reached in this way at all--through conquest and a German hegemony?

While the rulers of Germany to-day are more openly aggressive and imperialist than they were in August, 1914, the Allies arrayed against them have made great progress in clearing up and realizing the instincts and ideals which brought them originally into the struggle. The German government offers the world to-day a warring future in which Germany alone is to be secure and powerful and proud. Mankind will not endure that. The Allies offer the world more and more definitely the scheme of an organized League of Free Nations, a rule of law and justice about the earth. To fight for that and for no other conceivable end, the United States of America, with the full sympathy and co-operation of every state in the western hemisphere, has entered the war. The British Empire, in the midst of the stress of the great war, has set up in Dublin a Convention of Irishmen of all opinions with the fullest powers

of deciding upon the future of their country. If Ireland were not divided against herself she could be free and equal with England to-morrow. It is the open intention of Great Britain to develop representative government, where it has not hitherto existed, in India and Egypt, to go on steadfastly increasing the share of the natives of these countries in the government of their own lands, until they too become free and equal members of the world league. Neither France nor Italy nor Britain nor America has ever tampered with the shipping of other countries except in time of war, and the trade of the British Empire has been impartially open to all the world. The extra-national "possessions," the so-called "subject nations" in the Empires of Britain, France, Italy, and Japan, are, in fact, possessions held in trust against the day when the League of Free Nations will inherit for mankind.

Is it to be union by conquest or is it to be union by league? For any sort of man except the German the question is, Will you be a free citizen or will you be an underling to the German imperialism? For the German now the question is a far graver and more tragic one. For him it is this: "You belong to a people not now increasing very rapidly, a numerous people, but not so numerous as some of the great peoples of the world, a people very highly trained, very well drilled and well armed, perhaps as well trained and drilled and equipped as ever it will be. The collapse of Russian imperialism has made you safe if now you can get peace, and you can get a peace now that will neither destroy you nor humiliate you nor open up the prospect of fresh wars. The Allies offer you such a peace. To accept it, we must warn you plainly, means refusing

to go on with the manifest intentions of your present rulers, which are to launch you and your children and your children's children upon a career of struggle for war predominance, which may no doubt inflict untold deprivations and miseries upon the rest of mankind, but whose end in the long run, for Germany and things German, can be only Judgment and Death."

In such terms as these the Oceanic Allies could now state their war-will and carry the world straightway into a new phase of human history. They could but they do not. For alas! not one of them is free from the entanglements of past things; when we look for the wisdom of statesmen we find the cunning of politicians; when open speech and plain reason might save the world, courts, bureaucrats, financiers and profiteers conspire.