

# "Save the World!"--An Englishman to Wilson

**Our President is the One Man Alive Today Who Can Arrest the Madness That Is Destroying Civilization, Writes a Leader of British Social Democrats**

**He Says the Peoples Are Ready for Peace, the Violation of Belgium Already Avenged**

Mr. E. D. Morel, who writes the following appeal to the President of the United States, wrote the famous book "Red Rubber," which resulted in reform in Belgian Congo, is honorary secretary of the Union of Democratic Control, of England. He was a prospective Liberal candidate for Parliament at the outbreak of the war, but because he was at variance with the recent foreign policy of his party, he withdrew his candidature. Physically and mentally a powerful man, his words have much weight, known as he is to be a serious politician, an active advocate of peace, and a close student of world politics.

By E. D. Morel

There have been occasions in the life of peoples when the national soul, bewildered and stricken, has been saved by a single individual possessing in himself the combination of qualities which enabled him to adopt a clear and definite line of conduct and to give to his fellow-countrymen at the psychological moment just that inspiration and that lead required by the circumstances.

There has never been, until to-day, an occasion when the international soul, laboring in agony, cried out for a man to succor it.

But that situation has now arisen, and in the two hemispheres there is one man, and only one man, who, by his character and through the great position he enjoys, can save the soul of the peoples and of the governments of Europe.

That man is President Wilson.

TO THIS GO THE BEST OF US.

I write to the sound of the measured tramp of armed men. The confused clamor rising from the streets is shattered by the roll of drums. The martial setting cannot obliterate the haunting melancholy conveyed by the shrill whistling of the fife. It permeates the sunshine even, and robs it of its balm. For the message of the fife is the piercing homage to death. Death is in the very air we breathe, we Europeans. Its outstretched wings beat against the mansion of the rich and the cottage of the lowly. Death on land and on the sea. Death emerging, implacable and sinister from the bowels of the deep. Death falling swift and relentless from the blue vault of heaven. Death in all the hideous and revolting forms with which modern man and modern science have equipped it.

Presently these strong, clean-limbed young fellows, the flower of our people, the hope of our future, who a moment ago swung past to the sound of the fife, will be burrowing in the ground like rodents, slaughtering and being slaughtered; covered with vermin; the festering bodies of days-dead men at their feet, in front of them, behind them, huddled in shapeless masses, grotesquely stretching rigid limbs skyward. The foul smell of burnt and decomposing flesh will be in their nostrils by day and by night. Flies in myriads will be settling about them, pumping putridity into their unhealed wounds. They will be foul and mad with the blood-lust; their bodies repulsive to them; their nerves shattered by the everlasting roar of the hurrying shells; their souls blunted and scarred.

Thus in a hundred cities of Europe to-day. Tramp, tramp, tramp. The march of death to the sound of the fife and drum, in the general sunshine of declining May. Thus, too, in the far-flung battle lines. Millions of men who had no quarrel until their rulers invented one, living like brute-beasts, acting like brute-beasts; fly-blown, verminous, stinking with uncleaned wounds; physically, mentally, normally thrown back a thousand years. In the plains and valleys, on the mountain slopes, multitudes of corpses uncovered by the stoppage of the floods and the melting of the snows fill the air with the germs of disease. And that other army grows and grows—the army of the widows and the orphans; the army of the bereft and destitute, of the broken-hearted, of those for whom life henceforth is but a vale of tears.

And still the rulers will not speak. The war has lasted ten months. It is roughly computed that three and a half million men—the pick of European manhood—have been killed outright and as many more permanently disabled. It cannot be said that any one of the belligerent states is nearer the accomplishment of the professed aims of its rulers when they entered the war, as the outcome of this unprecedented human holocaust and the colossal wastage of economic resources which has accompanied it. But of far greater importance is the question: "What are the various belligerent States fighting for NOW?" What vital issue to the peoples concerned could not NOW be secured by negotiation?

And that is what no government will state in explicit and authoritative terms. No government will do so lest, if it did, its enemies would imagine that the national interests it supposedly represents would suffer. "The enemy would conclude that we were weakening" is the parrot cry in every capital. No

government will assume the responsibility of uttering a word which would permit of the enemy imagining that it is anxious for peace. Yet the rulers of every belligerent state must be anxious for peace in their hearts; if only because they must begin to realize that the edifice of civilization is tumbling about their ears and that dynasties and castes run a considerable risk of being buried in the ruins.

That there is an intense longing for peace among the peoples—especially among the working classes and the peasantry—cannot be questioned. But as the entire machinery at the disposal of the governments for influencing public opinion is engaged in fomenting national passions to the highest pitch of intensity, by representing the enemy-country as the embodiment of evil and treachery and by crediting the enemy-country with the purpose of utterly destroying its adversaries, the very longing for peace becomes a spur to national fury. Indeed, the governments recognize the popular desire for peace and cunningly pander to it. A "lasting peace," they cry, "can only be secured by the complete pulverization of the enemy"—whereupon they know full well that that would mean the indefinite prolongation of the war and its renewal at no distant date: for you cannot pulverize a people. Here in England the very recruiting placards with which our cities and towns are plastered almost invariably urge men to join the colors IN ORDER TO HASTEN THE ADVENT OF PEACE. It is everywhere the same, in one form or another. The admitted desire of the peoples for peace is used to exploit them for prolonging the war.

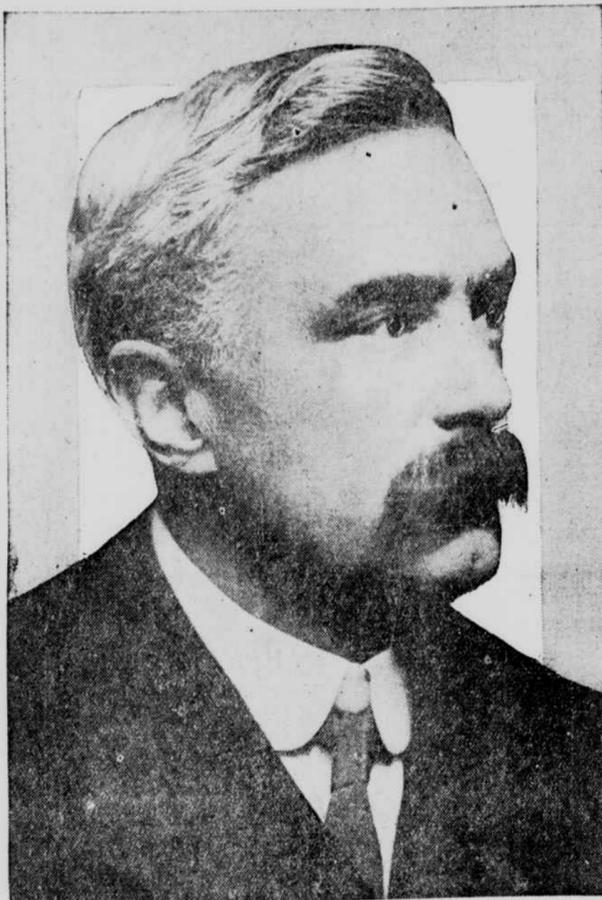
The governments decline even to hint at the terms upon which they would be mutually prepared to discuss the basis of a possible settlement. And so the slaughter continues on an even vaster scale. Yet, some day, the governments will have to discuss or perish. Meantime they are blind leaders of the blind; straws upon the elements they, in their folly, have unchained; incapable of controlling them; knowing not whither they are drifting.

## WHAT THE PEOPLES BELIEVE.

Every belligerent people—except the Italian—believes that it is fighting, and every government asserts that it is fighting, in self-defence, for national existence, for the right to preserve its own traditions, its own modes of life, its own homesteads. If what the governments assert be true, then each and all of them are suffering from hallucination; for assuredly it is in the interest of no single people that its adversaries should lose their national existence and be destroyed—since civilized life is built upon foundations of human exchange, and the lack of clients with whom to exchange would spell national bankruptcy. And the truth lies just here. All the belligerent governments ARE under the spell of an hallucination, the hallucination of fear. The driving force of fear, it was, which made possible this wicked and suicidal struggle. I am not in the majority, with those who maintain that the rulers of Germany deliberately planned this war and are wholly responsible for it. That they have a large measure of responsibility for it is patent. That others share responsibility with them can be gained only by such as have come under the spell of the hallucination. Fear caused this war. Fear is prolonging it. Fear is aggravating its natural bestialities. Fear is making every chemical laboratory into a chamber for the concoction of new and more terrifying modes of human destruction. It may yet evolve some substance capable of destroying an army corps or of firing a city in a few moments. The end might thereby be hastened, it is true.

The fear of the governments is communicated to the peoples, and millions who are not engaged in killing are employed in manufacturing implements to kill. To such a pass has come our civilization. The civilian population in every belligerent state is becoming drunken and maddened by fear. For it is the support by the civilian population of its rulers which prolongs the war. It is the civilian population that fears; not the men who fight. They do not fear. Neither do they hate with the same intensity because, being injured by their occupation to physical bravery, they respect it in their foes. They respect, too, the keen competition in brains behind the firing lines. And respect chases out hatred. Moreover, they know that what the papers print of their adversaries are mostly lies; and that sickens them. Every day some incident occurs, even in the hours of carnage, that helps them to remember that those to whom they are opposed are men like themselves, full of courage and resource as themselves, obeying orders even as they themselves, suffering even as they themselves must suffer. If it rested with them the war would not last long.

From the civilian population this deep, underlying fraternity of suffering and a common discipline is hidden. Fed every day upon the lowest garbage of sensational journalism, its passions stimulated by every imaginable device, torn by the cruellest tremors of love ones



E. D. Morel

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in the field and rooted in dull revenge under the stress of bereavement, the civilian population hates with a hatred unknown to most soldiers. And so in blind fear, in blind hate, the peoples stumble forward along the valley of abomination and despair, behind their infatuated and insensate leaders.

No force, it would seem, which either the belligerent peoples or their governments can evolve will arrest the madness which is destroying civilization. And yet if it be not arrested disaster beyond the imagination of brain to grasp will overwhelm Europe. That force must come from without, and there is but one man who can wield it—President Wilson.

Rash, impertinent it may appear for a foreigner to write thus of your First Citizen, to raise an unknown voice in hearing of the accumulated care, which weigh so heavily upon the leading representative of a neutral state—upon one who is the living embodiment of your true dignity and your true greatness. Yet in countless European hearts there beats the hope—the pathetic trust—that in him humanity may find its savior—that there may be granted unto him a message from the Cross. I do but express, feebly enough, what multitudes are thinking, hoping, awaiting. Formless, vague is the hope. Nevertheless it is very real. Can shape and substance be given to it?

## IF TERMS COULD BE DISCUSSED.

The belligerent governments have for decades encouraged man's progress in invention, his triumphs over nature in the direction of man's destruction; and now they have unloosed all the factors of primal savagery armed with these terrible powers. They see the work of decades crumbling before their eyes. They shudder at the ethical degradation; the spiritual collapse which is overwhelming society. They recoil with horror at the abyss of economic ruin, of disease and want, of social tumult which yawns wider at their feet as month follows month, each month a catastrophe in itself.

And yet each fears to be the first to tread the path which leads to the international Council Chamber. Each bases its resolve to go on to the bitter end. Each repudiates every suggestion to state the terms upon which it would consent to discuss. None dare take the initiative.

But if they will not speak to one another, would they severally refuse to lay their views before your President on the understanding that the collective expression of those views should be communicated by the President to them all in a public dispatch? In so doing they would sacrifice none of their "prestige" to which they cling and which each deems would be jeopardized if it opened communication with the others. Did they respond to that invitation, they would not necessarily, thereby, commit themselves to acceptance of the President's ultimate mediation. But it would be a step on that road; or at least a step toward an armistice.

The essential is that the peoples in each belligerent state should be in a position to know what at this moment the governments are fighting to attain—not in vague but in precise terms. This they cannot now learn because the governments will not tell them, save in rhetoric capable of an infinite variety of interpretation. This, through the President's initiative, they might ascertain, and they have suffered and are suffering so greatly, that future outlook for them is so appalling that it would be incredible if in each belligerent state

there were not set up as the result of that knowledge currents of opinion sane enough to indorse what was reasonable in the desires of their adversaries and formidable enough to correct what might be unreasonable in the demands of their own rulers.

## PRUSSIAN EVERYWHERE.

For example, despite the clamor of our own jingo publicists, literary men and politicians—and do not forget on your side that we, too, like you, have such elements among us: that we have our class which wishes for its own ends to "Prussianize" the nation, and that we, too, have our unscrupulous and powerful journalists who constitute the mouthpiece of that class and who are prepared even in the very midst of this desperate struggle in which we are engaged, to throw mud at any and every Minister of the Crown whom they believe to be opposed to their policy;—despite these "Prussians in our midst," were the people of this country to learn through such a *démarche* on the part of your President that Germany was prepared to evacuate Belgium and the north of France as a result of a compromise which would restore her overseas possessions or pave the way for her acquisition by negotiation of similar outlets elsewhere; and if they were to learn that on the strength of assurances such as Sir Edward Grey offered her on July 30—when the tramp of armed legions was already shaking the plains of Europe—that the British government would endeavor to promote some arrangement, to which Germany could be a party, by which she could be assured that no aggressive or hostile policy would be pursued against her or her allies by France, Russia and Great Britain jointly or separately, such an arrangement would remove those fears from the future. And if the British government realized the practical impossibility and, from the point of view of the British national interest, the undesirability of excluding Germany from a place in the sun commensurate with her legitimate requirements I cannot conceive that a single German possessed of common sense would desire the retention of either Belgium or Northern France, and I do conceive it likely that tens of thousands of Germans, smitten with remorse attendant upon the saner vision ensuing from the advent of peace, would eagerly co-operate in healing the wounds of that unhappy land.

For the rest Germany's supreme interest is peace, and when you have said all there is to be said of her national faults and of her conduct of the war the solid fact remains that this powerful nation had for forty and four years kept the peace when war broke out last August. Attention has, of course, been drawn to this many times; but, considered in the light of international reconstruction and Germany's attitude thereto, it is a fact of cardinal importance. No other great power can boast such a record. With the sole exception of the guerilla campaign with a Hottentot tribe in Southwest Africa and sundry skirmishes with primitive tribes in German East Africa, against which we can set a dozen far more comprehensive campaigns of a similar kind, Germany had kept her sword in the scabbard, while her neighbors had been drawing theirs and laying about them with great energy. She had rattled it loudly and offensively often enough, especially when she became nervous at her position in the "balance of power," as the man who is apprehensive of his neighbor's intent puffs out his chest and assumes a fierce expression. But she had not drawn it. She could have drawn it with every chance of success again and again had the desire of her rulers been the "subjugation" of Europe or even of a part of Europe in the years when her military strength was incomparably superior to every possible combination against her. She could have drawn it on a Balkan issue when Russia, crippled by her war with Japan, was helpless; she did no more than support her one real ally in Europe in an offence, but a technical one, against the sovereignty of the Porte, whose sovereignty, guaranteed by all the powers, has been flouted by each in turn with ab-

solute cynicism whenever it suited their interests to flout it. Had she desired to crush France she could have done so in the 80s, when the British official world would have been rather pleased than otherwise. She could have done so when, embarrassed by the Boer war, we were incapable of helping France even had we wished to do so; or, again, when freed from any danger on the Russian side after Mukden. She did not do so. Why? She was proportionately far stronger as a land power in the 80s, the 90s and in the first five years of the present century than in 1914. For just upon half a century Germany had waged no war. Neither had her Austrian ally. The personal influence of their rulers had been exerted time and again, as eminent politicians and writers in the countries of their present foes have borne witness, in the cause of peace. Germany's overseas possessions had been acquired not by wars of conquest but by treaty arrangements. Her ally had never been attracted by the overseas imperialist mirage. During that period Russian imperialism had waged a sanguinary war with Japan; British imperialism with the Dutch republics which had been absorbed in the British Empire; France had been indulging in wars of conquest against colored peoples all over the globe, and as a result had annexed an area of territory as large as the United States; Italy had embarked upon two formidable campaigns, the latter of which was the most cynically immoral venture of our time. While her neighbors were fighting Germany was building up a marvellous industrial edifice, which had everything to lose by war, and a great overseas trade, which was bound to be temporarily ruined by war.

**The Warring Governments Mr. Morel Calls Blind Leaders of the Blind: Nothing More Can Be Gained by Prolonging the War**

**Wilson Only Can Call a Halt to a World Driven to Destruction by Fear, and He Is Asked to Act for Humanity**

coercive action in support of the council's decisions; a principle which would automatically involve the gradual disappearance of militarism and colossal armaments as the dominant factors in international politics and, eventually, the internationalization of land armaments and armies; the British people would, if Germany were thus minded, be brought to reconsider that claim to absolute dominion over the natural highways of the globe which has been hitherto the basis of their foreign policy and a bulwark of their national freedom, but which cannot in itself alone continue to be so, in any event, for long, in view of the development of submarine powers of offence and of airism, the advent of which have—although we perceive it not in the fury of the combat—totally altered the British national and imperial problem. Moreover, it is self-evident that there can be no internationalization of land power, if there be none of sea power.

## A DISPASSIONATE VIEW OF GERMANY.

And is it inconceivable that Germany should be so minded? No doubt, if you take the view that Germany cynically planned and executed this war for the purpose of "subjugating Europe," striking when she thought the hour had come; it is inconceivable. But not only will posterity reject that legend; when the mists of passion have cleared and when things reassume their true perspective, when men of the present generation once again see themselves as they really are, they will wonder how they came to credit it. That legend will perish, just as surely as Germany's crime in her relentless treatment of a small people who had done her no wrong and did but defend what they had a right to defend, will ring down the centuries to the detriment of the German name.

If you do not take that view, but place yourself, as well as a foreigner can with no other sources of information than those accessible to all men, "in the skin of a German," to use the expression employed by Marcel Sombat, the leader of the French Socialists and a member of the French War Cabinet, in the famous treatise "Faites la Paix: sinon faites un Roi," which he addressed to his countrymen a few months before the war, you will discover manifold reasons why Germany should be willing to make peace on some such terms as those indicated. If fear, as I contend, has been at the bottom of the great catastrophe—fear common to all the powers which plunged into the war last August—an "arrangement" to which Germany would be a party "by which she could be assured that no aggressive or hostile policy would be pursued against her and her allies" by France, Russia and Great Britain jointly or separately, such an arrangement would remove those fears from the future. And if the British government realized the practical impossibility and, from the point of view of the British national interest, the undesirability of excluding Germany from a place in the sun commensurate with her legitimate requirements I cannot conceive that a single German possessed of common sense would desire the retention of either Belgium or Northern France, and I do conceive it likely that tens of thousands of Germans, smitten with remorse attendant upon the saner vision ensuing from the advent of peace, would eagerly co-operate in healing the wounds of that unhappy land.

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When these facts are borne in mind—and none can gainsay them—when it is considered that even Germany's enormous expenditures upon armaments during the last ten years falls short by hundreds of millions of the expenditure of her potential foes under the European "balance of power" system—that "foul idol," as Bright once called it—and that she has never once put forth her great strength, the presumption is that, judging from her own past conduct, Germany would welcome an honorable peace, and if this be denied her that she will drag down the civilized world with her in her fall. In her position Britishers would do the same.

## ONWARD TO PEACE.

Were President Wilson able to lay even the first foundations of the future bridge across the gulf of existent Anglo-German enmity the end of this awful tragedy would be in sight. For Anglo-German enmity has become the key of the situation. The Balkan question, and with it the problem of Austro-Russian rivalry, is not insoluble on the basis of a settlement founded upon nationality, of home rule within home rule. We owe the origins of this war not to the insolubility of Austro-Russian contentions, but to the seeds of strife sown by two rival diplomatists—Aehrenthal and Iswolsky—watered by the subsequent intrigues of Hartwig and von Tschirsly, just as we owe its world-wide extension to the intrigues, ignorances and incompatibilities of temper of half a dozen rulers and diplomats operating in an atmosphere of mutual fears and concealing their manoeuvres from the gaze of their peoples, thus giving free rein to the criminal enterprise of a few powerful publicists and an internationalized armament race. Neither are the problems of Alsace-Lorraine or of Poland insoluble if a solution be sought in the ascertained desires of the peoples of those disputed areas; and not on the basis of military considerations which have never settled any problem of international politics. The real problem which faces the world to-day is none of these. Anglo-German enmity is the real problem.

Neither people can destroy the other, whatever the politicians or the papers say.

Every belligerent government must make sacrifices for peace; must be compelled to do so by its peoples if it will not of its own accord. But it is at least probable that elements in the ruling classes of all the belligerent countries are looking for a golden bridge. And after all it is the peoples, not the diplomats who blundered them into war or the publicists who hounded them at each others' throats, trading on their fears, that are paying with blood and tears.

Once again, then, the essential is that the Peoples should mutually and severally be in a position to know the nature of the adversary's claim. If the Peoples have the right to make war they also have the right to make peace.

It is a great thing to ask of President Wilson that he should endeavor to make himself the medium through which that knowledge can be acquired. But he is the only personal force in this distracted planet to whom we can turn. Supported by the American people, fortified by the deep humanities which inspire him and by the wide and penetrating grasp of men and things which he possesses—if he could bring himself to make this effort he would be the savior of the world, and his name would be blessed from generation unto generation.