Eric V. Snow June 3, 1991 Mr. Coogan HST 499 Research paper

STABILITY, CHANGE, AND DEVELOPMENT:

British and French War Aims, December 1916 to January 1918

"When men by the million are being called upon to suffer and die and vast populations are being subjected to the sufferings and privations of war on a scale unprecedented in the history of the world, they are entitled to know for what cause or causes they are making the sacrifice. It is only the clearest, greatest, and justest of causes that can justify the continuance even for one day of this unspeakable agony of the nations. And we ought to be able to state clearly and definitely not only the principles for which we are fighting, but also their definite and concrete application to the war map of the world."[1] Here in his Caxton speech of January 5, 1918, the British Prime Minister David Lloyd George stated the main rationale for stating war aims: people are motivated to fight the war if they know what they are fighting for. In the period from November 1916 to January 1918, the governments of the Western Atlantic Allied powers spent a great deal of effort synthesizing and explaining why they sent millions of men off to die and why they continued to fight World War I when a compromise peace could have been arranged. During this time, the French focused on redeeming land inhabited by their own nationality and avenging the humiliation of 1870-1, while the British under Lloyd George, who was the exponent of the "knockout blow," came to see the need for more idealism.

The French government during this time, with Raymond Poincare as President, and Aristide Briand and, later, George Clemenceau as Premier, focused almost exclusively on regaining the provinces of Alsace Lorraine for France

[1] David Lloyd George, The Great Crusade (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1918), p. 251. This book collects together many of Lloyd George's wartime speeches.

and avenging the humiliation of losing the Franco-Prussian war in 1870-1. An example of this obsession was when the French Ambassador to the United States, Jean Jules Jusserand, wrote to French Foreign Minister Stephen Jean Marie Pichon on January 9, 1918 concerning Wilson's Fourteen Points address. Despite the address had been prepared "in the greatest secrecy," he was "able to discover that favorable declaration concerning Alsace-Lorraine would probably be made by him . . ."[2] He was by one of Wilson's advisers asked if a response along the lines of Lloyd George's in the Caxton speech would be acceptable, for which he said "I hardly need tell you my response"[3] since the Caxton speech's reference had filled him with joy. "The reception accorded the message by Congress has been especially a triumph for France; no passage was more ardently applauded than the one on Alsace-Lorraine; the same passage on Belgium, which preceded and which was warmly applauded, did not excite an equal enthusiasm."[4] He spent no time on the high ideals Wilson proclaimed, such as a League of Nations, freedom of the seas, or disarmament. To keep track of the applause the eighth point of the 14 points Wilson gave surely betrays a certain single-mindedness in war aims.[5]

Another example of French emphasis on Alsace Lorraine was what the former French Minister of Munitions, Albert Thomas said: "I would like to say at once how deeply moved I felt when the Prime Minister (Lloyd George), turning to me, read the first words of the passage in his speech[6] concerning France and Alsace-Lorraine. . . . In the cordial conversation he had a few days ago with representatives of the Labour Party he emphasized his desire to be in complete agreement with the French democracy on this war aim. To-day it is with a clearness devoid of any reservation that he has pledged not only his Government but also, it may

[2]Arthur S. Link, editor, The Papers of Woodrow Wilson (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), Vol. 45, p. 550. For now on it will be called Wilson Papers.

[3]Ibid.

[4]Ibid.

[5]"Mr. Wilson's demand for the evacuation and restoration of Belgium brought Congress to its feet, but the climax was reached in the demand for the return of Alsace-Lorraine to France, when the whole House rose and cheered." London Times, January 10, 1918, p. 6.

[6]The Caxton speech of January 5, 1918.

be said, the British people."[7] Edward Mandell "Colonel" House, Wilson's close friend and adviser, complained the French put too much emphasis on Alsace Lorraine: "Up to now, both the British and French have said the things that the German Government wished them to say. I am trying to get them to adopt a policy of saying the things the German Government does not desire them to say. A case in point is Alsace and Lorraine. The French and British, particularly Lloyd George at the instance of the French, are constantly making Alsace and Lorraine an Allied ultimatum."[8] Lloyd George told Charles Prestwich Scott, the editor of the Manchester Guardian that if the Russians quit fighting he may not be able to give Poland its independence in order to get Alsace Lorraine for France.[9] David Hunter Miller, who was on the Inquiry commision for Wilson, pointed out in a memorandum in partial dissent to the other authors of it who did not want to totally box in the United States to a commitment to get Alsace Lorraine back for France: " . . . failure to state as an essential term of peace, the restoration of Alsace-Lorraine to France will end the war with a German victory, for France will believe that nothing is left worthy her blood and treasure. It is useless, and worse than useless, in any statement of war aims, to disguise or attempt to disguise by vague diplomatic language, the real purpose as to Alsace-Lorraine, for the French will not be deceived, and anything but plain language with a definite meaning belongs to a past era of history."[10] Clearly, regaining Alsace Lorraine was the major objective for France during this 1916-8 period.

The French also wanted not only Alsace Lorraine back, the material losses of the Franco-Prussian War, but they wanted to regain a sense of national pride and honor, the spiritual loss for them then. The American Ambassador to France, William Graves Sharp, noting the increasing bitterness of the French against the Germans due to the war, especially due to over a million battle deaths and permanent deaths and permanent injuries, also

[7] London Times, January 10, 1918, p. 6.
[8] Wilson Papers, Vol. 45, p. 3.
[9] Trevor Wilson, editor, The Political Diaries of C.P. Scott 1911-1928 (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1970), p. 304. This will be called C.P. Scott henceforth.
[10] Wilson Papers, Vol. 45, p. 474. From this memorandum Wilson drafted the 14 points.

commented: "Then, too, among those who remember the days of 1870-1, there is an intense desire to redeem France from what they regard her humiliation at the hands of the same enemy."[11]

Thus, for France avenging the crime of 1871 became its objective, which could only be accomplished by a decisive victory. While the Germans were willing in a compromise peace to evacuate Belgium and occupied France, Alsace Lorraine would not be.[12] The French government, especially as exemplified by Clemenceau's policies, were insistant on a decisive military win since such a win would be the only way to get Alsace Lorraine back. Clemenceau, like Lloyd George, wanted the "knockout blow." "We come before you with but on thought--war; nothing but war. . . . To conquer in order to be just has been the motto of all our Governments since the beginning of the war. This frank and open programme we shall maintain. . . . Through them, through us all, the immortal patrie of humanity, mastering the pride of victory, will follow, in its noble ambitions of peace, the course of its destinies. . . . Everything for France, bleeding in her glory, everything for the apotheosis of triumphant right. We have one sole, simple duty--to stand fast with the soldier, to live, suffer and fight with him, to rest from us everything that is not for our country."[13] Colonel House said Ambassador Jusserand, "admitted that it was probable that no material change in the western line could be made at least for a year or more, and I (House) suggested the wisdom of accepting your (Wilson's) offer of last spring to mediate. He seemed to concur in this, but at the last moment upon leaving, he veered away into the high-flown, foolish declaration that France would fight to the last man."[14] The French government, even though war weariness did exist among average French people,[15] causing some doubts about achieving these war aims,[16] was not going to accept a compromise peace if it could possibly help otherwise.

[11] Wilson Papers, Vol. 40, p. 482. This was from a telegram of January 15, 1917.

[12] New York Times, January 26, 1918. Chancellor Georg Freidrich Count Von Hertling said in reply to Wilson's eighth point, "I can only again expressly accentuate the fact there can never be a question of dismemberment of imperial territory."

[13] London Times, November 21, 1917, p. 8.

[14] Wilson Papers, Vol. 40, p. 139. This incident occurred on December 3, 1916.

When Lord Henry Charles Lansdowne proposed restating war aims as a means of starting negotiations towards a compromise peace with Germany, Clemenceau replied: "I am in agreement with Lord Lansdowne on his premises that without lasting peace we all feel that the task we have set ourselves will remain unaccomplished. But what peace will be lasting? A clearly defined peace; a peace which leaves no room either for the revindication of oppressed peoples or for the dangers of aggression; in one word, a peace of the right. Outside of that there is no safety. To persevere in our efforts as long as is necessary for the achievement of a peace of justice is to be good citizens of the world as well as patriots. Imperialism on the one side--democracy on the other--between the two a chasm which (no) matter what Lord Lansdowne may believe, cannot be bridged."[17]

For France, the reasons for continuing the war were obvious: redeeming Alsace Lorraine and national honor. Unlike the British, who came into the war based on the lofty goal of fighting for a small nation ruthlessly invaded by a nation pledged to defend it, the French had obvious national goals in mind, and so were not very idealistic. Unlike the British and (especially) American governments, who used a lofty idealism to justify entry into and continuance of the war, the French government did not have to repeat it war aims regularly for internal use, for they were obvious to all Frenchmen and women. According to House, France in the early December of 1917, after the Bolshevik Revolution and the Lansdowne letter's publication, was "indifferently against" stating war aims again, while"England passively was willing."[18] The more grandiose objectives France had in the various secret treaties, such as detaching the Rhineland from Germany, and annexing

[16]Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, Lansing Papers 1914-1920 (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1940), Vol. 2, p. 32. Henceforth, it shall be called Foreign Relations. The British Foreign Minister, Arthur James Balfour, said that he was told the French were not as eager about getting Alsace Lorraine back due to war weariness and the burdens of the war. This letter reporting this was sent to Lansing on May 18, 1917.

[17]Chicago Tribune, December 11, 1917, p. 3.

[18]Wilson Papers, vol. 45. p. 184. House wrote this on December 2, 1917, right after the Allies' Supreme War Council met.

the Saar,[19] many in the French government were not at all reticent about stating such desires, such as Marshal Ferdinand Foch during the Paris Peace Conference. Clemenceau was to somewhat covertly push these goals,[20] not caring at all about self determination or other such ideals the Anglo-Saxon nations were pushing. Clemenceau sneered at the League by saying the socialists in the Chamber of Deputies appeared to believe a League would come from a miracle overnight. He said he did not believe in miracles, and even if it was formed, would not have Germany in it.[21] His legendary reply to Wilson's 14 points ("The good God had only 10"[22]) shows the French government was not seriously motivated by Wilsonian idealism, even if it made pro forma bows in public for the 14 points or Lloyd George's Caxton speech.

For Great Britain, the picture concerning war aims was much more clouded. The crowned republic of Britain, as always never quite thoroughly reactionary or loyally liberal,[23] played a suitable ambivalent role in developing Allied war aims in the November 1916-January 1918 period. The same government signed the treaties dividing up Turkey (Sykes-Picot) and proposing to give non-Italian Dalmatia to Italy in exchange for declaring war on Austria (Treaty of London), also produced the Caxton speech and the pro-German plebiscite in Silesia after the war all in the space of four years. The British declared war on Germany to defend a poor, helpless nation it was pledged to protect by treaty--and if its dominions got the change to annex the German colonies, that was all fine and good. The Prime Minister who gave the "No Halfway House" speech of December 14, 1917, with its ringing praises of decisive victory three weeks later gave the moderately-toned, idealistic Caxton speech on January 5, 1918. This is not to say the British government was necessarily hypocritical, but many times practical self-interest was very conveniently tied to moral idealism, and the British often took full advantage of such

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[19] Foreign Relations, 1917, supplement 2, p. 505. Here one finds the Russian Foreign minister approving French desires to annex the Saar and make the Rhineland an autonomous state.

[20] Clemenceau did so off the record because "he was anxious to avoid a rebuff which would be recorded in the minutes of the conference." See David Lloyd George, Memoirs of the Peace Conference (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1939), vol. 1, p. 253.

[21] London Times, November 21, 1917, p. 10.

[22] [illegible] Times.

overlaps. Lloyd George's pushing through of the Silesian plebiscite later at the Paris Peace Conference shows the British did take their ideals seriously at least part of the time.

In the early December of 1916, the new Lloyd George government, Liberal-led but Tory-dominated, had come to power promising total victory. To illustrate this promise, consider the first speech Lloyd George gave as Prime Minister: "And let me say that any man or set of men who wantonly and without sufficient cause prolongs a terrible conflict like this has on his soul a crime that oceans could not cleanse; on the other hand, a man or set of men who from a sense of war weariness abandoned the struggle without achieving the high purpose for which we had entered into it, would be guilty of the most ghastly poltroonery ever perpetrated by any statesman." He went on to make a statement of American President Abraham Lincoln his own: "We accepted the war for an object, an worthy object. The war will end when that object is attained. Under God I hope it will never end until that time."[24] Skepticism against the Welshman and his promises definitely existed in England. John Howard Whitehouse, a liberal member of Parliament and his former parliamentary private secretary said: "Lloyd George now appears to be in. He was bound to be tried as a strong well advertised quack medicine, but is I think unlikely to cure the patient."[25] Colonel House felt his ministry could be "very short lived."[26] But, as it turned out, Lloyd George was a consumate politician who actually happened to deliver on this particular promise, thanks to being bailed out by the Americans.

As Lloyd George took power December 5, 1916 he soon faced two challenges to definte just what his program of the "knockout blow" was supposed to accomplish. The German peace note of December 12 and Wilson's "war aims" note of December 18 both challenged Lloyd George and his government to do some more specific thinking about what an Allied victory would accomplish

[23]Herbert George Wells, The Outline of History (Garden City, N.Y.: Garden City Books, 1956), Vol. 2, p.

[24]New York Times, December 20, 1916, p. 1.

[25]Wilson Papers, vol. 40, p. 187.

[26]Wilson Papers, vol. 40, p. 201.

for the British and/or the world. Even in the December of 1917 his mind was not fully clear on the subject: "I (Charles Prestwich Scott, Editor of the Manchester Guardian) asked what was to be held to constitute victory. He (Lloyd George) said we should have victory when we were manifestly dominant. I said that was only to say the same thing in different words. Then he fell back on Wilson's definition of the aim of a victorious war which was that the world should have been made a safe place for democracy. But I objected that he had never explained by what test we were to judge when that conclusion had been reached. Then he turned to (L.S.) Amery (a strongly imperialist Conservative member of Parliament) and asked him how he would define victory. Amery gave the simple and obvious reply that he should consider we were victorious when we were able to secure the terms of settlement which we considered necessary, in which I entirely concurred. From all which it appeared . . . George had not really thought out our war aims and when he talked of victory was talking rhetorically, unless he meant simply victory in the field, which may not be attainable."[27] In the December of 1916, his mind was presumably even less clear on the subject of war aims.

In his first speech as Prime Minister to Parliament, on December 19, 1916 he replied to the German note informally. He knew war aims were important: "We must keep a steadfast eye upon the purpose for which we entered the war, otherwise the great sacrifices we have been making will be all in vain."[28] What came to his mind was the prior Prime Minister Herbert Henry Asquith's formulation, which Conservative Party leader Bonar Law had just recently restated: "'restitution, reparation, guarantees against repitition.'"[29] He denounced the German note's reference to respecting the rights of other (small) nations with a burst of inspired sarcasm: "Menaced, I suppose, by the overwhelming armies of Belgium, the Germans had been intimidated into invading that country, to the burning of Belgian cities and villages, to the

[27] C.P. Scott, p. 319-20. Note also p. 253: "He (Lloyd George on Wilson's note on December 21, 1916) said it was impossible for us to state definitely our terms just now."

massacring of thousands of inhabitants . . ." He believed the German military caste had to be destroyed or at least tamed, which could inevitably only be accomplished by a decisive win since ruling classes seldom give up their power voluntarily: "The Allies entered into this war to defend Europe against the aggression of Prussian military domination and they must insist that the end is a complete and effective gurantee against the possibility of that caste ever again disturbing the peace of Europe."[30] While mentioning nothing of a League of Nations, he did refer to restoring international law as an objective: "This is a struggle for international right, international honour, international good faith--the channel along which peace, honour, and good will must flow amongst men."[31] So while Lloyd George had not systematically thought out all the Allies' war aims as shown before above, he still definitely had a general list of sought for items, some of them idealistic.

President Wilson's "war aims" note of December 18, 1916 was very badly timed from Lloyd George's point of view. Here he is, just coming into office, promising total victory, and Wilson dumps unexpectedly this note on him implying a compromise peace is possible, desirable, and necessary in so many words. While Wilson denied the note was "proposing peace" or "even offering mediation,"[32] and just only wanted the war aims of each side, Lloyd George quite properly saw it as an attempt to arrange an immediate compromise peace.[33]

Lloyd George, not to mention English newspapers,[34] were incensed by how Wilson seemingly put the Allies and Central Powers on the same moral level by his statement " . . . the objects, which the statesmen of belligerents on both sides have in mind in this war, war virtually the same . . ."[35] Lloyd George also attacked Wilson's note as being tied to the German peace move of six days earlier: "George was extremely anxious that the Manchester

[30] Ibid. [31] Ibid., p. 2

[32] New York Times, December 21, 1916, p. 1.

[33] Wilson said in a letter to House on November 21, 1916: " . . . this is very nearly the time, if not the time itself, for our move for peace." See Wilson Papers, vol. 40, p. 20.

[34] New York Times, December 23, 1916, p. 2.

[35] New York Times, December 21, 1916, p. 1.

Guardian should not back Wilson's proposals. He said that they knew, absolutely knew, that it was put forward at the inspiration of (German Ambassador to the United States, Johann Heinrich von) Bernstorff and he implied that America had done a deal with Germany. . . . He spoke of the tone of the note which he described as almost insulting, especially the passage where it said that the aims of the belligerents were identical."[36] He opposed even stating terms, let alone arranging a compromise peace because: "Germany was selling at the top of her market."[37] Clearly Lloyd George did not like Wilson's peace move at all for it attacked his policy of the "knockout blow."

So now the Allied governments had to reply both to Wilson's note and the Central Powers' note. The Allied reply to the latter, sent on December 30, 1916, took a very hardline stance against Germany, and condemned the Central Powers' offer of peace negotiations as "empty and insincere."[38] The Allied note blamed Germany for starting the war, for various atrocities, especially the invation and occupation of Belgium. It condemned the German note for lacking peace terms, but it itself was not very specific on them either. It mentioned that due to German "outrages" "against both belligerents and neutrals demand penalties, reparation and guarantees."[39] Here is the Asquith-Law formula once again. However, in one paragraph more specific terms were mentioned, which were similar to Lloyd George's statements on December 19, 1916: "Once again the Allies declare that no peace is possible so long as they have not secured reparation for violated rights and liberties, the recognition of the principle of nationality (i.e. self-determination) and of the free existence of small States, so long as they have not brought about a settlement calculated to end once and for all forces which have constituted a perpetual menace to the nations (i.e. 'destroy the Prussian military caste'), and to afford the only effective guarantee for the future security of the world."[40] Notice that no League of nations is mentioned in the note or some

[36] C.P. Scott, p. 253.
[37] Ibid.
[38] New York Times, December 31, 1916, p. 1.
[39] Ibid.
[40] Ibid.

such similar idea. Thus, in a very harsh, condemnatory note, the British[41] took a somewhat idealistic line when war aims were mentioned due to emphasizing self-determination, international law, and protecting small nations amidst demands for penalties and reparations.

Replying to Wilson's note was more problematic for the Allies, for they had not fully thought their war aims through, for Wilson wanted specific terms: "The leaders of the several belligerents have, as has been said stated those objects in general terms. But, stated in generalterms, they seem the same on both sides. Never yet have the authoritive spokesmen of either side allowed the precise objects which would, if attained satisfy them and their people that the war had been fought out."[42] Germany had replied to Wilson long before the Allies in a deplorably vague and brief note that only stated the willingness to negotiate in a peace conference.[43] No war aims here, yet Germany's war aims were what Wilson wanted above all.[44] The British and French argued about whether to be similarly vague, but following Lloyd Cecil and Phillipe Berthelot's desires to be specific,[45] the Allies were specific in their reply. Lansing, through both the British and French Ambassadors in America, had told the Allies Wilson's note was not an unfriendly gesture, and just wanted specific terms from the Allies, which he then went on to suggest.[46] The American Secretary of State obviously operated under a creative definition of "neutrality" when doing this. So the British[47] then chose to comply and be specific.

The Allies' note to Wilson again took the opportunity to morally condemn various German atrocities and to blame Germany and Austria for starting the war. The note also stated a key argument constantly repeated by the "decisive victory" school of thought: No guarantee against future violations

[41] Balfour largely this note. New York Times, January 3, 1917, p. 1.
[42] New York Times, December 21, 1916, p. 1.
[43] New York Times, December 27, 1916, p. 1.
[44] New York Times, December 23, 1916, p. 8. Notice that the Times' opinion is partly confirmed by Lansing's statements in Wilson Papers, vol. 40, p. 308-9.
[45] Wilson Papers, vol. 40, p. 442.
[46] Balfour also appears to have been the main author of this note, though since it was written with two Frenchmen it was put in French. New York Times, January 3, 1917, p. 1. This describes the meeting in which the Allies decided

of international law and "Teutonic" agression could be firm unless the Allies won a decisive military victory against the Central Powers. They attacked the idea of an immediate compromise peace: "But they (the Allies) believe that it is impossible at the present moment to attain a peace which will assure them reparation, restitution, and such guarantees to which they are entitled by the aggression for which the responsibility rests with the Central Powers, and of which (their) principle itself tended to ruin the security of Europe itself . . ."[48] The Allies specifically called for the evacuation and restoration of Belgium, Serbia, and Montenegro, as well as the invaded areas of Russia, France, and Rumania. An oblique refernce of Alsace Lorraine and Italia Irredentia was included: "The restitution of provinces or territories wrested in the past from the Allies by force or against the will of their populations."[49] References to indemnities, the Czar's promise to the Poles, "expulsion from Europe" of the "bloody tyranny of the Turks," and the "enfranchisement" of the Ottoman Empire's people's also got mentioned. Finally, the Allies more idealistically pledged to promote international law, create international guarantees for small and large nations against agression, "respect of nationalities" (i.e. self-determination), "liberate Europe from the brutal covetousness of Prussian Militarism," and not exterminate the German race or end their existence politically. A League of Nations was not mentioned. Again, the British (and other Allies) pledged themselves to a program of both realism and idealism.

The explusion of the Turks was especially an interesting refernce, for it sanitized Russia's desire for the Straits[50] by calling upon (implicitly) Christendom's crusading spirit to drive out the infidels. Britain justified this move because of Turkish astrocities and aggression. As Balfour explained in a later, separate note. "The Turkey of 'Union and Progress' is at least

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[48] New York Times, January 12, 1917, p. 1. Note the repitition of the Asquith-Law formula.

[49] Ibid.

[50] France recognized "Russia's complete liberty in establishing her western frontiers" including "the question of Constantinople and the Straits" according to the Russian ambassador to France in a letter for the Russian Minister of [illegible] relations, 1917, supplement 2, p. 506.

as barbarous and is far more aggressive than the Turkey of Sultan Abdul Hamid. . . . (Turkey) has been guilty of massacres in Armenia and Syria more horrible than any recorded in the history even of those unhappy countries. Evidently the interests of peace and the claims of nationality alike require that Turkish rule over alien races shall if possible be brought to an end; and we may hope that the expulsion of Turkey from Europe will contribute as much to the cause of peace as the restoration of Alsace Lorraine . . ."[51] Notice how Balfour comes out into the open on the Alsace Lorraine issue as well here. On June 29, 1917 in Glasgow, Lloyd George made similar points, including not restoring Mesopotamia "to the blasting tyranny of the Turk" and condemning the Turkish atrocities in Armenia.[52] Thus, the British had a somewhat plausible reply to German objections to satisfying Russian Imperialism such as this one: ". . . the Entente note mentions the right of nationalities, although one of the avowed war purposes of the Entente is the conquest of Constantinople and the Strait."[53]

Balfour's note of above (January 13, 1917) and Lloyd George's "A Safe Investment" speech of January 11, 1917[54] both held to making the case for decisive military victory as the only guarantee of a permanent peace. Balfour was particularly skeptical of the idea of imposing a compromise peace and setting up a League of Nations immediately. As he put it: "If then the Central Powers succeed, it will be due to methods like these (atrocities on land and sea) that they will owe their success. How can any reform of International relations be based on a peace thus obtained? . . . Are the victors likely to abandon it ("terrorism by land and sea") on the appeal of neutrals? If existing Treaties are no more than scraps of paper, can fresh Treaties help us?"[55] As Lloyd George put it, "Before we attempt to rebuild the temple of peace we must see now that the foundations are solid. They were built

[51] Wilson Papers, vol. 40, p. 500-1. This message was written January 13, 1917.
[52] Great Crusade, p. 156.
[53] New York Times, January 2, 1917, p. 1.
[54] Great Crusade, p. 88-97.
[55] Wilson Papers, vol. 40, p. 502.

before upon the shifting sands of Prussian faith; henceforth, when the time for rebuilding comes, it must be on the rock of vindicated justice."[56] Needless to say, such as a frame of mind will not be receptive to Wilson's ideal of a "peace without victory," which soon (January 22) landed on top of the British government.

Wilson's "war aims" note, was first heatedly denounced in Britian at first as a German-inspired move and/or putting the Allies on the same moral plane as the Central Powers. But upon some reflection, some saw it as useful for forcing the Allies to think about war aims. "Second thoughts have shown matters in a much better light. In the first place, the Wilson note has compelled consideration in the concrete by the Allies of their own case, and they have come out of this travails of thought prepared to give the neturals, and particularly America, an itemized account that will sweep away the last vestige of doubt from every fair mind."[57] When Josiah Wedgwood, Liberal Member of Parliament, said England would give no specific information for her "demands" even secretly in a letter received by Wilson on December 29, 1916, he must have felt abashed when the Allied note to Wilson was far more specific than the Central Powers' reply.[58] When C.P. Scott recorded that, "Wilson's note was meant to embarass us (said Lloyd George). He said it was impossible for us to state definitely our terms just now,"[59] it was useful to get Lloyd George and his Government to think beyond the three Rs of reparation, restitution, and no repitition.

When Wilson's "Peace Without Victory" speech was given,[60] the British government had a predictable reply: Lasting peace is possible only with victory. Law replied for the Government: "President Wilson's speech had this aim--to gain peace now and secure peace for the future. That is our aim and our only aim. . . . Peace (now) would leave the (Prussian)

[56] Great Crusade, p. 88-9.
[57] New York Times, January 3, 1917, p. 2. This was said nine days before the Allied reply to Wilson was published.
[58] Wilson Papers, vol. 40, p. 361.
[59] C.P. Scott, p. 253.
[60] New York Times, January 23, 1917, p. 1.

military machine unbroken, with the halo of success surrounding it. It would leave the control of that military machine in the hands of the same men who for a generation prepared for war, who would make the same preparation again and who would choose their own time to plunge the world into the horrors which we are not enduring."[61] He did have some positive words for the League of Nation idea, "It would not be right to regard this proposal as something altogether Utopian," and said that one day nations fighting wars would become like what duelling now is between individuals--eliminated by a governing authority.[62] Law's reference to a League was clearer than Balfour's in his note of January 13, 1917.

As America entered the war in April, the British did not need to discuss their war aims so much since Wilson had come around to their views on the necessity of winning the war decisively. Indeed, it was left mostly to Wilson to shoot down the Papal peace note for a compromise peace in the August of 1917.[63]

But as November and December came, the British government and Press suffered a number of events that called for a restatement of war aims. First was the collapse of the Russian war effort and the Bolshevik revolution, who quickly took Russia out of the war. To the general uneasiness caused by this has to be added the failure of Allied offensives to accomplish anything at Passchendaele, Chemin des Dames, and even the failure of the new "wonder weapon" tank offensive to accomplish anything at Cambrai.[64] The Italian disaster at Caporetto added to the sense of failure militarily, which cast serious doubt on Lloyd George's idea of the "knockout blow" being possible. Then both the Central Powers and then the Bolsheviks launched peace conference invitations to the Western powers for them to come to Brest-Litovsk. The Bolsheviks also demanded point-blank the Western powers' war aims.[65] They then proceeded to publish the infamous secret treaties, which cast

[61] New York Times, January 23, 1917, p. 1-2.

[62] Ibid.

[63] New York Times, August 29, 1917, p. 1.

[64] See William Hepburn Buckler's letter to House, November 30, 1917, Wilson Papers, vol. 45, p. 174-5.

doubt on whether the war was such a holy, noble, righteous cause after all. Labor unrest in England was stirring, and "pacifist" propaganda from anti-war Labourites was causing trouble.[66] And on top of all this with a thud arrived Lord Lansdowne's[67] plea for a restatement of war aims and a compromise peace[68] in the Daily Telegraph of November 19, 1917. Just what is this--a high ranking establishment Conservative wanting peace? So the British government and press seem to go almost war aims crazy from late November to early January 1918, as the New York Times from its trans-Atlantic vantage point said: ". . . for British society, a part of it at least, for some weeks has been passing through a time, we will not say of mental depression, but of spiritual shivering and gooseflesh."[69]

The Bolsheviks were particularly important for stirring up the pot, for they took Russia out of the war, which made Lloyd George's idea of the "knockout blow" that much more militarily difficult to accomplish. They then demanded Allied war aims and invited the British and other Allies to come to Brest Litovsk. Leon Trotsky, the Bolshevik Foreign Minister, challenged Britain and the other Allies: "The period of delay thus given (in negotiations with the Central Powers), even in the existing disturbed condition of international communication is amply sufficient to afford the allied governments governments opportunity to define their attitudes toward peace negotiations--that is, their willingness or refusal to participate in negotiations for an armistice and definitely before all mankind the aims for which the peoples of Europe may (be) called to shed their blood during the fourth year of the war."[70] Their radical ideals and demands for a "peace without indemnities or annexations" was also a challenge to British, and even American idealism. The Bolsheviks taunted the Central Powers govern-

[66]See the letter from Lansing to Wilson, enclosure 1, November 30, 1917, Wilson Papers, vol. 45, p. 167.

[67]Henry Charles Keith Petty-Fitzmaurice, the fifth Marquess of Lansdowne: die-hard conservative and former Foreign Secretary under Asquith, now a leader in the House of Lords.

[68]New York Times, November 30, 1917, p. 1-2.

[69]New York Times, January 7, 1917, p. 12. A careful examination of the London Times of this period, even though it itself did not really want to restate them, confirms this.

ments by pointing out: "Under your (the Central Powers' peoples) pressure your governments have been obliged to accept the motto of no annexations and no indemnities, but recently they have been trying to carry on their old policy of evasions."[71] They also held to a radical (for then) doctrine that all peoples in all lands (including the colonies seized before World War I by imperialism) have the right to self determination. "Never will we recognize the justice of imposing the will of a foreign nation on any other nation whatsoever."[72]

For the British still had the idea of picking up at least some of the German colonies: "No doubt many people would prefer that the result of the war should be that the German African Colonies should be simply annexed, partly by us and partly by France, and that otherwise the status of Equatorial Africa should remain unchanged."[73] "I fully appreciate the reasons which make it impossible for the Government to make any announcement at this stage of the war, but conversant as I am with the views, not only of the Governments, but of the peoples of our Great Dominions, I am satisfied that they effect of the return of these Colonies to Germany would be disastrous to the future of the Empire."[74] Hence, Lloyd George in his Glasgow speech of June 27, 1917 had deliberately been reticent about stating the German colonies fate, probably also since he perceived them to be a useful bargaining chip in case the Allies did not win a decisive victory also: "As to the German colonies, that is a matter which must be settled by the great international Peace Congress. Let me point out that our critics talk as if we had annexed lands peopled by Germans, as if we had subjected the Teutonic people to British rule."[75] Inevitably, Bolshevik ideas of self-determination

[71] New York Times, January 4, 1918, p. 2. See also article III of the armistice concluded at Brest-Litovisk, December 15, 1917, Cabinet Minutes, the Memoranda, January 1, 1918, 24/37, #3224, 112.

[72] New York Times, January 4, 1918, p. 2.

[73] Cabinet Minutes, the Memoranda, 24/39, #3133, 38.

[74] Cabinet Minutes, the Memoranda, January 1918, 24/37, #3174, 210.

[75] Great Crusade, p. 157.

were not going to line up well with the desires and policies of the Colonial Office.

The Bolsheviks' unveiling of the secret treaties[76] was especially embarrassing for the British, who proclaiming the lofty rhetoric of defending poor, helpless Belgium against German aggression, had participated in both the giving of non-Italian Dalmatia to Italy to get her in the war on the Allied side,[77] and had signed by infamous Sykes-Picot agreement that divided most of the Ottoman Empire into roughly equal sized chunks to be split up among the (hopefully later) victorious Allies.[78] Balfour had to do some explaining in Parliament one day for the Government: "As for conference on war aims, none, Mr. Balfour, explained had ever been refused by the Government. Besides, the broad objects of the war had never been in doubt. Mr. Ponsonby (the questioning Labour Party Member of Parliament) had gone to the secret treaties--which, to quote Mr. Balfour's words, the present holders of power in Petrograd had most illegitimately made public--to show that this country was really in the war for Imperial gains. He took the specific instances recounted by his critic one by one--Constantinople, Persia, Italy, Alsace-Lorraine. He denied that in any of these the British Government was doing anything for the Imperial aims of this country."[79] Some time before the secret treaties were published, Lloyd George in the June 29, 1917 Glasgow speech responded to charges of Imperialism concerning the German colonies this way: "But they say, 'That is not what you are after (defending international law and self-determination). You are after our colonies and Mesopotamia, and perhaps Palestine.' If we had entered into this war purely for German colonies we would not have raised an army of three or four millions. We could have got them all without adding a single battalion to the army we had, and if Germany had won elsewhere we should have defied the whole of her victorious legions to take one of them back. If we engaged in the gigantic enterprise, it was

[76] For their text, see Foreign Relations, 1917, supplement 2, p. 493-507.
[77] Ibid., p. 497-500.
[78] Ibid., p. 501-502.
[79] London Times, December 20, 1917, p. 7.

not for German colonies. Our greatest army is in France. What territory are we after there? We have an army in Salonika. What land are we coveting there? We are there to recover for people who have been driven out of their patrimony the land (i.e. Belgium and Serbia) which belongs to them and to their fathers."[80] In a letter published in the Daily Chronicle in England, Sir Algernon Methuen said: "Refusal to publish war aims is weakening both the Government and the nation. When Britain entered into the war in 1914 she was filled with no selfish ambition. She had an ideal in her heart. Today we are disillusioned. We have been shocked by the publication of secret treaties which disclose dreams of annexation which would have seemed immoderate to Alexander or Napoleon. . . . the ambitions of the Allies should be clearly defined and publicly stated. They should be moderate; they should be as far as possible unselfish . . ."[81] Needless to say, the can of worms the Bolsheviks opened for the Allies would impact Wilson's as well as Lloyd George's statements on war aims.

A last major influence was the "strange letter" of Lord Lansdowne. Though having been an early supporter of the war, he had had second thoughts as the immense slaughter and expense continued with no end in sight. "We are not going to lose this war, but its prolongation will spell ruin for the civilized world and an infinite addition to the load of human suffering, which already weighs upon it."[82] He called for a restatment of war aims, especially because before they had not been specific enough on "territorial questions," mentioning five conditions he listed that would encourage the peace party in Germany. He called for a League of Nations as well. He effectively called for an immediate compromise peace[83] by saying: "Some of our original desiderata have probably become unattainable, others would probably now be given a less prominent place than when they were first put

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[80] Great Crusade, p. 155-6.

[81] New York Times, January 3, 1918, p. 2. Notice how this was said just before the Caxton and 14 Points speeches, indicating what was on many people's minds.

[82] New York Times, November 30, 1917, p. 1. Could this be most directly influential letter to the editor ever written, especially for the worldwide press controversy it made?

[83] True, Lansdorme said, "we want to inflict a signal defeat upon the Central Powers,

forward. . . . But when it comes to a wholesale rearrangement of the map of southeastern Europe[84] we may well ask for a suspension of judgment and for the elucidation which a frank exchange of views between the allied powers . . . (who) will make it their business to examine and, if necessary, to revise territorial requirements." Lansdowne's letter was a serious challenge to Lloyd George, for now his promises of total victory were under assault by an establishment, politically experienced figure of the Right, when before peace questionings had been exclusive property of the Left in England.

The influence this letter had in drawing responses to it was enormous, with much of the initial public response very negative. The London Times was particularly vitrolic through printing denunciations of it in succeeding days. For instance, it editorialized: "It is not wonderful, in view of this extraordinarily foolish and mischievous letter, that Professor Delbruck and other Germans should have recently named Lord Lansdowne--in very incongrous company, it is true (i.e. most anti-war people were of a socialist bent)--as a pillar of the peace party for which they diligently seek among us."[85] The Globe labeledit "Lansdowne's stab in the back."[86] The New York Times called it "most inopportune, it does great harm to the Allied cause, it encourages the German party of war (not peace, as Lansdowne had in his letter), for inevitably it is there construed as evidence that there are divided counsels in England, that the British are weakening in their determination to conquer."[87] The Chicago Tribune labeled it: "ill timed if not suspicious. Peace at this time would leave the Prussian doctrine of profitable war making not only intact but stronger than ever."[88] But a minority of papers had good words for it, such as the Manchester Guardian: "The

[84]Balfour had plotted precisely this. In a memorandum he proposed undoing the treaty of Bucharest and increasing Bulgaria's size even though she was an enemy nation, and generally redrawing the Balkans national borders on a stricter self-determination principle than the Paris Peace Conference would do to avoid future wars. See Cabinet Minutes, the Memoranda, 24/35, #2957, 243.

[85]London Times, November 30, 1917, p. 9.

[86]New York Times, December 1, 1917, p. 2.

[87]New York Times, December 1, 1917, p. 12.

[88]Chicago Tribune, December 3, 1917, p. 8.

infamy and harm that comes in the country from Lansdowne's letter will come, not from the letter iself, but from the wild misrepresentations of its terms and purpose, and from the deductions based on these."[89]

The leaders of the British Government first repudiated the letter and said it did not represent their position. For since Lansdowne had only been in the cabinet 12 months before under Asquith, there was the chance some people could take it as a statement of policy.[90] Then, in a series of assaults climaxing with Lloyd George's "No Halfway House" speech of two weeks later,[91] the British ruling coalition's leaders assaulted Lansdowne's thesis. They obviously saw it as a threat. Even Wilson joined in when he asked for a declaration of war against Austria-Hungary on December 4, 1917 in the State of the Union address for the year.[92]

Law was the first to wade in: "But I must say that I disagree absolutely not only with the arguments, but with the whole tone of his (Lansdowne's) letter. (cheers.) I think it is nothing less than a national misfortune that it should have been published, now of all times. (cheers.) . . . Lord Lansdowne's letter is based upon the assumption . . . that because the Germans say they are ready to have a pact of nations, and to talk about disarmament, that therefore peace is possible. Why, gentlemen, just look at the past. Before the war our Government did not dare to suggest disarmament to the Germans. . . ."[93] Austen Chamberlain, Member of Parliament, said: "I think the letter unfortunate because some of the ideas which it expresses may easily give rise to misapprehension of what is in Lord Lansdowne's own mind and may be an instrument of mischief by our enemies. I think it inopportune, because (with Russia in Revolution, Rumania more than half occupied, and Italy reeling from the Caporetto disaster) that anything should be said or written which to anyone could give a moment's cause for doubt

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[89] New York Times, December 4, 1917, p. 2. See also November 30, 1917, p. 1, which shows this minority was larger than the London Times would like you to believe.

[90] London Times, December 1, 1917, p. 9.

[91] Great Crusade, p. 233-250.

[92] This was especially ironic, for Wilson had been the man wanting a "peace without victory" only eleven months earlier.

[93] London Times, December 1, 1917, p. 10.

as to the firmness of this country or her loyalty to the Allies. (Cheers.)"[94] Asquith, although in the opposition, also had critical things to say about the letter, but he was relatively kind and pointed out it had been misinterpreted by many. He still thought the war had been worth the sacrifices if: "that the war ends in a peace which secures the attainment of our original purposes and which contains in itself the safeguards of its own permanence. . . . There is no greater enemy of the human race at this moment than the man, if there be such a man, who by word or act makes it more difficult to achieve."[95]

Wilson from across the Atlantic launched an assault on Lansdowne in his State of the Union address of December 4, 1917 in which he declared war on Austria-Hungary: "(The American people) desire peace by the overcoming of evil, by the defeat once for all of the sinister forces that interrupt peace and render it impossible . . . They are impatient with those who desire peace by any sort of compromise--deeply and indignantly impatient,--but they will be equally impatient with us if we do not make it plain to them what our objectives are (emphasis added--notice how Lansdowne's request on stating war aims is answered, even as his peace ideas are spurned, which was what Asquith had done on December 1, 1917) and what we are planning for in seeking to make conquest of peace by arms. . . . First . . . the German (militarist) power, a Thing without conscience or honour or capacity for covenanted peace (i.e. that is, Germany's present government is totally unsuitable for inclusion in a League of Nations, at least so long as the 'Prussian military caste' runs it), must be crushed (Notice how Wilson's rhetoric here is equal to anything Lloyd George had said) . . . Let there be no misunderstanding. Our present and immediate task is to win the war, and nothing shall turn us aside from it until it is accomplished. . . . Those who desire to bring peace about (i.e. Lansdowne) before that purpose is achieved I counsel to carry their advice elsewhere. We will not entertain it."[96] Here Wilson says good riddance

[94] Ibid.
[95] Ibid., p. 9.
[96] Wilson Papers, vol. 45, p. 195-196.7

to Lansdowne's ideas on a compromise peace, but throughout the speech he states America's--and the Allies'--war aims, which was what Lansdowne had also wanted.

Winston Churchill, the Minister of Munitions, on December 11, 1917 spoke, showing the Lansdowne controversy was hardly dead two weeks after his letter was published: "We read in the newspapers and in some speeches which are delivered of appeals to the Government to tell the truth about the war, to tell the truth about our war aims . . . By all means re-state war aims in any terms you like, but for my part Wilson's statement of war aims (of December 4, 1917) is good enough for me. (Great cheering.) . . . I am afraid there are some people who go about saying, 'Restate your war aims,' when what they really mean is 'Make friends with the victorious Huns.' . . . To talk of peace now, to make a peace based upon military weakness and war weariness, would be to rejected the proffered comradeship of the United States. It would be to cut ourselves off from the bright prospects of the future, it would be to squander the solid assets of victory which are at our disposal, won for us by their intense suffering, it would be to disperse the world-wide league of (n)ations of which we are proud to be the centre."[97]

Finally, Lloyd George himself weighed in against Landsdowne with his vitriolic "No Halfway House" speech[98] of December 14, 1917: "But the man I cannot comprehend is the sort of man who, when he first saw these (German) outrages, called out, his generous soul aflame with righteous wrath, 'In the name of Heaven let us leap in and arrest this infamy, and if we fail, then at least let us punish the perpetrators so as to make it impossible for it to happen again.' And having said all this and having helped to commit the nation to that career of honour (Lansdowne had been a member of the Asquith Government and had been an early exponent of the war, unlike Lloyd George who was opposed until Belgium had gotten invaded), now, before the task is nearly accomplished, he suddenly turns round and says, 'I have had enough of this. It is time it

[97] London Times, December 11, 1917, p. 4.

[98] Great Crusade, p. 233-250.

should come to an end. Let us shake hands with the malefactor. Let us trade with him to our mutual advantage.' He is not to be asked for reparation for damage done. He need not even apologise. He is simply invited to enter into a bargain to join with you in punching the head of the next man who dares to imitate his villanies. . . . Now, what do you think would be the effect on crime (of such a bargain)? It is idle to talk of security to be won by such feeble means. There is no security in any land without certainty of punishment. . . . The law of nations is no exception, and, until it has been vindicated, the peace of the world will always be at the mercy of any nation whose professors have assiduously taught it to believe that no crime is wrong so long as it leads to the aggrandisement and enrichment of the country to which they owe allegiance."[99]

Lloyd Geroge also clearly targeted Lansdowne by saying: "The danger is not the extreme pacifist. I am not afraid of him. But I warn the nation to watch the man who thinks that there is a halfway house between victory and defeat. There <u>is</u> no halfway house between victory and defeat.[100] These are the men who think that you can end the war now by some sort of what they call pact of peace, by the setting up of a League of Nations. . . . That is the right policy after victory.[101] Without victory it would be a farce. Why, we are engaged in a war because an equally solemn treaty was treated as a scrap of paper. Who would sign the new treaty? I presume, among others, the people who have so far successfully broken the last. Who would enforce the new treaty? I presume that they would be the nations that have so far not quite succeeded in enforcing the last. To end the war entered on, to enforce a (more sweeping) treaty without reparation . . . would be, indeed, a farce in the setting of a tragedy."[102] Notice how over two weeks after Lansdowne's letter was published, Lloyd George still felt called upon to answer him. Notice also reparations are wanted still. The strongtone of this speech lead the <u>Chicago Tribune</u> to headline the speech on the first page with the banner,

[99] <u>Great Crusade</u>, p. 236-7.

[100] Lloyd George was not about to give up his "knockout blow" policy.

"'Peace Now Treason.'"[103]

But what is the point of quoting all this anti-Lansdowne rhetoric? What is shows is how the Allies--especially the British government--took Lansdowne's proposals as a very serious threat. The controversy generated by Lansdowne's letter lasted for well over two weeks, and continued to linger even into early January when the Caxton and 14 Points speeches were drafted and given. Much evidence exists that this letter not only helped cause the British (and Americans) to think through more and state their war aims, as shown by the speeches quoted from above, the Asquith and Wilson speeches being among the best examples of this. The Lansdowne controversy, combined with Bolshevik rhetoric and peace proposals[104] and the peace move by the Central Powers,[105] helped to set the stage for both the Caxton speech of December 5 and the 14 points speech of December 8.

The letter's proposals about restating war aims and a compromise were very certainly in Wilson's and Lloyd George's minds. House wrote that: "The Lansdowne letter which appeared in the Daily Telegraph on Thursday was uppermost to-day (December 1--the last day of the Supreme War Council Meeting in 1917) in the mind of the British Prime Minister."[106] Harry Augustus Garfield on November 30 told Wilson in a personal letter that "Lord Lansdowne's letter published in the Washington Post of this morning is the most noteworthy and noblest utterance that has come out of England (during the War (?))."[107] Franklin Knight Lane on December 3 told Wilson that Colonel George Harvey was great disturbed over the Lansdowne letter, calling it a call from Junker to Junker that the war was destroying aristocratic, anti-liberal ideals and felt a new statement of war aims probably should be made, which only (felt Harvey) Wilson could do.[108] Sir William

[103] Chicago Tribune, December 15, 1917, p. 1.

[104] New York Times, January 8, 1918, p. 1. Notice the subheadline: "Press Backs Lloyd George Speech, Calling it Reply to the Bolsheviks."

[105] Austria's peace proposal was in the air at the same time. New York Times, December 6, 1917, p. 1. Count Albert von Mensdorff-Pouilly-Dietrichstein, who had been the Austrian Ambassador to Britain from 1904-14, suggested restating war aims and having a general peace conference. Lloyd George decided to act upon the former suggestion. See David Lloyd George, War Memoirs of David Lloyd George (London: Odhams Press Limited, 1936), p. 1490.

[106] Foreign Relations, 1917, supplement 2, p. 353.

[107] Wilson Papers, vol. 45, p. 173.

[108] Ibid., p. 193.

Wiseman on December 15 told House that: "The President's speech to Congress enthusiastically received in England. It expresses perfectly British sentiment and is excellent antidote to Lansdowne letter, which is generally recognized as an unfortunate blunder."[109] When discussing the reasons for giving the Caxton (not "No Halfway House") speech, Lloyd George said: "The desire for peace was spreading amongst men and women who, although they were convinced of the righteousness of the War, felt that the time had come for putting an end to its horrors in the name of humanity, if it could be done on any terms honourable and safe. Lord Lansdowne constituted himself the spokesman of this sentiment."[110] Much evidence also exists in routine journalistic analysis that Wilson's December 4 speech that declared war on Austria-Hungary was saying before it was given it was to be a reply to Lansdowne.[111] Plainly, Wilson and Lloyd George[112] took this letter by Lansdowne very seriously privately.

Another factor for Lloyd George giving the Caxton speech was labor unrest and the need to get the unions to release more men for the army. "The efforts we were making to comb out more men for the Army were meeting with resistance amongst the Trade Unions, whose loyalty and patriotism had throughout been above reproach. . . . Had they been driven into hostility, a dangerous rift in the home front would have been inevitable. The influence of the (James Ramsey) MacDonald section of the Labour movement was becoming greater, and their (anti-war) agitation was intensifying and gaining adherents. One of their number informed me that he never attended more packed and enthusiastic meetings tha(n) those which he addressed on peace the last year or two of the War. It was essential to convince the nation that we were not continuing the War merely to gain a vindictive or looting triumph, but that we had definite peace aims and that these were both just and attainable."[113] In a January 9, 1918 letter to Wilson, Thomas W. Lamont reported there had been

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[109] Ibid., p. 312.

[110] War Memoirs, vol. 2, p. 1491.

[111] New York Times, December 4, 1917, p. 1.

[112] "Afterwards, when we were alone, he spoke of the Lansdowne letter. I (C.P. Scott) said I thought Bonar Law had made a mistake in making so much of it and describing it as a 'national misfortune.' He (Lloyd George) said it had been his own intention when he came back from Paris to say that 'rather too much had been made of it,' but on reading the letter again he felt he could not. It was really a plea for immediate peace, though it did not say so in terms. And it was singularly ill-timed (because the Supreme Allied War Council did want to discuss terms for the Russians, and doing so would be seeming to accept the letter's

"outside Government circles much more sympathy with the Lansdowne point of view than newspaper reports would indicate. In other words, the people as a whole seemed to have reached a point where, though just as steadfast as ever, they could not endure to fight only blindly--when, for all they knew, Germany had already reached the point where she might make terms almost as favorable to-day as three years hence. In other words, English people were asking for further definitions of war aims and peace terms. . . .The result of this growing feeling has shown in Mr. Lloyd George's recent utterance . . ."[114] And the Labor situation in England was a problem, as Lansing sent a naval intelligence report to Wilson on November 30, 1917: "In regard to the labor situation in England, it is reported that the fight of labor against the Prime Minister, that is now being organized, may be very far reaching in it effects that the Government is making strenuous efforts by sending speakers throughout the country to counteract the pacifist agitation that has sprung up in England."[115] While House cast doubt[116] upon Balfour's explanation[117] that negotiations with the trade unions for releasing men required giving the Caxton speech without Wilson's seeing it first, the above analysis backs up Balfour's and Lloyd George's explanation.

The Caxton speech[118] of January 5, 1918 was a remarkably clam, reasoned, and merciful statement of war aims for Lloyd George. It was so much like Wilson's 14 points that Wilson considered not giving his own address: "When George's speech came out in Washington Saturday afternoon the President was depressed. He thought the terms which Lloyd George had given were so nearly akin to those he and I (House) had worked out it would be impossible for him to make the contemplated address before Congress."[119] One of the Labour Party's leaders, James Ramsay MacDonald, member of Parliament, said: "Was there any man or women who had read Mr. Lloyd George's speech to the trades unions representatives under the delusion that the tone of the speech was the same as those

[113] War Memoirs, vol. 2, p. 1491.
[114] Wilson Papers, vol. 45, p. 548.
[115] Ibid., p. 167. Notice this was sent out the day after Lansdowne's letter was published.
[116] See House's diary entry for January 9, 1918. Wilson Papers, vol. 45, p. 556.

which had been delivered before? Of course not. It was far more reasonable and far more calm, showing that Mr. Lloyd George felt his tremendous responsibility as Prime Minister of this country. It was far more the expression of the mind of the man who saw the matter clearly and who saw all the problems which would have to be settled when the clouds had lifted. How much better it would have been if every speech which had been delivered since August 4, 1914 had been of that kind."[120] And this from an avowed enemy of Lloyd George's "knockout blow" policy! Even the German newspaper Cologne Volkszeitung wondered if a new Lloyd George was coming on the scene, and would wait to see if he could continue to improve his manners and follow in Lansdowne's footsteps (on a non-vindictive peace).[121] Thus, the Caxton speech clearly showed a change in Lloyd George's tone.

But, interestingly, most of the war aims mentioned in the Caxton speech were not much different from what he or others high up in the British Government had said before. Comparing this speech with the Glasgow speech of June 29, 1917 is particularly interesting. Both speeches say the Allies are not aiming to destroy Germany or infringe on her economic growth and development. Both leave the changing of the German government's form and constitution up to the Germans, but both say the Allies would trust a changed, democratized German government much more. Both say reparations should be paid, though Caxton spends much less time on this point. (It is worthy of note Wilson's 14 points address spends no time on war reparations at all by contrast, which set the stage for one of the main controversies at the Paris Peace conference). Both say the German Colonies will be disposed of by the Peace Conference, and that the wishes of the natives would be consulted in disposing of them. Both would strip Turkey of non-Turkish dominions, though Lloyd George does not attack the Turkish government much in the Caxton speech. It is not "the blasting tyranny of the Turk" here. Both wish an end to Prussian imperialism dominating the German government. Glasgow has the idea

119 Wilson Papers, vol. 45, p. 556.
120 London Times, January 7, 1918, p. 8.

of self-determination in it but is not as specific as Caxton on this idea. There are many similarities here, as would be implied by what Lloyd George once said to Scott in the early December of 1917: "My own speech at Glasgow . . . remains the most moderate, practical statement of terms yet made. I can't go on repeating it, but it is on record."[122] Caxton qualifies not as a repitition, but as an elaboration of Glasgow.

In Caxton, Lloyd George was more specific, detailed, and put more emphasis on international law and the League of Nations than in the Glasgow speech. He wanted Serbia, Belgium Montenegro, Rumania, and France all evacuated, and paid reparations. This was not a new idea overall, for this was in the Allied note of January 10, 1917 that replied to Wilson. He specifically named giving Alsace Lorraine back to France in the Caxton speech, but this was in Balfour's note of January 13, and even vaguely alluded to in the Allied note of January 10, 1917.[123] The League of Nations and international law were emphasized, but even the ringing "No Halfway House" speech of December 14, 1917 mentioned this. Poland's independence was included here, but this was alluded to (or at least autonomy was) in the Allied note of January 10, 1917. Austria-Hungary was not to be split up, which was something not mentioned in prior speeches by Lloyd George or in the Allied notes

However, one change existed from the Allied note of January 10, 1917 that was a complete reversal: Turkey was to keep Thrace and Constantinople. Russian imperialism no longer had to be bought off since Russia was now out of the war due to the Bolshevik Revolution. As Lloyd George said: ". . . as new circumstances, like the Russian collapse and the separate Russian negotiations, have changed the conditions under which those arrangements (i.e. the secret treaties that were made between the Allies) were made, we are, and always have been, perfectly reading to discuss them with our Allies."[124] This part also shows Lloyd George at Caxton clearly had the Bolshevik critique

[122] C.P. Scott, p. 318.

[123] ". . .the restitution of provinces or territories wrested in the past from the Allies by force or against the will of their populations," New York Times, January 12, 1917, p. 1.

[124] Great Crusade, p. 262.

of the Allied war effort in mind when speaking this address. By emphasizing international law, a League of Nations, disarmament, and by avoiding so many harsh denunciations of the enemy, British idealism reached its height at Caxton. It would go on to do battle with French demands for the Rhineland and Polish demands for Silesia at the Paris Peace Conference.[125]

This is not to say Wilson and others did not have suspicions about how idealistic the British really were. He told ex-President William Howard Taft on December 12, 1917 the following: "He (Wilson) questioned the desirability of drawing the two countries (Britain and America) too closely together. He said that there were divergencies of purpose and that the United States must not be put in a position of seeming, in any way, involved in British policy. He cited the (secret) treaty between Great Britain and Italy as one example of British governmental policy to be heartily disapproved. He intimated that the motives of the United States were unselfish while those of the British, as discussed in this treaty, seemed of a less worthy character."[126] Ironically, in a document prepared almost at the same time in the November of 1917, one finds Sir George Fiddes of the British Colonial Office writing this in a memorandum concerning whether the German colonies should be handed back to the Germans: "Can we afford to surrender any or all of these three colonies? In no country of the world, save our own, would the question be put in this way. It would not be 'Why not?' but 'Why?' In any other country the opponent would be left to find an answer to 'Why?' It would be left to the enemy to explain why--when we have conquered these territories at a very large cost in life and treasure--we should treat these as negligible and hand him back his territories as a beau geste. But the effect of our traditional attitude of apology for our existence is such that, when we are asked 'Why not?' we are constrained to feel that we are put on our defence, and that unless we can furnish a conclusive answer the verdict will go in favour of the

[125] General Jan Christaan Smuts and Robert Algernon Cecil wrote the rough drafts for the Caxton speech (see Cabinet Minutes, the Memoranda, 24/37, #3180-2, 236-259) would go on to be two of the most zealous League proponents at the Paris Peace Conference.

[126] Wilson Papers, vol. 45, p. 273.

enemy forthwith. Let us attempt to answer in this spirit."[127] He then proceeds to give various answers about why Britain should not give up the German colonies, when in other nations the question would be posed why they should be allowed to keep them. Thus at the same time Britain is castigated for being unidealistic by Wilson, this British colonial official is complaining that the British were being too self-sacrificing.

Also, as an ever present force was the British Labour Party. While Labour did not directly get involved in forming British war aims officially, its ideas on the subject were enthusiastically propagated, having surely at least some influence. Labour criticized Lloyd George's policy of the "knock out blow" powerfully. Consider what Arthur Ponsonby, Labour Member of Parliament once said: "Do you expect a decisive military victory? Is such a complete victory probable in modern warfare? And, if it could be achieved, would not the sacrifice be out of all propotion to the advantage gained? Moreover, is it a decisive military victory that will bring lasting peace to Europe? A dictated peace has always meant a vindictive peace. There can be no permanent settlement with such a peace as that. But if a decisive victory is not probable, then the vast sacrifices which the continuance of the war must entail will be wasted. Is a gamble for a possible temporary triumph of arms--a triumph which cannot in itself provide a guarantee of permanent peace--worth such a terrible price in human life and suffering?"[128] The Labour Party's Memorandum on War Aims is not that much different from what Lloyd George proposed in the Caxton speech.[129] The British War Cabinet circulated this document among itself, and it had some influence on the development of British war aims. And, Labour did get some direct input into Caxton, according to Lloyd George himself: "Last week I had the privilege not merely of perusing the declared war aims of the Labour Party, but also of discussing in detail with the Labour leaders the meaning and intention of that declara-

[127] Cabinet Minutes, the Memoranda, January 2, 1918, 24/37, #3174, 212.
[128] New York Times, January 6, 1917, p. 2.
[129] Cabinet Minutes, the Memoranda, December 28, 1917, 24/37, #3167, 194-197

tion."[130] Thus, although Labour did not directly create British war aims, and it had no use for Lloyd George's "knockout blow" policy, its idealism still influencedthe British Government when proclaiming its own war aims.

British war aims developed and changed towards increasing idealism in the December 1916-January 1918 period, while the French kept their war aims on the same goal of avenging 1870-1. While the British still would press for reparations at the Peace Conference, in most other ares they would side with Wilson in opposing a vindictive peace, showing their ideals were not just hot air, against the French. The British did take their idealism seriously, but like Wilson never managed to implement it fully, and in some areas like reparations and the infamous "war guilt" clause the British helped set the stage for World War II. The end result of the failures of Wilson to implement his ideals, and the British in being fully consistent in theirs, allowed George Bernhard Shaw's declaration to become prophecy: "If the Germans win this war, they will skin us alive. They can't help doing it. If we shall win this war, we shall skin the Germans alive. We can't help doing it."[131]

[130] Great Crusade, p. 252. This was said in the Caxton speech's beginning.
[131] Chicago Tribune, November 30, 1917, p. 6.