

Mexico, it will be one of the most wonderfully rich and prosperous countries in the world. And when you have the foundations of established order, and the world has come to its senses again, we shall, I hope, have the very best connections that will assure us all a permanent cordiality and friendship.

DECLARATION OF THE CZECH DEPUTIES.

In Convention at Prague, January 6, 1918.

[The "Pact of Corfu," reprinted in these columns last month, is in effect the declaration of independence of the Yugoslavs. Another Slavic people that is struggling for freedom from Austrian and Magyar tyranny and for independent nationality is the Tzecho-Slovak, inhabiting Bohemia, Moravia, and Austrian Silesia. Comparable, therefore, with the Corfu declaration is the statement of the Czech deputies at Prague, January 6, 1918, when they met in convention with the unconvoked diets of the three Tzecho-Slovak provinces. The progress of the growth of the idea of independent nationality among this people is further comparable to that of their brother Slavs in the fact that, like the Poles and the Yugoslavs, they now have a fighting force at the front, fighting under their national flag and politically speaking a Tzecho-Slovak national army. This army is supported by a decree of the French Government, signed by President Poincaré, Premier Clemenceau, and Foreign Minister Pichon, which has been published in the Official Journal of the Republic, and reads:

"1. The Tzecho-Slovaks, organized in an autonomous army and recognizing from the military point of view the superior authority of the French High Command, will fight under their own flag against the Central Powers.

"2. This national army is placed, from the political point of view, under the direction of the Tzecho-Slovak National Council, whose headquarters are in Paris.

"3. The formation of the Tzecho-Slovak Army, as well as its further work, are assured by the French Government.

"4. The Tzecho-Slovak Army will be subject to the same dispositions as regards organization, hierarchy, administration, and military discipline as those in force in the French Army.

"5. The Tzecho-Slovak Army will be recruited from among (a) Tzecho-Slovaks at present serving with the French Army; (b) Tzecho-Slovaks from other countries authorized to be transferred into the Tzecho-Slovak Army; and (c) Tzecho-Slovaks who will voluntarily enter this army for the duration of the war.

"6. Further ministerial instructions will settle the application of this decree.

"7. The President of the War Cabinet, the Secretary of War, and the Foreign Secretary are charged, each in his own sphere, to bring into effect the present decree, which will be published in the *Bulletin des Lois* and the *Journal Officiel de la République Française*."

The meeting of the diets and the deputies from the Reichsrat at which the following declaration was adopted has been termed by several European writers "The Czech Constituent Assembly." The declaration itself was prohibited publication in the Austrian and Magyar press, but finally found an outlet in the Polish *Głos Narodu* of Cracow.—THE EDITOR.]

In the fourth year of this terrible war, which has already cost the nations numberless sacrifices in blood and treasure, the first peace efforts have been inaugurated. We, the Czech members of the Austrian Reichsrat, which, through the verdicts of incompetent military tribunals, has been deprived of a number of its

Slav deputies, and Czech deputies to the dissolved and as yet unsummoned Diet of Bohemia, and to the equally unsummoned Diets of Moravia and Silesia, recognize the declarations of the Czech deputies in the Reichsrat, and deem it our duty emphatically to declare, in the name of the Czech nation and of its oppressed and forcibly silenced Slovak branch of Hungary, our attitude towards the reconstruction of international relations.

When the Czech deputies of our regenerated nation expressed themselves, during the Franco-Prussian War, on the international European problems, they solemnly declared in their memorandum of December 8, 1870, that "*all nations, great or small, have an equal right to self-determination, and their complete equality should always be respected. Only from the recognition of the equality of all nations and from mutual respect of the right of self-determination can come true equality and fraternity, a general peace and true humanity.*"

We, deputies of the Czech nation, true even today to these principles of our ancestors, have therefore greeted with joy the fact that all States based upon democratic principles, whether they are belligerent or neutral, now accept with us the right of nations to free self-determination as a guarantee of a general and lasting peace.

Also the new Russia accepted the principle of self-determination of nations during its attempts for a general peace, as a fundamental condition of peace. The nations were freely to determine their fate and decide whether they want to live in an independent State of their own or whether they choose to form one State in common with other nations.

On the other hand, the Austro-Hungarian delegate declared, in the name of the Quadruple Alliance, that the question of the self-determination of those nations which have not hitherto enjoyed political independence should be solved in a constitutional manner within the existing State. In view of this declaration, we deem it our duty to declare, in the name of the Tzecho-Slovak nation, that this point of view of the Austro-Hungarian representative is not our point of view. On the contrary, we have in all our declarations and proposals opposed this solution, because we know from our own numberless bitter experiences that it means nothing but the negation of the principle of self-determination. We indignantly express our regret that our nation was deprived of its political independence and of the right of self-determination, and that, by means of artificial electoral statutes, we were left to the mercy of German minority statutes, we were left to the mercy of the German minority and the government of the centralized German bureaucracy.

Our brother Slovaks became the victims of Magyar brutality and of unspeakable violence in a State which, notwithstanding all its apparent constitutional liberties, remains the darkest corner of Europe, and in which the non-Magyars, who form the majority of the population, are ruthlessly oppressed by the ruling minority, extirpated, denationalized from childhood, unrepresented in Parliament and civil service, deprived of public schools, as well as of all private educational institutions.

The Constitution to which the Austro-Hungarian representatives refer falsified even the justice of the general suffrage by an artificial creation of an over-representation of the German minority in the Reichsrat, and its utter uselessness for the liberty of nations was clearly demonstrated during the three years of unscrupulous military absolutism during this war. Every reference to this Constitution, therefore, means, in reality, only a repudiation of the right of self-determination for the non-German nations of Austria who are at the mercy of the Germans; and it means an especially cruel insult and injury to the non-Magyar nations in Hungary, where the constitution is nothing but a means of shameful domination by the oligarchy of a few Magyar aristocratic families, as was again proved by the recent electoral reform proposal.

Our nation longs with all the democracies of the world for a general and lasting peace. But our nation is fully aware that no peace can be permanent except a peace which will abolish old injustice, brutal force and the predominance of arms, as well as the predominance of States and nations over other nations, and which will assure a free development to all nations, great or small, and which will liberate especially those nations which still are suffering under foreign domination. That is why it is necessary that this right of free national development and to self-determination of nations, great or small, to whatever State they may belong, should become the foundation of future international right, a guarantee of peace, and of a friendly co-operation of nations, as well as a great ideal which will liberate humanity from the terrible horrors of a world war.

We, deputies of the Czech nation, declare that a peace which would not bring our nation full liberty could not be and would not mean a peace to us, but only a beginning of a new, desperate, and continuous struggle for our political independence, in which our nation would strain to the utmost its material and moral forces. And in that uncompromising struggle it would never relax until its aim had been achieved. Our nation asks for independence on the ground of its historic rights, and is imbued with the fervent desire to contribute toward the new development of humanity on the basis of liberty and fraternity in a free competition with other free nations, which our nation hopes to accomplish in a sovereign, equal, democratic, and socially just State of its own, built upon the equality of all its citizens within the historic boundaries of the Bohemian lands and of Slovakia, guaranteeing full and equal national rights to all minorities.

"President Wilson's name is openly cheered in the streets of Prague," declared Miss Olga Garrigue Marsaryk recently in Boston. She and her father, Prof. Thomas G. Marsaryk, founder of the Bohemian Realist party and one of the foremost Czech leaders outside of the Central Powers, both declare that since the Czechoslovak convention in Prague on April 13, only a spark at the right moment is needed to arouse open and unquenchable revolution in Bohemia. France, Britain, and Italy have united in recognizing the National Council of the Czechoslovaks.

THE PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS AT MT. VERNON, JULY 4, 1918.

GENTLEMEN of the Diplomatic Corps and my fellow citizens: I am happy to draw apart with you to this quiet place of old counsel in order to speak a little of the meaning of this day of our nation's independence. The place seems very still and remote. It is as serene and untouched by the hurry of the world as it was in those great days long ago when General Washington was here and held leisurely conference with the men who were to be associated with him in the creation of a nation. From these gentle slopes they looked out upon the world and saw it whole, saw it with the light of the future upon it, saw it with modern eyes that turned away from a past which men of liberated spirits could no longer endure. It is for that reason that we cannot feel, even here, in the immediate presence of this sacred tomb, that this is a place of death. It was a place of achievement. A great promise that was meant for all mankind was here given plan and reality. The associations by which we are here surrounded are the inspiring associations of that noble death which is only a glorious consummation. From this green hillside we also ought to be able to see with comprehending eyes the world that lies about us and should conceive anew the purposes that must set men free.

It is significant—significant of their own character and purpose and of the influences they were setting afoot—that Washington and his associates, like the barons at Runnymede, spoke and acted, not for a class, but for a people. It has been left for us to see to it that it shall be understood that they spoke and acted, not for a single people only, but for all mankind. They were thinking, not of themselves and of the material interests which centered in the little groups of landholders and merchants and men of affairs with whom they were accustomed to act, in Virginia and the colonies to the north and south of her, but of a people which wished to be done with classes and special interests and the authority of men whom they had not themselves chosen to rule over them. They entertained no private purpose, desired no peculiar privilege. They were consciously planning that men of every class should be free and America a place to which men out of every nation might resort who wished to share with them the rights and privileges of free men. And we take our cue from them—do we not?

We intend what they intended. We here in America believe our participation in this present war to be the fruitage of what they planted. Our case differs from theirs only in this, that it is our inestimable privilege to concert with men out of every nation what shall make not only the liberties of America secure, but the liberties of every other people as well. We are happy in the thought that we are permitted to do what they would have done had they been in our place. There must now be settled once for all what was settled for America in the great age upon whose inspiration we draw today. This is surely a fitting place from which calmly to look out upon our task, that we may fortify