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# FOR FREEDOM

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A MANIFESTATION OF OPPRESSED SLAVIC  
NATIONALITIES OF AUSTRIA-HUNGARY IN  
HONOR OF THE SERBIAN WAR MISSION TO  
THE UNITED STATES

PUBLISHED BY THE  
SERBIAN NATIONAL DEFENSE LEAGUE  
OF AMERICA

29/82

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By Transfer  
MAY 19 1919



## P R E F A C E

On January 20th of this year an important Slav meeting was held in the big Ball room of the Hotel Astor. Its importance lay not only in the fact that it was arranged jointly by duly authorized representatives of 7,000,000 Poles, Czechoslovaks and Yugoslavs (Serbs, Croats and Slovenes) living in this country, but also in the fact that it was arranged in honor of the Serbian Royal Mission to the United States because by expressing their admiration for, and solidarity with, Serbia these Austrian Slavs proved to be with their heart and soul for the Allies and against Austria-Hungary. The meeting in general resulted in being an eloquent protest of former Austrian subjects against the unheard of system of violence and oppression practised in Austria-Hungary, and its fundamental tone, was: Long live liberty! — Down with Austria!

At the moment when the Secretary of State desires to announce that, after the recognition of a Free and United Poland, the nationalistic aspirations of the Czechoslovaks and Yugoslavs for freedom, have also the earnest sympathy of the United States' Government, it may be of some interest to give a detailed account on this first joint action of the Poles, Czechoslovaks and Yugoslavs in America, by publishing the speeches given at the Hotel Astor. Far from having lost anything of their actuality these speeches are now of even more immediate significance because of the changed position of Austria-Hungary, who, impossible as she already was, has after her recent treaty with Germany become a complete vassal of German militarism.

In the name of the Czechoslovaks, Mr. Gaza H. Mika spoke, in the name of the Poles, Dr. F. Ignatius Drobinski, and in the name of the Yugoslavs, Dr. Hinko Hinković. Dr. Milenko R. Vesnić, chief of the Serbian Mission, and General Mihailo Rašić spoke on behalf of Serbia. The chairman of the meeting, General Francis V. Greene, also delivered a cordial speech which was enthusiastically cheered by the audience; it is repeated here in full, as an inseparable part of the whole.

When this booklet was already in print, Mr. Pierre de Lanux, the well known author of "Young France and New America" and

of "La Yougoslavie", was kind enough to write an introduction which will be undoubtedly welcomed both by experts and beginners in the complicated problem of oppressed nationalities in Austria-Hungary. Being at the same time an old friend of the Slavs and a French official he is quite naturally a link between the Allies and the Austrian Slavs and has proved it on more than one occasion.

On behalf of the South Slavic National Council, in the name of which I had the honor to open the meeting, I herewith express my heartfelt gratitude to the Chief and the members of the Serbian Royal Mission who accepted our invitation; to the Serbian Minister at Washington, Mr. Lj. Mihailovich who attended the meeting together with the Mission; to all speakers — contributors to this booklet; and, last but not least, to all American friends who through their presence added very considerably to the success of the meeting. May I also deeply thank the Czechoslovak singers who, together with the Serbian women in their picturesque national costumes, and the Croatian Sokols in their uniforms made the meeting a vividly representative one of the great purpose of Slavic solidarity.

New York City, June, 1918.

M. TRIVOUNATZ,

President of the Serbian National Defense League of America,  
member of the South Slavic National Council at Washington.

# INTRODUCTION

by

PIERRE de LANUX

Member of the French High Commission to the United States.

Once before, I was present at a meeting of delegates from all Slavic nations. It was on the night of the first great battle in the Balkan war of 1912, at Vrania, a little Serbian city near the Turkish front. War correspondents from Bohemia, from Croatia, from Bosnia, from every Slavic province, were assembled together, scarcely knowing each other, cautiously feeling the ground.

We were awaiting the news from the battle before Skoplie, the capital of Macedonia. At nightfall Mr. Pašić, the Serbian Premier, came in and said, "Skoplie is taken".

A sudden current of enthusiasm and of pride ran through the gathering, and there I could see, crystallized under my eyes, the first great manifestation where the Western Slavs proved conscious of their common strength.

Turkey was defeated. But it was Austria and Germany who had received the blow.

From that night, it was all clear to me, and I wrote to France: "Serbian victories are French victories".

Since October 1912, there have been long and bitter trials for the Slavs. Every Slavic group has been threatened and shaken and sometimes ruined; still, on January 20th at the Hotel Astor, remembering that first, improvised assembly of Vrania, I felt a strong, decided optimism. In spite of the terrible ordeal, the national problem of the Western Slavs has undoubtedly advanced, in six years, towards its solution. Why? Because there is today a wide consciousness and a sincere alliance where a few years ago there was provincialism and division. That is what I want to insist upon.

## The Will of the People.

Here you are, three strong unified groups — Yugoslavs, Czechoslovaks and Poles. In Austria-Hungary, in defiance of the old policy of division entertained by Vienna, your people have clearly manifested their will. In repeated occasions they have endorsed the bold action of their representatives, who stood in the Parlia-

ment with a program of independence and national unity. These words appear in all their recent declarations.

A few months ago, the Yugoslavs and Czechs went so far as to amalgamate their political organization. When the Poles proved ready to join in, for the Empire there was no other alternative to political bankruptcy than the closing of the Parliament.

These representatives of your people, Professor Masaryk, Dr. Trumbić, Mr. Paderewski, who have founded national councils in the Allied Countries, express themselves more freely — but there is no difference between their declarations and those which are issued at home in the presence of Austro-Prussian bayonets.

At the meeting of January 20th, we listened to the best authorized representatives of the millions of Poles, Czechoslovaks, and Yugoslavs immigrated in the United States. These immigrants, in their turn, are the free spokesmen of their oppressed brothers in Europe. We have to recognize that wherever a voice of yours makes itself heard, the claim is the same and even the words are identical. But not with words only have you expressed your will. Thousands of volunteers have enlisted in the Polish army and in the Czechoslovak army which France recently created under the political authority of the National Councils of Poland and of Bohemia in Paris, thus recognizing the political existence of your Nations. President Wilson has formally recognized the Polish National Council. There can be no doubt about your wishes. If one objected that the Slavs in enemy country are perhaps only infuriated by persecution, that the Slavs in allied countries are inflamed by the contagion of our creed, then what about those 5000 Yugoslavs who had chosen to fight with the Russian army, and who after the Russian peace have managed to go to Vladivostok, to sail through the Indian Ocean and the Red Sea and to join our forces in Salonica, where they fight again for their freedom? Who has influenced them?

### **The Case in full Light.**

It has been long and hard work to expose your case, to defend your claim, before an indifferent, ignorant world which had bad habits of thinking. You have been disappointed, deluded many times. But now results are at hand. Inter-Allied difficulties have been removed, and with the recent Congress of Rome, with the Congress of Paris that will take place very soon, your case is now in full light.

You deserve freedom, first because each people "great or small" deserves freedom and needs it as we need the air in which to breathe.



You deserve our help because you, Southern Slavs, have sacrificed yourselves in the Dobrudja and on the Macedonian front; you, Czechoslovaks, in the Carpathians have fought in such a way that "the world ought to fall on its knees before you", as General Brussilov said, and you, Poles, had to fight not only persecution, but also insidious, treacherous attempts to win your consent to your own dismemberment.

You deserve America's help because you stand strictly for the principles she herself upholds, and because your fight for independence is a striking repetition of the earlier times of American Revolution.

### **The Present Duty.**

The future of the Western Slavs now depends first upon themselves. They have to sacrifice everything to unity and community of efforts. No longer is this a time for party divisions. Nations will not be saved by one party or another, but nations will live or perish according to the unity shown by their members.

About the disposition of the civilized world concerning the right of self-determination of the people, according to clearly recognizable lines of nationality, there is no more doubt to be entertained. The civilized world knows at last that it will have no permanent peace until this self-determination is put into practice.

Austria-Hungary's structure is in opposition with that right. Now, if the peoples under that monarchy, faithful to themselves and acting as our allies, contribute to our victory and dissolve the empire into independent nations with democratic constitutions and with a renewed vitality, this will be no destructive dismemberment, it will be a constructive liberation of the enslaved.

If then Austria-Hungary is at last replaced by something better, the Western World cannot but ardently approve of its disparition.

What becomes of your nations at the end of the war will be evidence of victory for one side or the other. Whatever the other results will be, Germany keeping her control over subject races is a victorious Germany. Deprived of that control and reduced to her real dimensions, population and boundaries, she is made harmless, and the world can resume its normal life.

Address of General Francis V. Greene.

Ladies and Gentlemen —

This meeting is called to welcome Dr. Vesnich and his colleagues of the Serbian Mission and also to give an opportunity for speakers of the different branches of the great Slavic race to give expression to the hopes and aspirations, the intentions and purposes of their respective peoples.

Dr. Vesnich: It is indeed a high privilege in welcoming to this liberty-loving land your Excellency and your colleagues of the Serbian Mission. From the day when Patrick Henry made that soul-stirring speech to the Virginia House of Burgesses which ended with the impassioned appeal "As for me, give me liberty or give me death" — from that day, one hundred and forty three years ago, until this very hour, the American heart has always beat warmly in sympathy for those who in any part of the world were fighting for their liberty, for the right to live their own lives, choose their own form of government and select their own governing officials. And surely, Sir, your gallant compatriots have gained the sympathy and admiration of all Americans, for Serbia has for nearly two centuries been fighting for liberty, first against the hideous cruelty of the unspeakable Turk, and then against the intolerable tyranny of the Austrian despot. In 1804 your ancestors first took arms against the Turks; in 1830, with the aid of the most powerful nation of the Slavic race — Russia — Serbia gained its autonomy with a ruling Prince sprung from its own soil; in 1876, in support of your brothers in Bosnia and Herzegovina, you again went to war with the Turk, and although at first defeated by overwhelming numbers, you did in 1878, again with the aid of Russia, become an absolutely independent state; finally, in 1914, the destruction of Serbia in the Southeast as of Belgium in the Northwest was the basis of the Teutonic plan for the conquest of the world, and it was upon Serbia that the first blow fell. But so gallant a defense did your brave country make that three times were the Austrians driven back, and it was only in the second year of the war when Germany and Bulgaria came to the aid of Austria, and all these Empires united to crush a nation less than one tenth of Austria's size in population and resources, that the Serbian army was forced to retreat into Albania, the Serbian people were overwhelmed with murder and rapine, and the beautiful valleys and hills of Serbia given over to devastation and destruction. But amid the ruins of their homes and their property, the Serbian people have saved their souls untarnished and unconquered. As your people of

today have received from their ancestors the noble heritage of their struggle for liberty, so in turn you transmit to your descendants the priceless gift of your valiant conduct in this great war for human freedom.

In the war which resulted from the action of Serbia in 1876 it was my good fortune to accompany the Russian Army from the Danube, through Plevna and Shipka, the Balkans and Sofia, Philippopolis and Adrianople to Constantinople; and in that campaign to form an intimate friendship with one of the greatest soldiers of modern times — Skobelev — and through him to gain some knowledge of the Slavic character and aspirations. Russia, which has for so many generations been the leader of the Slavs, the big brother of the less powerful Slavic States, and which came so nobly to their aid in 1829, in 1876, and in 1814, is today temporarily incapacitated and can not help you now. Russia has gained her own liberty, but has not yet organized it. She has yet to learn that without the support of law and order liberty cannot survive. All nations have to learn that fundamental lesson, each in its own way. From 1783 when we gained our liberty until 1789 when we established our present form of government, these United States were thirteen separate communities, jealous of each other, quarrelling among themselves, financially bankrupt, and rapidly drifting toward anarchy. Then, through the practical genius of Washington and Hamilton, a "more perfect Union" was established and a Constitution adopted under which we have made that progress which has astounded the world and placed us in the front rank of nations. Similarly France, which began her revolution in 1789, has run the whole gamut of social and political development, through the reign of terror, the rule of Napoleon, the restoration of the monarchy, the second revolution of 1848, the second Empire, the Commune, and finally the third Republic. At last, after nearly a hundred years of prolonged birth pains, she found her permanent form of government under which she has in this present war for freedom given such an example of heroic spirit as shall be an inspiration for all time to those who seek to gain or maintain their liberty. Russia is now following this same difficult path; for the time being intoxicated with the first deep draughts of liberty; and in her case the task is greatly complicated by the fact that barely ten per cent of her population can read and write, and that her territory is so vast and her means of communication so limited. But a race which has produced Pushkin, Tolstoi and Dostoievsky in literature, Tchaikovsky in music, Verestchagin in painting, and Skobelev in war — such a race will ultimately consolidate its revolution, develop the

form of free government best adapted to its national character and under such government will attain its full measure of happiness and prosperity. How long this will take, no man can say; but that it will ultimately be achieved is as certain as the movement of the stars in their courses. For the present, however, Russia is not a factor, and the leadership which she has so long exercised in Slavic affairs now passes, Sir, to your devoted country, Serbia. Small by comparison, as your country is in area and population, she is fully competent to take this leadership, and will worthily perform its duties, for Serbia has shown that she possesses those qualities of soul, which far more than size or wealth determine the greatness of nations.

And now, Ladies and Gentlemen, it is peculiarly agreeable that in this great city of New York we should have an opportunity to hear from scions of the Slavic race their own statement of the part which they should take and the dispositions which they should receive in this momentous settlement of the affairs of men and of nations, which is now being worked out on the battlefields of Europe. Twenty five years ago no one but a madman would have imagined that we should ever be engaged in a great European War and that we should take part in deciding the future of Belgium, of France, of Poland, of Bohemia and of the Balkan States. Our foreign policy has been guided by two shining beacon lights: first, the Farewell Address of Washington, in which he enjoined us to avoid entangling alliances in Europe; and second, the Monroe Doctrine which we flung out to the world a generation later, and in which we declared that no European State should acquire any additional territory in Europe; and second, the Monroe Doctrine which we flung out to the world a generation later, and in which we declared that no European State should acquire any additional territory in the Western Hemisphere, or interfere in the political administration of any State in that Hemisphere. And strange to say, though we took this step while still a feeble state, almost without an army or a navy, yet so strong is the force of a righteous idea, no nation has seriously questioned that Doctrine, although a century has elapsed since it was promulgated. But out of a clear sky in 1898 we went to war to liberate Cuba — and at its end to our astonishment, found ourselves a World Power with new possessions in the Atlantic and in the Far East, and all the complications and responsibilities inseparable from our new position. Probably no war was ever fought in which the cost in life and treasure was so slight and the political consequences so far reaching. Now we find ourselves engaged in a World War, and in spite of all the delays and mistakes and confusion

due to our total lack of preparedness, we shall be in it until the end and shall be a mighty factor in determining the terms of the peace with which it will be concluded. Our President has recently (January 8th) set forth "The program of the world's peace", and I call your attention to the first of his fourteen articles. I will read his exact words: "1. Open covenants of peace, openly arrived at, after which there shall be no private understandings of any kind, but diplomacy shall proceed always frankly and in the public view".

Now, what does this mean? It is manifest that the negotiations of diplomacy can not be carried on in the market place or by town meetings. But it is equally certain that the public can be advised of what is in process of negotiation and be allowed to express their opinion in regard to it before the negotiation is closed; in other words, that diplomacy shall not be a matter of secret negotiation between high officers of the contracting parties but that it shall be carried on under the guidance of an enlightened public opinion, and that such opinion shall be based upon public knowledge of the essential facts. Such meetings as this of today are just what is needed in order that such an enlightened public opinion can be formed and crystallized. We have a deep sympathy with people struggling to acquire the liberty which we have so long enjoyed, but we have not an intimate knowledge of the facts in regard to their situation. Until the outbreak of the war the very names — Croatia, Istria, Dalmatia, the Morava, the Drave, Lodz, etc. were unknown to the great mass of the American people. Of the social life, the economic resources, the political conditions, the history and traditions, the aspirations and affiliations of the millions of Slavic people in Poland, in Bohemia, and in the Balkan States we have much to learn. And it is essential that we learn it, for we have given the most solemn pledges that we will see justice done to these people. The President has said that "we see very clearly that unless justice be done to others it will not be done to us"; and further that "in regard to these essential rectifications of wrong and assertions of right we feel ourselves to be intimate partners of all the governments and peoples associated together against the imperialists"; and finally he has given our word that "we stand together until the end". These pledges have been given with practically no dissenting voice in all this broad land. They have been approved with an approach to absolute unanimity almost unknown in our history as a nation. If now we fail to support these pledges with appropriate acts and to carry on the war until they are redeemed, then we shall have

broken our word and shall stand before the world disgraced and disonored. But rest assured, my friends, we shall not fail.

In doing our duty we shall be guided not alone by altruistic or emotional motives, but also by an enlightened self-interest. Fortunately for us, the paths of duty and of advantage run side by side and lead to the same goal, for our independence is at stake as well as that of the Slavs. If Germany can and does win this war, she can and will destroy us. If we do not gain your freedom, we shall lose our own. Absorbed as we have been with our own affairs, and ignorant of the real situation in Europe and the actual designs of Germany, it took us nearly three years before we realized that this is our war, that our interest in it is just as acute and vital as that of France, or Great Britain, or Italy, or Belgium. It may take us some time longer before we realize how important is the relation of the Slavic peoples to the outcome of the war and to our success in it. As the map now stands, the destinies of 176,000,000 people are controlled from Berlin, and of these less than 70,000,000 are Germans in race or language or sympathy. If Germany can make peace on that basis, then in the future wars, which she is already planning and one of which would be against us, for every two German soldiers she would have three soldiers of other races whom she would compel to fight against their own brethren as she now compels the Alsatians to fight against their brethren in France. On such a basis as this the project for submitting the world to the domination of Prussian Kultur is no mere idle dream but is well within the domain of actual possibility and even probability.

How is such an unspeakable calamity to be prevented? My answer — I speak only for myself but I am confident that before this year 1918 is ended it will be the opinion of the great body of Americans — by surrounding Germany with a number of independent Slavic states: a free Poland extending to the Baltic; a free Bohemia; and Serbia expanded into a great Jugo-Slav state extending from the Adriatic to the Aegean; these free and independent States to be not only established but to be supported, so long as is necessary to maintain, their independence not only by our political and military strength but above all by our economic strength; so that they may be able to develop their own enormous economic resources, which have been so completely suppressed by the aliens who have ruled them, until they gain such strength that they no longer need our support. If such a project is realized, then Mittel-Europa is an idle dream and world domination is impossible. And unless we falter and fail in the task to which the President has pledged that the people of the United States "are ready to devote their

lives, their honor, and every thing that they possess", then this project will be realized.

But I fear that I have taken more of your time than belongs to the presiding officer and that you are impatient to hear the speakers who are so well qualified to address you on these stirring and far-reaching subjects, and whom I shall now introduce to you, — first, however, standing to hear the noble strains of the Serbian National Hymn as you have already heard the Star Spangled Banner, so beautifully sung by the Czechoslovak Singing Society.

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### Address of Gaza H. Mika.

In introducing Mr. Gaza H. Mika, the Chairman of the meeting said:

"The first speaker is an American citizen, a practising lawyer in New Haven Conn., but he was born and his mother still lives—at least he hopes she does, for it is two years since he has had news of her—in far away Bohemia, at no great distance from the city of Pressburg. Like many others, this speaker has given up his ordinary avocations in order to devote his entire time to activities connected with the war. He will speak to you concerning the Czechoslovaks, as a duly authorized representative of 1,500,000 Czechoslovaks living in this country.

"I have much pleasure in introducing Mr. Gaza H. Mika".

The citizens of New York feel proud of the privilege to welcome in their midst the distinguished representatives of the Serbian nation. The courageous stand of the Serbian people, when, in the summer of 1914, they were summarily requested to surrender a part of their hard-won liberties has long been a subject of admiration. Their valiant resistance has long ago elicited the merited praise of her friends and also the acknowledgments of her enemies. Like a gallant "Spartan band" the Serbian Heroes stood their ground till further resistance was useless. Overwhelmed in the end by a superior foe, commanding greater numbers, possessing more instruments of war, and surpassing even Attila and his tribe of Huns in wantonness and cruelty, they were at length forced to yield.

Nevertheless, the Spirit of Serbia is still alive. When the sufferings of the present war shall have been forgotten, when the crimes that have been committed in the name of Teutonic Kultur shall have passed out of the memory of man, the name of Serbia will still ring true and continue to inspire and thrill the hearts of all who love justice, and are willing to protect and defend her.

It would be needless to dwell on Serbia's contributions to humanity and civilization. Let the Germans talk about and advertise their achievements, Serbia needs no press agents. But, even if Serbia had never been heard of before, the courageous resistance of her men, the noble sacrifices of her women, and the bold stand of her armies, when in effect they said to the Teuton hordes "Thus far canst thou go and no farther" would be sufficient to immortalize her name.

If there be a people that can really appreciate and sympathize with all that Serbia has accomplished, then it is those who like Serbia of today are suffering beneath the oppressive yoke of the Hapsburgs. The Poles, the Yugoslavs, and the Czechoslovaks know full well what it means to be deprived of their liberty and independence. The Czechoslovaks were deprived of their rights and privileges one after another; even those the most sacred to the hearts of a people that proudly points to John Hus as their national idol, have been shamefully trodden under foot. To their sorrow they have learned that Austria as a friend, is far more to be feared than Austria as an enemy.

What Serbia is now going through, and it must be admitted that even the tyrannous hand of the Turk lay not so heavily on the shoulders of the Serbian people as the supposedly cultured and benevolent hand of the Hapsburgs, the Czechoslovaks have had to contend with for centuries. They know what it means to have their mother tongue banished into exile; to have their men, women and children massacred en masse and deprived of their possessions.

It is reported that about 20 per cent of the Serbs and Yugoslavs have already been annihilated. At the end of the Thirty Years War hardly a third of the inhabitants of Bohemia was left alive, and since then life has been worse than slavery. Long before the present war began the Czechoslovaks realized that the interests of the Poles, the Yugoslavs and the Czechoslovaks were identical; that a common danger was threatening the national existence of all. Consequently among the volunteers who rallied to the defense of Serbia, when in previous wars that country sought to insure her position in the Balkans, there was no small percentage of Czechoslovaks. They knew that whatever advantage would accrue to Serbia would simultaneously redound to their interests.

The problem that is now facing Serbia, and the Yugoslavs, is the same problem that must be solved before the once glorious Polish state is reconstructed and before the Czechoslovaks can attain national unity and independence. These three nations have a multitude of interests in common; they have all been the



victims of a tyrannous autocracy, they have all lost their independence for a time; they have all had to pass through the same fiery test, and so they must also fight and win together. Realizing the common danger that threatens each individually they shall henceforth cooperate more and more, to the end, that autocracy may be banished from the earth and the world made safe for democracy. The very fact that the Yugoslavs, the Poles and the Czechoslovaks, are jointly welcoming the Serbian Royal Commission, is an evidence of their unity of purpose and solidarity of interests. Together with the Allies and America, they must succeed in attaining the common aims of all humanity.

I was asked to lay before you their complaints and their aspirations. There is no use discussing the past, it is to the future that we look. And in a few words, a mere sentence, I may say that the aims of the Poles, the Yugoslavs, the Czechoslovaks, and other oppressed nations of Europe, are no other than the aims that forced the Minute Men of 1776 to leave their hearths and strike for liberty. Their aim is the same as that, for the attainment of which, hundreds of thousands of lives were sacrificed here in American unity and independence. And, we have full reason to believe that when the war is over their legal and national claims shall have been recognized and approved.

None of these have any aspirations beyond their own ethnic borderland. Unlike that of the Germans and Magyars, their guiding principle is now, and always has been, that he who is unwilling to grant liberty to others is himself unworthy of it. All they seek is freedom to pursue their own manner of living, unhindered and unthreatened. And just as they are fighting for their own rights, they are willing to respect and even defend the rights of others. Of this they have already given ample proof.

And so, outside of the Germano-Magyar-Bulgaro-Turkish combination the world stands united in its determination to remove the Teuton menace from the face of the earth, even though the war should have to go on until even "unconditional surrender" would be welcomed by the present enemies of humanity.

Even the Russian people are in their own way striving for the same aims. We must not judge Russia too harshly, she has already accomplished much and she has suffered even more. It will take time to bring order out of chaos. But the heart of Russia is still sound. With the memories of Czarist absolutism still before them, it is inconceivable that the Russian people or any considerable faction of them should favor Germany or Austria. Have faith in Russia. The time is not distant when

the present attitude of America towards Russia as outlined by the President shall have been thoroughly vindicated. In their own way, which is not without its effect, the Russians are also exerting their influence for democracy.

Thus we stand united in purpose, fighting and bleeding for the same cause, having full confidence that right and justice will finally prevail and believing also that just as the fatal treaty of Berlin is frequently spoken of, as one of the leading causes of the present war, so the coming treaty will be the foundation of a lasting peace. We hope and believe that it will be founded on a satisfied nationalism, for this is a prerequisite of all future international agreements, tending to preserve peace and prevent wars. In this common task America, as ever heretofore, will use her influence for good and it is to her that the world now turns for help and guidance.

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### Address of Dr. F. Ignatius Drobinski.

In introducing Dr. Drobinski the Chairman said:

"In our Revolution two young men left their homes in Europe to join Washington's army.— Lafayette and Kosciusko. Their statues are now in the same public square in the city of Washington. They both rendered distinguished and valuable service. In the association of these 3 men as comrades in arms— Washington, Lafayette and Kosciusko—we see the first symbol of that association of the three races, the Anglo-Saxon, the Latin and the Slav, which is to be so potent in the future. These are the races which will decide this war and it is they and not the Teutons and their Kaiser who will hereafter control the destinies of the world.

"Nearly 5,000,000 of his countrymen have come to live in the country and under the government which Kosciusko helped to establish. They are industrious, hardworking, valuable citizens, who have taken an honorable part in its development.

"He who will speak for them is a fine type of his race, an American citizen, a practising physician.

"I have much pleasure in introducing Dr. F. Ignatius Drobinski, President of the Polish Department, in which all Polish organizations of this country are united."

Dr. Drobinski opened his speech with the greetings from Ignace Paderewski, who regretted that he was detained by important business in Washington.

**Your Excellencies of the Serbian Royal Mission,  
Mr. Chairman,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is my very great privilege and honor to have been selected by the Polish group to convey to the Serbian National Com-

mission our great admiration, for the bravery and fortitude of Serbia, and our deep and sincere sympathies for the tortures and sufferings of the Serbian People.

Excepting the Yugoslavs, Czechoslovaks and Poles, who from sad experience knew better, the world in general firmly believed in such a thing as Teuton culture. It did not understand how armed men could wage war against defenseless women and children, but after the atrocities committed by the Austro-Germanic hordes in Serbia, Belgium, France and Poland the picture was changed. The Teuton stood revealed in his true colors. The world then realized what was in store for mankind if Austro-German scheming and militarism were not defeated, and the world made safe for freemen to live in.

Being of Slavonic origin, the Poles rejoice that it was a Slav State Serbia who in this war first drew her sword in the defense of her own and the rights of men in general against arrogant dictatorship of the Teutons, while Poles in the United States, citizens of this country by birth or naturalization, attached to the history and traditions of this country by strong bonds of loyalty and fidelity, rejoice doubly that it will be the moral and material power of the United States which will so greatly aid in delivering the death blow to Austro-German scheming and lust for world power .

At so general a gathering of the Slavs it seems quite natural that each group would voice its grievances against the common enemy.

We do not wish further to accuse the already criminally convicted States of Austria-Hungary and Germany. Their conduct and diplomatic duplicity in neutral and formally neutral States; their lack of scruples, their crimes against humanity have so firmly convinced mankind of their true character as to leave little for us to add or detract.

But we Poles can never forget Austrian ingratitude for her deliverance from the Turk. Her instigations of fratricidal massacres are still fresh in our minds, while her strong economic oppression of Galicia which drove thousands upon thousands of Polish peasants from their homes and fertile farms is of such recent origin that it is well known to all. That is why Poles appreciate and sympathize so greatly with the sufferings of Serbia at the hands of their common source of misfortune.

As to Germany, much could be said of her oppressive conduct and low standard of morality in regard to Poland but these are historical facts well known to the world and still better proven by German conduct in the World War.

Polish aims and aspirations for a Free, United, and Inde-

pendent Poland with an outlet to the sea are perfectly understood, and recently have been so strongly brought to the foreground in the various war aims speeches of the Entente leaders that we may consider them an almost accomplished fact. But we also hope to see Serbia fulfill her great mission on earth, that of liberating and uniting her people enslaved by Austria-Hungary. That of forming the Yugoslavs into a free and independent nation with an indivisible territory, a unity of power and free access to the Adriatic Sea. We sincerely hope and wish to see a strong, free and independent Czechoslovakia, that great nation of Slavonic democrats. Such a Poland, such a Czechoslovakia, an dsuch a Yugoslavia, a trio of liberty - loving States stretching from the Baltic to the Adriatic are the only possible antidote to the German desires of a German Central Europe. It is the only bulwark that will stop the Teutonic rush to the East.

And the sooner that is accomplished, the better will it be for mankind. There cannot be a world peace without a settlement, and a just settlement of this question.

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### Address of Dr. Hinko Hinković.

In introducing Dr. Hinković the Chairman said:

“The next speaker is fresh from the scene of the conflict. His home is in Croatia, he was a member of the Croatian and also of the Hungarian Diet. He has been long in public life and also an advocate in the practice of the law. When Austria-Hungary seized Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1908, he rendered immense service to large numbers of people in those unfortunate countries who had been thrown into prison for no cause, but were rescued after some months and released as a result of his tireless efforts in their behalf. He will speak in the name of the South-Slavic National Council, in which the Serbian, Croatian and Slovenian organizations of this country are united.

“I have much pleasure in introducing Dr. Hinko Hinković”.

In Austria-Hungary there are seven and a half million Southern Slavs or Yugoslavs occupying in compact masses the whole South-East of the Monarchy. Although appearing under three denominations — Serbs, Croats and Slovenes — they are of the same race, speaking the same language, having the same customs, traditions, aspirations and economic interests — the same national soul. These Austro-Hungarian Yugoslavs are racially identical with the five millions of Serbs in Serbia and Montenegro. All these Yugoslavs have the ardent desire of uniting in one independent State.

The first condition of the creation of a Yugoslav State is,

of course, the liberation of those Jugoslavs who languish under the Austro-Magyar yoke. The breaking off of the Yugoslav provinces and their union with Serbia and Montenegro would be a notable territorial diminution of the Dual Monarchy and a sensible weakening of her military power. It would be more than that; it would be a real death blow to her. The Eastern Adriatic shore is Yugoslav. By losing it, Austria-Hungary would be cut off from the sea and, by this very fact, cease to be a great Power.

On the other side, the Yugoslav provinces of Austria-Hungary form with Serbia and Montenegro a continuous territorial and economic block. If Serbia by herself proved a remarkable obstacle to the German scheme of Mittel-Europa, a united Jugoslavia would be an incomparably graver obstruction. Therefore, according to the Austro-German plan, the Yugoslav movement for union had to be checked at any cost.

Thus the Austrian ultimatum of July 23, 1914 to Serbia was the inauguration of a war not only against Serbia, but against Austro-Hungary's Yugoslav subjects as well — a war of extermination of the whole Yugoslav race.

As a result of the war, starvation, epidemics of cholera and typhus, and the unspeakable atrocities committed in Serbia and the Yugoslav provinces of Austria-Hungary, more than twenty per cent of our race has already been exterminated.

Thus, this war began as a tragic conflict between two great ideas: the Pangerman and the Yugoslav idea; in which conflict Serbia as the champion of the latter represents the Right and the sacred principles of Democracy, while the Central Powers stand for brutal force and the most hideous product of Autocracy — Prussian Militarism.

It would be too pretentious to maintain that the world war is being waged only for, or against Serbia. The struggle goes on for the World Power of Germany v. Liberty of Mankind. But Serbia, was the first stumbling block to be removed by Germany. This role is a great honour for Serbia. By it she entered gloriously into the history of the world.

Thus it becomes clear how the attack on little Serbia set afire nearly the whole of our planet.

The real Serbia, as shown by the Balkan war and this war, was a revelation to the world. Her glory spread through all continents. I will not recall the heroic achievements of her army, driving out and defeating twice, she the little David, the Austrian Goliath. Neither will I recall how she repudiated the offer of a separate peace by which she could have saved her territory. In the choice between ruin and honour she did not

hesitate a moment. By this deed of highest morality, little Serbia became with little Belgium, her martyr-sister, one of the greatest nations that History has ever known.

Is it necessary to emphasize the <sup>notable</sup> notorious services rendered to the common cause of the Allies by the Jugoslavs of Austro-Hungary, who, seizing every opportunity, surrendered in the number of 150,000 to the Russians and over 50,000 to the Serbians, fighting afterwards by tens of thousands as volunteers against the Central Powers? Thousands of Jugoslavs who found on the free and hospitable soil of the United States another home, have already sailed to the Salonika front to fight there under the glorious Star Spangled Banner.

All this would entitle the Jugoslavs to the sympathy of the Allies for their national claims.

But we do not want our aspirations to be based on favours. Our cause is an eminently just one.

From time to time, we hear authoritative representatives of the Allied nations promising solemnly to Serbia an integral restoration, even an enlargement of her territory with an outlet to the sea. That would mean that the bulk of the Yugoslav race would remain under Austria-Hungary. Such a solution would be disastrous. Serbia has no imperialistic designs at all. She is not waging a war of conquest. She does not struggle for a greater Serbia, i. e., to get more land, but for the deliverance of her subdued kinsmen and the union of our whole race. It would be equally false to speak of a great Jugoslavia. She ought not to be greater or smaller, but the Jugoslavia including the whole of our national territory. It is cruel to concede us graciously the outlet to a sea, on the shores of which we have been settled for nearly thirteen centuries!

Our claims are based on the principle of nationality, that is on the right of a people of the same blood, language, customs and economic interests to constitute one nation. Once it was from the East that the Light came to mankind. Now it is the West which sends the Gospel of Liberty to the small nations of the old Continent. It will be the eternal glory of the great Democracy of the United States of America, that it proclaimed this Gospel through their illustrious President. Its first axiom is the equality of rights of small and big nations, and the second, the right of self-determination for every people.

These two principles are the cornerstones of our future Yugoslav State. In the negative, the Austrians and Magyars have no right to keep our people in slavery; and in the positive, we have the right to throw off their yoke.

The Yugoslav program is drawn up in the Declaration of

Corfu, July 20th, 1917. Its authors are the Serbian Government and the Yugoslav Committee in London as representatives, the former of Serbia, and the latter of the Yugoslavs in Austria-Hungary. The Serbs, Croats and Slovenes — proclaims the Declaration—constitute by blood, language and all vital interests one and the same nation. This virtually already united nation desires ardently the liberation of its unfortunate members who languish under the Austro-Magyar domination. All Serbs, Croats and Slovenes wish to form, on the broadest democratic basis, one independent state, embracing the whole Yugoslav race.

The Declaration is based on the principle of nationality and the right of self-determination of peoples.

The Act of Corfu has been communicated to all Allied Powers. Lord Robert Cecil acknowledged recently in the House of Commons the "great interest and sympathy" of the British Government for the Programme of Corfu. Its high importance is obvious. Serbia has endorsed the Yugoslav programme as her war aim. She has officially accepted the role of a Yugoslav Piedmont and has notified her Allies of this fact. She has become, the diplomatic spokesman of the Austro-Hungarian Yugoslavs and the representative of the whole future united Yugoslav State. Potentially, this State is already in existence, and the Corfu Declaration is its birth certificate.

On the other hand, the Austro-Hungarian Yugoslavs by this Act "officially" became rebels to the Dual Monarchy. Abroad, of course, in the allied Countries, they ceased to be aliens, even friendly aliens. They became one of the immediate allies especially of the United States, where they are living in such large numbers.

Jugoslav unification implies the collapse of Austria-Hungary. Fortunately for us, this is also the indispensable condition of a true victory of the Allies and a future security for the world. Germany has at present almost accomplished her chief aim in this war: the establishment of communication from the Baltic to the Near East. Pan-German "Central Europe" is realized in its principal points. Germany controls not only Austria-Hungary and the Balkans, but Turkey as well, and the control of these immense territories is a basis for her world domination.

Mittel-Europa is the foundation of Germany's world power, and of this asset Austria-Hungary is the centre. Without Austria-Hungary there can be no Mittel-Europa, and without this, the Pangerman dreams must dwindle away. By the preservation of Austria-Hungary, Germany would keep the enormous geographical, military and economic advantages which have enabled

her to prolong this war and which would enable her, if it is necessary for her plans, to start very soon a new one. If Austria-Hungary survives this war, Germany has won it, whatever peace conditions she may concede. The Slav and Latin peoples of the Dual Monarchy, all of whom are hostile to Germany, would, through the vassalage of the Hapsburgs, remain under German control. On the contrary, if freed from this control, they will immediately form a strong defensive wall against Germany.

In his last message to Congress, President Wilson pointed out that the peoples of Austria-Hungary shall be given the fullest opportunity for an autonomous development. But with all respect to the President, we beg him to believe that any democratization of Austria-Hungary is absolutely impossible.

A real autonomy conceded to all the nationalities would crush the hegemony of the Austrians, Pangermans and the Magyar Junkers upon which the actual construction of the Hapsburg Empire is based. Never, unless they are forced to it, will they give up their dominating position. Besides this, the Hapsburgs themselves would revoke all concessions at the first opportunity. Their constitutional charters are but scraps of paper, their sworn oaths are but perjuries. Croatia, my native country, has a wide autonomy, but only nominally, and even this autonomy which has never been observed, was in the course of thirty years twice suspended by the Sovereign who, as Apostolic King, had sworn to observe it.

No autonomy whatever can satisfy us; we want absolute independence.

Austria-Hungary must be disrupted. Her survival would mean the Kaiser's victory. Only an integral victory of the Allies can crush Austria-Hungary.

Only an integral victory can bring to the Jugoslavs their deliverance and union, and to the world lasting peace and freedom. An independent Czecho-Slovakia and Poland will be the first line of defense against Pangermanism, and Jugoslavia will be the second. The more complete the State of Jugoslavia, the more efficient will be her resistance.

Since the Corfu Declaration, all Jugoslavs consider the Serbian Government as their government, and therefore we consider you, gentlemen of the Serbian Mission, as the spokesmen of the whole Jugoslav race and their national aspirations. In the name of the South Slavic National Council as representative of the Austro-Hungarian Jugoslavs in the United States, I am happy to welcome you on this free American soil and thank



you very heartily for your advocating our sacred cause before this greatest Democracy in the World.

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### Address of General Rašić.

General Mihailo Rašić was not scheduled on the program as a speaker, but General Greene, giving voice to the general wish of the audience, persuaded him to give an address. General Rašić is a well-known Serbian army chief, and was in command of the rear-guard during the Serbian retreat of 1915.

Speaking in Serbian, General Rašić said that what he believed to be just now the foremost duty of every Slav in America was to help win the war. He then dwelt upon the vast importance of America's help to our common Allied cause in Europe, and concluded his speech with: "Long live America! Long live Jugoslavia!" amid enthusiastic cheers from the entire audience.

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### Address of Dr. Vesnić.

Dr. Vesnić, chief of the Serbian Mission, was the next speaker after General Rašić.

Dr. Vesnić paid a high tribute to the moral spirit of the American people and drew a parallel between the two ideals for which this war is being waged—the Teutonic and the Allied. Speaking particularly of the wrongs inflicted by the Austrian and Hungarian autocrats upon their Slav subjects, he likewise emphasized the need for the realisation of all the aims and ideals of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes of Austria-Hungary, viz., their liberation and unification in one State together with their brothers of Serbia.

"We are certain that, even as morality must overcome immorality and freedom overcome slavery, so in time to come Right must end by conquering Might. When that comes to pass, we shall rejoice in the knowledge that the greatest of all despotic rulers has been driven to cover, never again to dictate to an enlightened people what it shall do and what it shall not do. We know there will be an accord of high ideals which weld the civilised countries of the world together in such a bond of friendship that there will be little probability of such a war as is now being fought ever occurring again.

"We are indeed grateful to your glorious country, to your noble President, and your high ideals. We also glory in the

sterling American soldiers now at the front aiding our Allies in the great fight for Liberty and Justice” .

## RESOLUTION.

After Dr. Vesnić had concluded, the Secretary of the meeting submitted to the approval of those present the following declaration which was unanimously adopted: —

“We Jugoslavs, Czecho-Slovaks and Poles, citizens of the U. S. A. and residents in the State of New York, assembled at a meeting in the Hotel Astor on the occasion of a reception to the Mission representing the people of Serbia, do hereby with love and pride welcome and greet in the city of New York the representatives of martyred Serbia, which has so valiantly fought and which has fallen—only temporarily—as the result of the atrocious and barbarous aggression on the part of the invading Teuton. These distinguished representatives are here with us as the spokesmen of those peoples who have undergone untold privations and sufferings and have given their all for the cause of the Allied peoples — the cause of Liberty and Justice. We greet them, not only as the spokesmen of the Serbian people, but also as the spokesmen of the Jugoslavs and the other Slav peoples of Austria-Hungary in their struggle for freedom and independence, and we are —

**Resolved** that we, as Americans and Slavs, do express our unequivocal approval of the declaration of war by this our native and adopted country, the United States of America, upon the autocratic and despotic Government of Austria-Hungary, which has for centuries oppressed its Slav subjects; and we commend our great leader President Woodrow Wilson, the champion of Right and Justice, backed by 100,000,000 Americans, for pursuing this great struggle with no desire for conquest, but with the sole end and purpose of the annihilation of autocracy and the complete establishment of liberty and freedom for all peoples and nationalities; the attainment of which, however, is not possible except by the dismemberment of Austria-Hungary; and be it further —

**Resolved** that, as the aims and aspirations of the Serbs and other Slav peoples coincide with those of the great Republic, it is our fervent hope and wish that the bond of friendship which binds the Slav peoples to the people of the great American Republic may become indissoluble, through the

attainment of those ideals for which all liberty-loving people have fought, by the establishment of a world democracy; and be it further —

**Resolved** that the Secretary of this meeting be directed, as hereby he is, to forward copies of this Resolution to His Excellency Woodrow Wilson, President of the United States, and to the representatives of the various Allied nations.”

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Telegrams expressing loyalty and admiration were despatched to President Wilson, to King Peter of Serbia, to the Prince Regent Alexander (Commander-in-Chief of the Serbian army), to Mr. Nikola Pašić (Serbian Prime Minister), and to the Yugoslav Committee in London.





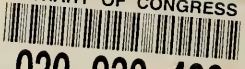
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