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Frank H. Simonds on Papal Peace Note

New York Tribune.

We should recognize at the outset of all peace discussion that while in fact the Pope's proposal must be closely associated with Austria and with the Catholic party in Germany, the mere fact that it includes the restoration of Belgium and Serbia makes it tantamount to demanding the defeat of Germany and of Austria. For it was over Serbia and Belgium that the world went to war. It was to defend Serbia that Russia drew the sword; the Belgian episode supplied the occasion for British entry into the war; and if the terms of peace establish the independence of both these countries German defeat is unmistakable.

We must recognize also that the liberation and restoration of Serbia and Montenegro would restore that condition created by the second Balkan war, which barred the road for the central powers to the Near East. It would restore the barrier between the component parts of the German Mitteleuropa Empire, and thus it would leave Germany and Austria, even had they no other concessions to make, still in that situation which seemed to their rulers so intolerable as to justify precipitating a world struggle.

Actually its reception, granted the restoration of Belgium and Serbia is unconditional and complete, must depend largely upon the French and Italian attitude toward the questions of Alsace-Lorraine and the Trentino. It is not too much to say that it is far and away the most important peace suggestion yet made, and, difficult as is the pathway which the Pope has to pass, it is by no means impossible that he may achieve his goal.

In any event, we must recognize that there is bound to be a different reception for this proposal than for that of President Wilson many months ago and of the German Emperor which preceded Mr. Wilson's suggestion. The desire for peace increases with every month of war, and with the prospect of a fourth winter the statesmen of no nation will dare to reject without discussion a proposal which, however unsatisfactory in detail, yet necessarily begins with the assertion of German defeat.—Toronto Star Weekly, Aug. 18, 1917.



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