

aim and purpose is shown by the following statement of H. G. Wells in a recent article in the New Republic:

"Our Tories blundered into this great war, not seeing whither it would take them. In particular it is manifest now by a hundred signs that they dread the fall of monarchy in Germany and Austria. Far rather would they make the most abject surrender to the Kaiser than deal with a renascent republican Germany. The recent letter of Lord Lansdowne, urging a peace with German imperialism, was but a feeler from the pacifist side of this most un-English, and unhappily most influential section of our public life. Lord Lansdowne's letter was the letter of a peer who fears revolution more than national dishonor. But it is the truculent wing of this same anti-democratic movement that is far more active. While our sons suffer and die for their comforts and conceit, these people scheme to prevent any communication between the republican and socialist classes in Germany and the Allied population. At any cost this class of pampered and privileged traitors intend to have peace while the Kaiser is still on his throne. If not, they face a new world—in which their part will be small indeed. And with the utmost ingenuity they maintain a dangerous vagueness about the Allied peace terms, *with the sole object of preventing a revolutionary movement in Germany.*"

But the noble Lord does not worry very much over what radicals and socialists think of him. The reactionaries evidently believe that they have the situation well in hand, and they are growing bolder from day to day.

One of the first demands of the radicals and Socialists after the war broke out was for the abolition of secret diplomacy; and as the war was settling down to a war of attrition and the workers of the world were gaining in power against their governments this demand was gradually conceded by all belligerent governments, at least to the extent of doing it lip service. But now the collapse of Russia has emboldened the reactionaries the world over, and they therefore openly demand the restoration of the secret diplomatic conclave as a peace working engine. A secret conclave and a meeting of diplomats

will always be a secret conclave, is, of course absolutely indispensable for the proper arrangement of a "negotiated peace" at the expense of the Russian Revolution. It would never do to discuss such delicate matters at long range—say, in an exchange of views between Hertling speaking in Berlin in the presence of the Reichstag and the hearing of all the world, and Lloyd-George speaking under similar conditions in London.

Hence Chancellor Hertling's plaintive reference in his last speech to "the existing method of dialogue across the Channel and ocean," and his suggestion that instead of thus carrying on negotiations in the presence of the whole world "the responsible representatives of the belligerent powers should come together in an intimate meeting" for the discussion of the terms of peace. And Count Hertling's plea finds a sympathetic rejoinder in the breast of Lord Lansdowne who hastened to second it in a letter to the London Daily Telegraph—a letter which is truly remarkable for the brazen effrontery with which it is demanded that all the great questions for which, we have been told, the world has been bleeding for nearly four years, should be left to be settled at a Peace Conference of diplomats, which will have the task of confirming and perhaps working out in detail the agreements reached at "an intimate meeting" of gentlemen like Mr. Lansdowne who can be relied upon to discuss matters "confidentially." In commenting upon Chancellor Hertling's request for "an intimate meeting" Lord Lansdowne says:

"By 'intimate meeting' I understand Count von Hertling to mean a small and informal meeting, not of plenipotentiaries, but of persons authorized to discuss confidentially and without prejudice the possibility of a more formal conference. It is true, as Mr. Balfour has pointed out, that it was unwise to begin negotiations unless there is a certain amount of potential and preliminary agreement. But how is such preliminary agreement to be reached unless there are preliminary conversations?"