We interrupt this podcast for a special presentation – this is a speech from the Presidential Palace, written by President Marshal Ferdinand Foch. After a week of reprehensible violence and bloodshed, President Marshal Foch is pleased to note that order has returned to the French capital, and he wishes to take this opportunity today, on 5th April 1919, to address the nation and the world. Much controversy has followed the forcible seizure of the office of President by PMF, as has a great deal of misinformation. With these unfortunate by-products of this tumultuous time in mind, PMF wishes to clear the air and reassert a sense of calm by outlining what he has deemed, the Sixteen Points for Peace. These terms are as follows.

1st: President Marshal FF, after having had his new regime approved by a considerable majority in the French Chamber of Deputies, is now the legal and official President of this great French republic. His rule is legitimate, and will accept no contenders, especially during such a time as this, when France is beset by danger on all sides.

2nd: Once the final peace with Germany has been made to the satisfaction of all French citizens, PMFF declares it is his intention to abdicate the Presidency, and return the office to a civilian.

3rd: PMFF wishes to reassure the world that France remains a stable and liberal democracy, with a free press and complete freedom of expression, and the President hopes that his amnesty of the political prisoners AC and RM from Le Santé prison will serve as a testament to this fact. President Poincare, once he swears not to establish a rival political grouping in the country, will be freed from prison also.

4th: PMFF and the office of the French President generally wish to assure the allies and the world that France remains beholden to virtually all treaties which have previously been signed. With very few exceptions, detailed below, PMFF wishes matters to continue as normal, and for previously agreed treaties to be respected and upheld.

5th: The one treaty which will require significant reappraisal is the Treaty of Western Peace, specifically on the issue of territory and reparations. In a revised treaty, Prussia will consent to release Bavaria as an independent nation, the terms of such independence to be determined by its citizens, and guarantee the independence of Austria. The union of Germany will not be dissolved, but German democratic regimes must be verified for their quality by independent observers to determine that this union remains the overriding wish of the majority of its citizens. Due to Bavaria and Austria’s current efforts at establishing independent entities, it is imperative that the allied powers recognise these efforts and legitimise them before it is too late. In return for this concession towards peace, France consents to reduce the final sum for reparations from 220 billion gold marks to just 85 billion gold marks, with the final decision on apportioning these funds to be determined by a committee consisting of the concerned allied powers.

6th: A Council with plenipotentiary powers will be established in league with the Supreme Council and Supreme Economic Council with an exclusive remit for determining allied policy on Russia. This Council for Russian Freedoms will be staffed with one allied representative from each concerned nation, and should help all concerned parties arrive at a solution for Russia at long last.

7th: In line with its efforts to facilitate a compromise between France, Italy and the rest of the allied powers, France commits to contribute 100,000 volunteers to the fight for Russian freedom, and Italy has consented to provided 50,000. If agreed to by the allies, General David Whiteside McCay of Australia has been nominated as the commander of this force, and several dominion powers of the British Empire have already expressed their desire to contribute forces of their own. Through this action, France intends to shoulder a great deal of the burden of the fight for Russian freedom, and PMFF hopes France will be treated with the relative respect such a responsibility incurs.

8th: The first three months of the conference have borne witness to many disappointments and a great deal of wasted time. The most egregious such misfortune has been the virtual divorce of the two allied parties, specifically the party of the west and the party known as IFTA. In recent days, it was announced with great uproar that PMFF has consented to attach France to this latter institution. While this is true, PMFF did not take this decision to drive a further wedge between east and west. The President’s office continues to negotiate with the Italian and Polish parties, the two most prolific actors in IFTA, in a bid to reach some negotiated solution. It is the sincere wish of PMFF that east and west, IFTA and allied powers alike, will reach an amicable settlement in the coming days, and put aside their petty differences for the good of the greater peace treaty. It was with this noble goal in mind, that PMFF determined to unilaterally attach French interests to those of IFTA – it is while their interests are aligned that the greatest opportunities for compromise can be reached.

9th: PMFF, acting under the authority vested in him by the French democratic apparatus which governs the French Republic, wishes to convey notice of an official amnesty for all prisoners arrested in the last week of regrettable violence. This includes the public servants Albert Claveille and Rene Massigli, but the President’s office must express regret that former President Raymond Poincare still demonstrates a keen desire for establishing a rival power bloc in France once he is set free. The last thing France can afford right now is civil war, and it must therefore be said that Raymond Poincare will remain under house arrest until such a date as it can be safely ascertained that the former president harbours no such ambitions.

10th: The Parisian police continue to comb the streets of Paris for Bolsheviks, and have uncovered some frightening details of conspiracy in the course of their investigations. Pawel Lebowa, the former delegate for Poland, has been implicated as an assassin responsible for the deaths of Alexander Kerensky and Chaim Weizmann. He has also confessed to paying an assassin to finish off GC. Upon further torture…er…persuasion, M. Lebowa revealed that he bribed a French journalist to create rumours about the German retention of AL, in a bid to fan the flames of revolution on the streets of Paris, and upend the entire peace conference. M Lebowa has since confessed his crimes as an anarchist, with revolutionary Bolshevik inclinations, and it is a good thing for the peace of the world that he has been stopped.

11th: It is earnestly hoped that the current peace conference will continue, but it is also accepted that Paris is no longer safe as a home base for the conference. Instead, it is believed by this office that the conference will continue in the Anna Bay Hotel on the outskirts of London. The structure of said conference, recommends the office of PMFF, should be rebuilt. German delegates, who are in no way fit to serve on an allied council, will have their accreditation removed. With the return to Germany by delegate HVH, only PVLV remains, and it is the hope of the office of PMFF that to facilitate a meaningful peace treaty, VLV will remain on side as an advisor for his country, but that he will be stripped of his powers to affect the final peace treaty. The office of PMFF must emphasise in the strongest terms that the presence of an enemy delegation on the pro-active allied councils undermines the very concept of a preliminary peace conference. This conclusion has been reached by PMFF and by an overwhelming majority of the French chamber of deputies. Germany can expect fair treatment, but must not be allowed to dictate the peace terms of the war it has recently caused and lost.

12th: The newly refreshed conference will resume its full duties from next week, 12th April 1919, once the recently released prisoners have arrived in London. Upon their arrival, the office of PMFF wishes to suggest a revision of the old style of inter-allied negotiation. There should be a C8, which will consist of the premier and foreign minister from the great states of Britain, America, Japan and France. There should be a minor council, consisting of the premiers of the other concerned allied powers, and equipped to receive representations from the C8. This arrangement will serve as a bicameral system, and will ensure that all decisions reached by the allies will be verified, with the C8 having the final say. Currently, the office of PMFF believes there are no grounds for Germany, Austria, Bulgaria, Hungary or Turkey to sit on the minor council, but it is possible that, in return for the concessions previously laid down, each of the defeated enemy nations will be permitted to have an observer sit in the deliberations of the minor council only.

13th: Regarding the current situation in Italy, it has come to the attention of the office of PMFF that Italian forces have landed along the Illyrian coastline, and have moved rapidly towards the major cities and towns of the Kingdom of the South Slavs. On 2nd April, with considerable aid from Slovenian and Croatian auxiliaries, both Slovenia and Croatia have been declared liberated by Italian troops. Evidence has since been uncovered of a Serbian conspiracy to forcibly entrap all Balkan nations together in an unwilling union. It is therefore fortunate that the Italians acted when they did, and in return for the promise of peace, the office of premier VO had welcomed mediation. On 4th April, yesterday, with the help of Swiss mediation, it is the understanding of the office of PMFF that Belgrade has reached an agreement for peace with Italy. There remains much to be done to heal the fractured Balkan region, but it is now fortunate that this region flies the white flag of peace after so many agonising years. In return for settling so many of the woes of this region, it is only fair to apportion Italy some reward; with great modesty, the office of VO had requested only Fiume, which the Serbian government recently conceded. Thus, while this peace treaty has in theory violated the previous stance of the allied powers, its blessing by all relevant parties involved suggests that the allied powers in London would do wise to ratify it as well. VO’s government has indicated that they would welcome, with further Swiss mediation, an international commission to investigate the different claims of the former South Slavs client states, in particular Montenegro, Albania and Macedonia, who wish to assert the sovereignty of their own nations.

14th: The office of PMFF wishes to express its heartfelt and sincere regret for the loss of life and conspiracy to commit murder which has recently been suffered by those delegates present in Paris. While much of the demonstrations over the previous weekend of 30 March were peaceful, there were regrettably some extremist elements also taking part, who engaged in far too bloody a campaign of violence. The newly legitimised regime of PMFF has surely demonstrated by now that it has no intention of unduly punishing those that were on different political sides to its supporters, however, there remains emergency legislation in place to detain all individuals suspected of engaging in Bolshevik practices or sponsoring a Bolshevik party. Recent events, and the association of Bolsheviks with so many terrible deeds, let alone what continues to transpire in Russia, moves the regime of PMFF to declare a policy of zero tolerance for all such individuals on the extreme left of the political spectrum, especially those that seek to use violence to achieve their ends.

15th: The campaign to restore the dignity of the French Republic has been a success, and the PMFF wishes to establish that the campaign was launched with the country’s security and future prosperity in mind. Under the previous regime, following numerous crises and with the passage of several treaties, it became evident that the French interests were being overwhelmed by those of Germany. To oppose this creeping takeover of the conference by German and Central Power interests, PMFF has established his Presidency. That has been its primary aim, but the President-Marshall remains determined to have a final say on the final terms of peace. Thus, any treaty which is agreed to at the Anna Bay Hotel resort must be ratified by the French Chamber of Deputies and the office of PMFF before it is actually to be ratified as international law. Due to the central interest and stake of France in this final treaty, and due to the scarring effect which the German rivalry has had on her, PMFF believes this request to be fair and forthright.

16th: The office of PMFF declares that it is truly sorry for those lives that were lost during the course of this campaign for securing French integrity. The President has personally met with the relatives of all victims who lost their lives in the course of the violence, and generous pensions have been promised to each of those in need. The office of PMFF has recorded a final death toll of 1,459, including 779 French citizens, 233 Americans and 145 Russians, the latter of whom seem to have been implicated in the worst outbreaks of violence. It is evident from this information, and from the crimes of PL, that much of the violence of recent days was the work of Bolshevik malcontents. Thus, it is the earnest hope of the office of PMFF that the allies will accept the olive branch which France now extends, and that all allied parties will commit next week to the proper commencement of meaningful, productive peace-making, such that the world deserves.

Signed, President of the Republic, MFF, 5th April 1919, 1.37PM.

\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*

Hello and welcome delegates all to episode 10 of the DG. Our 10th episode is a special one, because it is here that several important story threads congeal and culminate, with the end result being, hopefully, a renewed impetus behind peace-making efforts, and fewer opportunities for squabbles which had so badly delayed the creation of a final peace. What we’ve got in store for you today is something a bit different. As you’ve noticed from the announcement which opened our episode today, MFF has established his regime in France, and wishes to return to the business of peace-making. His demands, while steep in some respects, also contain their fair share of compromise and opportunity for others to benefit. If you want a recap on what those demands are, you can get a hard copy of these demands in the patreon episode page, but I will also upload the document to the Facebook group. Remember as well, that we update the details on who’s playing who each week, and I upload that excel spreadsheet to the patreon episode too, so do check those out if you’re curious. Anyway, back to the task at hand, and Foch evidently wishes to guard France against the twin evils of German revenge, and Bolshevik revolution, and he believes that his 16 points will guarantee this. In the vote which we send out this week, you will have the option to approve of, to abstain or to disprove of these 16 points.

One thing is certain, if you do approve, then the French government will be empowered, confident and willing to compromise. If however, the delegates do not vote in favour of the 16 points for peace, then it is hard to imagine how, bar some extensive negotiations, France will take part in the final peace treaty, which will in itself be disastrous for the peace of the world. It should go without saying that none of the aforementioned 16 points are negotiable. However, some are less rigidly set in stone than others; for example final figures for reparations, and the final form of government which an independent Bavaria will adopt, remain pertinent questions open to final negotiation. Hopefully this has soothed some of the fears which those of you had had following last week’s episode. It was unfortunate that many of you were upset by what took place, but perhaps now you see where we’re going with it.

While France had, in our timeline, achieved some concessions of worth, these were not nearly sufficient to appease the more hardline figures like MFF, who had, in historical terms, always demanded the highest price from Germany in the Rhine particularly. With Clemenceau’s moderating influence gone, and Germans taking their seats as accredited delegates, it was perhaps inevitable that veterans like Foch should take it personally, and take it upon himself to lead the French people to reassert their national dignity in the face of so many affronts. PL, for Foch, was also a supremely important boon to his regime’s legitimacy, as that Polish delegate had been caught red handed by an undercover French policeman, who recognised Lebowa after the latter attempted to purchase bomb making materials from him. Lebowa’s precise loyalties or aims were difficult to grasp, and the Pole remains in Le Santé prison, in no fit state to have visitors, if you know what I mean.

Meanwhile, everyone has made their way to London in light of the collapse of French order over the previous few days. A few individuals, such as PL and the two French delegates, were left behind, but by and large a new phase of the negotiations, based at the luxurious, but alcohol-short Anna-Bay Hotel overlooking the mouth of the Thames, has begun. After having followed these punchy policy decisions by the hopeful new French president over the first few days of April, we turn our attention now to 7th April when the terms of Foch’s 16 points were being digested in a large gathering of several allied powers, in the lobby of the Anna-Bay Hotel. Without any further ado, I will now take you there…

\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*

There was an atmosphere of unmistakable tension in the room. France, any representation of France, was conspicuous by its absence, and in his hands, the American President held the latest communique from the new President of that country. It presented several opportunities, but also several problems; it saved the allies a great deal of effort, and promised to cut through a whole load of red tape, but PMFF or whatever he insisted on calling himself, had also executed a sequence of fait accompli’s, which the allies would be effectively powerless to overturn. The war in the Balkans had been wrapped up within a week, and London now had Foch, in addition to some Swiss intermediaries, to thank for the resolution of that mess.

Thankfully, the allies had held back on recognising the Kingdom of the South Slavs for some time. Another figure who was conspicuous in his absence was Karhoo Rosnack. As the new premier of an independent Slovenia, welcomed by a rapturous population, and in a defensive alliance with Croatia, Italy and France, it was impossible to approach the subject of overturning that result, and what would be the point anyway? To forcibly bind several Balkan states together again under what had been exposed as an unlawful Serbian domination? No, that wouldn’t do. Wilson had to admit that the current arrangement was keeping more in line with the principles of self-determination which they had all committed to uphold, even if the journey to arrive at that destination had not been ideal.

As several delegates were coming to appreciate though, the world was a messy place in 1919. Maybe the conference needed this kick which the Marshal had given it? While they could never be seen to publicly approve his naked power grab, reports on the ground had it that the French chamber of deputies voted unanimously for Foch’s presidential run to begin. These French public servants granted Foch their blessing, and they did so with tears of joy in their eyes, that their Marshall saved them in the peace, just as he had saved them in the war. While he had ruffled some feathers, he nonetheless boasted a regime which was almost wholly supported by the people of France, and certainly of Paris. Bolsheviks had been systematically hunted down, and in a stunning reveal, Pawel Lebowa had been outed as the Bolshevists’ man on the inside, so to speak, who had worked with other disruptive elements to make Paris terminally unsafe for all that had operated there.

Reportedly, Chaim Weizmann’s body had been found in Lebowa’s wardrobe in the HZ, a further strike against him. Lebowa had sheepishly explained that the Zionist delegate had made a habit of trying to hide from him, but French authorities were evidently unconvinced. Would Lebowa swing? It was unclear, but what was clear was that France had been invigorated, even though it took the deaths of more than 1,500 people to achieve that. For all those transgressions, including the deaths of 200 Americans, Foch had profusely apologised, and insisted that compensation would be immediately given. His 16 points, Wilson had to admit, contained a central paradox – on the one hand it was an affront to the sensibilities of the democratic west, but on the other, it was a popularly supported regime which earnestly wished to make amends and aid the allies in their quest to fix the post-war world.

Fixing the post-war world would be totally impossible without French membership in the LON, and Wilson was comforted that at least, the 16 points had not even alluded to that new institution. If Foch’s references to other treaties being upheld was true, then that meant France would be a league member as before, but nothing having changed. Although, of course, a great deal had changed. Foch had seized power, whether approved of or not after the event, that was not an act which could be consented to. But, Wilson had to ask himself, was it worth asserting principles in that case, where meeting Foch where he stood would guarantee peace? Furthermore, those crimes Foch had committed, he atoned for, and he committed to give up the Presidency once the peace treaty was acquired. He had even released AC and RM, who were en route to take back their seats on board the C12, or should that be C8? Wilson admitted it had a good ring to it, and it would be a dream not to have to defend his policy from the Germans at every turn – it was hard enough defending it from TR!

Wilson was still unsure as to how he would vote when it came time to voice an opinion on those 16 points, but it was clear by now that this was no ordinary coup; he had heard it called a benign coup by some French citizens who had fled to Paris with them, but Wilson thought that was a bit much. The extreme elements of those demonstrations the previous week, which had apparently swept Foch to power, did not represent the mostly peaceful inclinations of the majority, and that was important. France was now stable, eager to help, and potentially very useful indeed if Foch fulfilled his promise to intervene in Russia with 100,000 volunteers. By their actions, everything had been made much simpler, and a path finally seemed open for compromise with those insufferable IFTA folks. Wilson looked across the room at PVLV. The normally unshakable general was sweating profusely – he did not look himself.

‘General’ Wilson called out, and thirteen people immediately turned towards him. Wilson scoffed, ‘I meant you, General von LV, come and talk with me.’ PVLV got out of his chair and walked about ten feet over to the other side of the large oval table, where all the important delegates were seated. Present around the table was a veritable who’s who of the peace conference, now transplanted to this, admittedly luxurious hotel resort on the outskirts of London – the Anna-Bay. They currently suffered from shortages in spirits, but VLV had already paid top dollar for their most expensive scotch, and he could have spent all day with such a glass of heaven. How he longed for the open African bush, where it was only him, his troops and his wits. Here, in these rooms, there was even more danger and fewer protections to confront. VLV arrived beside the president, and sat on the vacant chair beside him. They had been talking all morning as a large group of delegates, and many had left for lunch.

The topic of conversation that morning had been Foch’s 16 points, a weighted document indeed. ‘General’, Wilson repeated, ‘I just wanted to inquire as to the state of your health. Are you quite well?’ VLV realised then that he had been sweating profusely for much of the morning – he was overcome with anxiety. ‘Yes Mr President’, VLV began:

I am quite well in health, but I am laid low with worry. I must draw your attention to Foch’s 11th point, wherein he notes the departure of HVH to Berlin. I must now draw your attention to the regrettable fact that no-one in Germany knew of the extent of the concessions we had been forced to make under the Western Front Peace Treaty. Thus, when Foch released his 16 points to the world, and attached as an appendix the contents of that treaty, they were perused by the average German citizen for the first time. I regret that HVH may be punished gravely for its contents, though agreeing to its passage was not a fault of his.

Wilson squinted at VLV; the normally immaculate military man really was feeling the strain. His clothes were dirty and his collar not starched. This could have been the result of a general clothes shortage which many in London were suffering from, as so many delegates rushed to leave France, thereby abandoning their diplomatic dress in Paris as they did so, but this was more than a simple case of forgetting his luggage. VLV seemed shaken by the situation to a degree he had never been shaken before, even when on campaign, when his life was in immediate danger. Was his life in danger now? ‘General, if you worry for your colleague’s safety, why did you not accompany him?’ VLV made a face as though he’d been asked the question several times; indeed, Wilson had only asked him this exact question three days’ before. By asking it again, Wilson wanted to see if VLV would give him a different answer – maybe the situation had changed? Not so; VLV reverted to his previous response: ‘someone of rank had to stay to guard German interests!’ the General retorted.

Chancellor Karl Renner approached VLV from his left side, and the General walked to meet him. The two men began smoking and, from what Wilson could see, relished that moment to relax, insulated somewhat by their language barrier, though of course not from all delegates who were blessed with proficiency in multiple languages. ‘What’s this business about an independent Austria, and Bavaria? Could he be serious? What about German unity?’ Renner asked the General. ‘I know, your excellency, I know. I do not believe Bavaria desires to be independent however, and I imagine that the proposal will not succeed.’ ‘I’m afraid I must respectfully disagree, General’, Renner said, ‘I received word that a representative from Bavaria is on his way, Johannes Hoffman, the socialist Minister-President.’ VLV was dumbstruck, ‘It is all a scheme to undermine the authority of Prussia’, he spat, ‘I hope Foch knows what he is doing.’ ‘How will you fight him General, when you are here on the generosity of the allied powers?’ Renner asked. He didn’t ask the question maliciously, but as a genuinely curious outsider looking in, who feared for the future of his fatherland. ‘I will fight France as I fought Britain – on the field, if absolutely necessary, but I do believe that it will not come to that. The allies know that HVH and I represent the moderate faces of the new German Republic; if they spurn us now, radicals will take our place, and they won’t find much comfort with them.’

On the other side of the square shaped room, in the corner next to the jug of water and porcelain mugs, stood a positively traumatised Ignacy Paderewski. The pianist, statesman and patriot was now the last Pole standing, with the exception of Bogna Kuzdzal, who had taken to his bed in a fit of grief upon learning of Lebowa’s situation. It was a fate worse than death, and it inevitable undid all the good work which had been done since the terrible eruption in the HT earlier in the year. How had so many troubled Poles found their way onto his delegation? Paderewski felt as though he was being toyed with by some higher power – upon learning of the news he took to the piano, and played such a bitter, angry, but also tragically mournful piece that people begged him, with tears in their eyes, to stop, and to play something more uplifting. He had received a personal letter from the President Marshall, who informed him that he believed Poland was worth saving, and that its misfortune with public servants did not change this fact. Poland, Foch said, had a friend in him and a friend in France. Paderewski wished to believe him, but he didn’t know if he could believe in anything anymore. Perhaps he would take to his bed too. He walked slowly out of the room, past the two Belgians standing smoking at the door. Mercifully, Genuris Dinglebrush did not see him.

‘I would not recommend it, your excellency’, Paul Hymans said, for the third time that day, when Dinglebrush asked him once more whether he thought he should accept the offer from Foch to command allied forces into Russia. ‘It would be a seriously dangerous mission, and we are not quite certain yet whether the expedition would even go ahead.’ ‘You are quite right, M Hymans’, Dinglebrush replied, resting his hands as he said so on his large protruding belly. It was an orange waistcoat on the menu today, but it did him no more favours than the yellow variety. Every time he took a drag, Dinglebrush looked at the cigarette as though it had cured him of some ailment; Hymans knew he was only doing this to appear sophisticated, but at least he was smoking properly; Hymans had never quite managed the rhythm of inhaling and exhaling the smoke, without feeling like he’d cough up a lung. Supposedly, it made one relax, but Hymans felt they would need more than cigarettes for that.

A few feet from Hymans stood a new face, the unfortunate Italian representative, who had yet to be welcomed officially by those present. He had been given a few curious looks throughout the morning, having arrived to present his credentials at 9AM as scheduled, but then the full text of Foch’s 16 points had arrived, so he had been forced to stand around awkwardly in the hope that matters would proceed to the next item on the agenda – him. He wasn’t looking forward even then to this prospect, largely because it would require reading out another memo straight from the presses of VO’s government. Peace had been established in the Balkans after only a few days of fighting, but the Italian ministers had pleaded for a hasty settlement, in case the country was gripped by a military style coup of its own. Extremist movements seemed to stalk VO’s premiership, but one could not deny that he had never been so popular.

In the present moment, his victorious adventure into Dalmatia, his sponsoring of explosive revolts in Zagreb and Lubiana effectively torpedoed Serbian resistance before it truly had a chance to materialise. It was the element of surprise, KR had claimed, not to mention to rapturous enthusiasm in those oppressed Balkan states, who worked desperately to throw off the Serbian yolk. In his hand, the now sweaty piece of paper rested. Lorenzo Martilli had read the statement over and over again, but he still did not like it – would those present be convinced of its authenticity or worth? VO was effectively passing the buck onto him, so that he could rule from Rome more effectively; considering the circumstances, Martilli confessed that he could not blame the premier for staying home, especially as so much disruption threatened to derail the entire conference. Martilli checked his watch again – it was nearly 2PM. He sighed loudly, and sat down on a chair, reading once more the statement in his hot, stodgy hands:

Today Italy sets out to fulfil a new mission and to correct a failing of the post-armistice talks in Paris. Italy is taking military action as a final resort following the extreme provocation from Serbia and its agents. Serbia's actions directly provoked Austria to start the war. It has not learnt its lesson. It has acted to defy the 14 points and to deliberately stir up anti-western, particularly anti-Italian sentiment. We will not allow this. Italy wishes to uphold and enshrine the noble purpose of the 14 principles across the world and in particular in the Balkans. It is the only roadmap to stability and peace we have…Italy seeks to set free those people of Slovene, Croat, Bosnian, Kosovar, Herzegovinan, Macedonian, Montenegran and Albanian origin who have come under the yolk of the Serb. We believe Mr Wilson is right to call for their freedom. These nations have too long suffered under the boot of the Habsburgs, for Italy to stand-by and watch them fall under the heel of the Karageorgevich tyranny…Be under no illusion, we are acting with force, justified force. That we do it alone shows just how much the bourgeois diplomatic classes of the Paris conference have failed in 4 long months…Prime Minister Orlando refuses to attend further conferences in Paris or London. He welcomes any delegations to Rome to discuss the matter further. As a token of his respect to the misfiring process he presents Italy's streamlined delegation, embodied in the sole person of Signor Lorenzo Martilli. God Save The King.

The real question, at least in Lorenzo Martilli’s mind, was that which asked whether the British and Americans would accept this fait accompli, thereby granting France and Italy what they wanted, and guaranteeing the continuation of the conference, or would they cease to recognise Foch’s regime or VO’s successes, in the process dooming the conference from continuing? It was a toss-up between practical and what was morally right, or maybe, Martilli thought, there were shades of grey. After all, would it not be immoral to fail to create some kind of peace treaty? So the Italians had beaten up some rule-breaking Serbs, and Foch had not behaved according to the letter of the law when coming into the Presidency – were these facts now to doom the rest of the world to an eternity of conflict unending? Was it not worth it to compromise, to accept that bad had been done in the name of fixing the bad that was in the world? Lorenzo Martilli thought so, and he could only hope the allies would see things this way too.

Four figures sat huddled at the table a few feet from where Wilson had been seated, a cloud of smoke above their heads. If the smoke could talk, it would say that the four figures below were entering something of a crisis mode – they knew that the reception had been suspicious towards Foch’s 16 points, but that the last few hours had seen attitudes soften. However, this was far from how they felt – according to Baron Makino Nabuaki, Lady Nora Csok, Dmitri Rabotnik and Charles Sheer, these proposals suited them down to the ground. Nabuaki, now of increased fame since his stand-off in the HZ, interpreted the 16 points as an ideal opportunity for Japan to bargain with France. In return for concessions in Asia, specifically in French Indochina, Nabuaki planned to concede to the French points.

They concerned him far less than Rabotnik, who was positively jumpy with excitement now that Foch had proclaimed his intentions to intervene with considerable force against the Bolsheviks. Lady Nora Csok was more subdued, but still plainly loud in her feelings of joy – this represented a perfect opportunity to protect Hungary from the Bolsheviks, and hopefully, return Budapest to the councils of the world. Csok had been informed, though she had yet to tell the allies, that Bela Kun had been recently arrested while attempting to stage a Bolshevik coup of his own, in a bid to take advantage of the disruption in Europe. Thankfully, the allies had created in the Budapest government a stronger regime than Kun had expected. While being rounded up, Kun was shot in the back of the head by a right-wing sympathiser. Official Hungarian reports made a brief note of the incident, but Lady Csok knew that there was more to the story – Hungary had in fact been saved from the country’s most vocal proponent of Bolshevism, and it was therefore not in any real danger any longer. Lady Csok determined to keep quiet on these facts though – so long as the spectre of Bolshevism hung over the east, she would have more leverage.

As he breathed in, Charles Sheer felt his whole face throb. His nose hadn't just been broken, it had nearly been lanced clean off, by a baseball bat no less. Evidently a French ruffian had stolen such a weapon from an unwitting American visitor. Sheer’s face represented a kaleidoscope of different colours; shades of blue, black and red, with a large brace bandage over the bridge of his nose. The physician said the swelling would go down within a few weeks; it was difficult to breathe with such a wound. Yet, Sheer did have reason to be positive – these 16 points reduced the power of Germany, and provided new opportunities for his beloved Alsace to make independent moves on the European stage. If the western front treaty could be reopened by the new French president, then who else could open it and question the settlement on AL? Could he? Perhaps not, but by approving of formerly autonomous regions breaking away from the centre, Sheer hoped he would help set a precedent for his own Alsace to do the same. Did that even make sense? Perhaps the blinding pain was messing with his mind. Charles knew he needed to lie down – why did those Americans always insist on holding up the meeting?

TR strolled back into the room, his five followers trailing behind him. He walked straight over to House. ‘Had any more chances to think about the SPs, MR president?’ Roosevelt asked. ‘I fear I may have to sleep on it, Mr President’, Wilson replied. Roosevelt smiled a condescending smile. ‘I see. I understand Mr President, but my delegation and I are mostly united in approving these SPs, on the basis that France, in league with Italy, will hereby be encouraged to return here, and both can also be depended upon to act forcibly in Russia, where we have been carrying a great proportion of the burdens.’ ‘This is true’, Wilson replied, ‘I only hope we do not stray too far by legitimising such underhanded tactics.’

‘This is the world we live in Mr President’, Roosevelt replied, ‘we can either decry what Foch has done, and ruin our chances to ever make peace, or we can swallow this crime, as we have swallowed so many others when it has suited us, and move our negotiations forward to a point of genuine progress and productivity. Imagine, Mr President, if all of us were united behind a common cause – what good deeds we might accomplish in London!’ Wilson felt his face twitching – it seemed only being in Roosevelt’s presence was enough to vex him now. ‘I will think it over, of course’. Wilson confirmed. ‘Thank you, Mr President, and give my regards to Mr House.’ Wilson nodded weakly – House was bedridden after a nasty car accident had resulted in a broken arm. That, combined with the stress of the last few months, had caused House to fall into what amounted to a deep sleep for several days.

Wilson admitted he felt deeply jealous of his old friend, escaping so effortlessly into a land far from this one. As Wilson watched him sleep, he noted that not the sun shining on his face, nor the occasion chirping of a birdsong, would wake House up. How Wilson longed to go somewhere where equally nothing would disturb his rest, but that was impossible now. He thought matters had been difficult before, but before him today seemed an impossible choice, and one which he never imagined he would have to make. Did the American President want to stick to his morals, or did he want to achieve peace? Where once he had felt so self-assured, now Wilson felt convinced that he could no longer achieve both.

\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*

And that history friends and delegates, is the end of the episode. Hopefully now, you’ll see that it’s not all doom and gloom. You’ll also note that not everyone got a mention this week – that’s mostly because of Foch’s 16 points which I had to address; it would have taken too long to cover everyone. As you can probably tell, next week is when the conference fully resumes, and when that happens, with perhaps the C8 assembled, the proper business of this conference can resume too. And I say perhaps because this is where I put it over to you. I know Foch has committed several crimes, but I want you, dear delegates, to imagine what choice the delegates of the world have other than to recognise him. With PL imprisoned for his role in fanning the flames of the crisis, and with the Serbian government renouncing its control over the Balkans, it is hard to argue that no good came of his actions. Italy and France, both having sacrificed much, are now in a position to help the allied peace effort with far more gusto and enthusiasm than before, thanks largely to the fact that they have gotten what they wanted.

This may well appear unfair to you, but the reality is, this peace conference is going nowhere fast unless all delegates take a serious look in the mirror and ask themselves what is more important. For the sake of fairness, I will be putting Foch’s SPs up to a vote, but for the sake of balance and our forward progression in this game, I hope all delegates will make the right choice. Whether it is realistic or not, I will leave you to judge. Who can say what the marginalised, resentful Marshal Foch would have done had Clemenceau been assassinated and German delegates taken seats on the C10? What we have done here is spice things up; to effectively bring forward the consequences of earlier voting decisions, and while that freaked everyone out last week, now we have hopefully reached a point where you can see, the situation is a great deal more calm than you might have feared.

Apologies for the somewhat backward structure of this episode – you’ll note that some new delegates wandered into our consciousness. In particular, I’d like to welcome Johannes Hoffman, the Bavarian Minister-President, who is a character I have assigned to the player James, as he has yet to take part. In addition, we have a new Swiss delegate, Felix Calonder, who is making a name for himself in brokering an Italian peace in the Balkans before turning his attention to France next week, when he will arrived for the conference. Lithlilia has yet to get back to me, so Foch remains their player character, but remember, if you wish, I can switch these characters up if you prefer. I was also offered an interesting proposition in the last few days, as some of you delegates offered to take the more vacant player characters off my hands, until their actual players materialise, if indeed they do. I am very happy to facilitate this, and in line with this idea, you should know that the following avatars are potentially up for grabs: Sean T O’Kelly of Ireland, Nicola Pasic of Serbia, Foch of France and from next week, Johannes Hoffman of Bavaria.

These four individuals could have a profound impact, and some already have, but I simply do not have time to give them the attention they deserve. Perhaps, if we set up yet another chat group, we’ll be able to organise apportioning responsibilities to other players. So in conclusion you will be requested to vote on how you feel about Foch’s SPs. If you needed a refresher, make sure to download the document which includes these SPs in the episode on the Patreon page, where you can also sign up to play this game if you haven’t already! Regarding the vote, you can approve of the SPs, condemn them, or abstain – no permit history option this time around! All being well, Europe will be a little more stable when we resume our story next week, but until then dear delegates, my name is Zack and you have been listening to episode 10 of the DG. Thanks for playing, and I’ll be seeing you all soon.