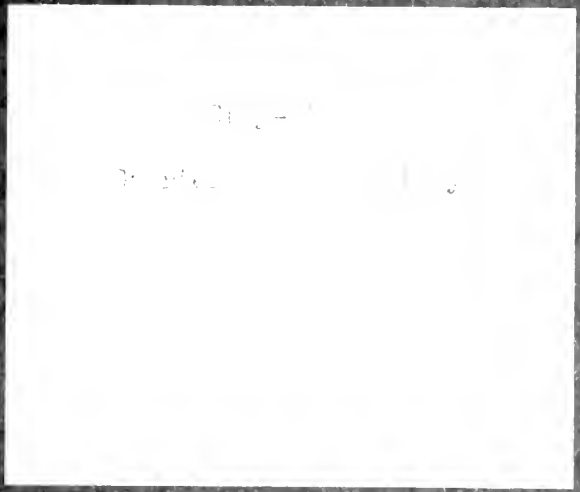

Gabriel de Vesselitsky

Sketch

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NOTE

The foundation of M. de Wesselitsky's unique international reputation was laid in the school of high policy in which so much of his life was spent.

Of this life he once wrote : "Of all my teachers I owe Bismarck most ; and my next greatest teacher was Leo XIII."

The following brief sketch of a life crowded with intense interest and of which the last twenty-five years have been devoted with steadfast loyalty to the cause of Anglo-Russian friendship, has been printed, by request, for private circulation among his many devoted friends and admirers, at a time when the Russian sky is heavily overcast and faith in the glory of her future calls for sympathetic expression.

W. GREY-WILSON.

April 7, 1918.

Gabriel de Wesselitsky

GABRIEL DE WESSELITSKY comes of an ancient historical family of Herzegovina which sought refuge in Russia His father was a well-known Russian general. He himself was successively page at the Imperial Court, pupil at a privileged military school, and lieutenant of the Guards. Love of study caused him to leave the Army and to become a student at the University of Heidelberg, where, four years later, he received the degree of Ph.D. During that period he was continually impressed by the danger that was threatening the peace of the world due to the German

First Impression an 1860.

While eagerly absorbing knowledge at the University, Wesselitsky felt an ardent interest in the struggle for freedom of the Herzegovinians and other Balkan peoples. Each summer vacation found him in the Balkans, taking an active part in any fighting which might chance to be forward. In 1860 he also fought under Garibaldi in South Italy.

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First Impression of German Danger, 1860.

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thus obtained authentic knowledge of the whole foreign policy of Russia. Before long he was attached to the Russian Embassy in Paris, and here he soon attracted the attention of Napoleon III, who, eager for information about the Near East, had many conversations with him. This was the first of those remarkable opportunities for private intercourse with rulers and statesmen which, by happy fortune, Wesselitsky has been privileged to enjoy throughout the whole of his long life. Nor was the second opportunity slow to appear, for in October, 1865, on the strand at Biarritz, he met Napoleon leaning on Bismarck's arm, and was thus introduced by the French Emperor to the German Chancellor. Bismarck was at the time preparing the war against Austria, which was to render Prussia mistress of Germany, and he tried to enlist Wesselitsky's services for his schemes. In this, however, he failed, for when in the following year, 1866, war broke out, Wesselitsky wrote a memorial in which he advocated an understanding with Great Britain and France, "in order to set a limit to the ambitions of Prussia." Alexander II, who had met Wesselitsky in a private house and had encouraged him to state his opinions, was favourably impressed by the memorial. He was himself, indeed, inclined to send Wesselitsky on a special mission to London and Paris. But this plan was wrecked by Bismarck, through influence brought to bear upon the Russian Chancellor, Prince Gortchakoff. Shortly after, Wesselitsky left the diplomatic service and began his struggle, as an independent politician, against the German peril, failing, however, for a long time to secure in any quarter the slightest sympathy with his views. Yet these views were destined, some fifty years later, to become those of all the Allied Governments and Nations.

Talks with Napoleon III.

Introduced by him to Bismarck, 1865.

Advocates Understanding with England and France, 1866.

Foreseeing the importance which the Near East was bound to acquire in German policy, Wesselitsky decided to travel throughout that region, and, during the three years 1867–1870, made himself thoroughly familiar with the language, history, actual conditions and aspirations of the various Near Eastern peoples. He soon came to be acknowledged in Russia as a leading authority on all questions concerning them.

Travels in the Near East, 1867-70.

When, in 1875, consequent on the Turkish massacres, the Herzegovinians and Bosnians rose up to fight for their existence, they appealed to Wesselitsky to help them. He forthwith formed in Paris the International Committee of Assistance for the Bosno-Herzegovinian women and children who had fled for safety to Dalmatia and Montenegro, and further, as a Delegate of that Committee, personally organized the relief work on the spot. In this labour he was enthusiastically helped by English sympathizers, Edward Freeman, the historian, for example, collecting donations for the fund in Great Britain.

Appealed to by Herzegovinians, 1875.

In 1876 Wesselitsky was charged by Alexander II with the task of bringing about the pacification of Bosnia-Herzegovina. The insurgents not only accepted his advice, but also requested him both to represent them before the Great Powers and to negotiate an arrangement on their behalf with the Porte. Wesselitsky, supported among others by British diplomatists, concluded an agreement which gave Bosnia-Herzegovina provincial autonomy within the Turkish Empire.

Mission of Pacification.

Procures Autonomy for Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Bismarck, however, whose desire was for a Russo-Turkish war followed by an Anglo-Russian conflict, saw in this agreement an obstacle to his plans. His agents

therefore, promptly stirred up an agitation in the Russian press, accusing Wesselitsky of "betraying the Slav cause for English gold." Serbia and Montenegro were pushed into war with Turkey, and Russia soon joined them. Wesselitsky entered the Montenegrin army, and with it went through the campaign of 1876. He re-entered the Russian Army in 1877 and fought before Plevna. At the Berlin Congress in 1878 he pleaded the cause of Bosnia-Herzegovina, but the Congress cancelled her autonomy, substituting for it an Austro-Hungarian occupation.

Represents Bosnia-Herzegovina at Berlin Congress.

Relations with Diplomatists and Statesmen.

Wesselitsky's independent initiative and successful conciliation of seemingly irreconcilable adversaries, and, above all, his success in delaying for a whole year the fulfilment of Bismarck's scheme—a "duel of a pigmy with a giant"—deeply impressed the diplomatic circles of that epoch, and led to his personal relations with the chief statesmen of many different countries. The list included Lord Beaconsfield and Mr. Gladstone, both of whom frequently asked him for information and advice on the various Balkan questions.

Adviser to the Austro-Hungarian Government for Bosnia-Herzegovina, 1878-1885.

Meanwhile, the Austro-Hungarian Government, apprehensive of Wesselitsky's influence in the occupied countries, sought by all possible means to gain his adherence, even going so far as to offer him the post of Governor-General of Bosnia-Herzegovina. This he declined, but he took advantage of his intimate relations with the Ministers Andrassy, Haymerle, and particularly Kallay, to exert his influence on behalf of the populations that were still looking to him for help. He also made full use of the special opportunities which he enjoyed in Vienna during the years 1878–1885 for learning every detail of the national problems

of the Hapsburg Monarchy, as well as of the inner structure of its Government.

Wesselitsky's action in the crisis of 1875–76 has been described in his lecture on "Bosnia-Herzegovina" at the Grafton Galleries, December 21, 1917, which will be published shortly.

Acquaintance with Leo XIII.

In February, 1878, Wesselitsky visited Rome, and among his letters of introduction he bore one for Cardinal Pecci, who was then *Camerlengo* of the Roman Catholic Church and invested with supreme authority during the interregnum which followed the death of Pius IX. The letter brought by Wesselitsky was from Pecci's nephew, the object of the Cardinal's warmest affection, and he received Wesselitsky most cordially. He opened for him, not only the Library, but also the Archives of the Vatican, and guided Wesselitsky with his advice in the latter's study of the history of the Elbe and Baltic Slavs. Pecci, on his side, sought from Wesselitsky information about ecclesiastical, political and racial conditions in the Balkans, in Austria-Hungary, and in Germany; during these talks he expressed deeply important and instructive opinions which were noted down and have been cherished by Wesselitsky ever since. The effect of this intercourse was still further to strengthen Wesselitsky's distrust of German policy. As Pecci, during the thirty years of Pius IX's Pontificate, never came to Rome, he was utterly unknown there, and when, on the strength of his high reputation for genius and virtue, he was elected Pope as Leo XIII, people of all classes and nations gathered round Wesselitsky wherever he went, asking him particulars about the new head of Catholic Christianity, of whom he was one of the few intimates.

Study of Austria-Hungary, and Discussions with her Statesmen.

One question to the elucidation of which Wesselitsky devoted a good deal of his time in Vienna was the possibility of some agreement between Russia and Austria-Hungary that would assure (1) the independence of all the Balkan peoples, (2) equal rights for all the nationalities of Austria and of Hungary, and (3) the complete freedom of the Hapsburg Monarchy from the ascendancy of Germany. Leading Austro-Hungarian statesmen gave him innumerable opportunities for the private and free discussion of this programme. Its first provision was met with a counter proposal for a division of the Balkan Peninsula into an Austrian and a Russian sphere—Serbia, Albania, and Macedonia being included in the first ; Roumania and Bulgaria in the second. Ministers, High Court functionaries, and even members of the House of Hapsburg, did all they could to win Wesselitsky's support for this combination, but he remained determinedly opposed to it as entirely contrary to the main aim of Russian policy, viz., the liberation of all Slavs.

With regard to the second part of his programme, the position of his interlocutors varied in strict accordance with their origin and political standpoint. But it was with the third point that the warmest sympathy was shown. All the Ministers of Francis Joseph approved of this in principle. None dared to undertake its realization. Nevertheless, the idea of emancipation from Berlin was so agreeable to the innermost ruling circles in Vienna that the fact of Wesselitsky including it in his programme appeared to them to be a proof of his friendship for their Monarchy, and herein lay the true explanation of the cordial welcome

given to Wesselitsky in Austria-Hungary even after he had fallen into disfavour with the rulers of Germany.

Bismarck Strives for Alliance between the German and the Russian Peoples.

In 1885 Bismarck proclaimed his earnest desire that the recently restored Russo-German Alliance should be an Alliance, not only between the Governments, but also between the Peoples. It appeared to him that this object would be best promoted by the visit of some popular Russian politician to Berlin with a view to discussing the fundamental bases of such an Alliance with the leaders of German public opinion. Bismarck appealed in this sense to the Russian Foreign Office, and, at the same time, to the editor of the *Moscow Gazette*, Katkoff, whose influence with Alexander III was greater than that of any of his Ministers, and who had already used it in favour of the renewal of the Russo-German Alliance.

Mission to Discuss Peoples' Alliance in Berlin.

Katkoff requested Wesselitsky to go to Berlin in the double capacity of correspondent of the *Moscow Gazette* and representative of independent Russian politicians. Wesselitsky, who considered his task in Vienna as terminated, accepted the mission, regarding it chiefly as a unique opportunity for completing his study of German policy. Aware that the Russian Government saw in an Alliance with Germany an efficient defence against a revolution at home, he was anxious to investigate how far such an Alliance would be even temporarily possible without undue injury to the vital interests of Russia.

Position in Berlin, and Relations with Bismarck, 1885-1892.

On his arrival in Berlin, Wesselitsky was, by Bismarck's desire, presented at Court, and at once all the doors of society were open to him. In exclusive salons he met members of the Prussian Royal Family and had frequent opportunities of observing Prince William of Prussia

(William II). Wesselitsky was also a frequent guest in the castles of the great Prussian landlords, where he learned the truth concerning their relations with their *de facto* serfs. On terms of intimate friendship with Count Herbert Bismarck, the Chancellor's elder son, Wesselitsky was introduced by him into his family circle, and was thus accorded special facilities for meeting Prince Bismarck himself. The Iron Chancellor bore no malice to Wesselitsky for the latter's crossing his plans in 1875–76 ; he seemed, in fact, rather to appreciate Wesselitsky's fearlessness in the matter. He discussed with his visitor all the great questions of the day, and his utterances have always been valued by Wesselitsky as the best lessons ever received in *Realpolitik* and *Weltpolitik*. Among the younger diplomatists, Wesselitsky was on friendly terms with Herr von Buelow (future Prince Buelow) and Baron Holstein, creator and chief of German propaganda.

Formal discussions with leaders of German parliamentary parties, as well as with German diplomatists and statesmen, bore scanty fruit, since, with one accord, they insisted on the acceptance by Russia of the partition of the Balkans into an Austrian and Russian sphere. They very generously, indeed, offered to Russia the gift of Persia, Afghanistan, and even India. As for Germany, they assured Wesselitsky that she would claim " nothing for herself " except " a free hand in the West." Wesselitsky was already sufficiently enlightened as to the merits of such an Alliance, but private talks with German politicians taught him something further, for he learned that the Military and Pan-German parties, dissatisfied with Bismarck's moderation, were treacherously hatching plots for the extension of German domination

Discloses Pan-German Plots in the Near East.

far beyond the limits even of what Bismarck held to be either practical or prudent.

Wesselitsky's activities were, at this time, widely spread and systematically organized. In Berlin itself he had a news agency, "Arc-Bureau," and an organ of his own, *Allgemeine Reichs-Korrespondenz*, which supplied information to the whole German Press and Parliament, as well as to all Embassies and Legations. The Arc-Bureau had also branches in various German towns, in Vienna, and in Paris. Wesselitsky was himself, at the same time, Berlin correspondent of the *Moscow Gazette*, Vienna correspondent of the *Novoe Vremya*, and the correspondent of the telegraphic St. Petersburg "Nord Agency" in Berlin, Vienna, and Paris. Having skilful assistants in all these centres, he was able frequently to travel to St. Petersburg and to Paris, and to pay visits to Vienna, Belgrade, Dresden, and Stuttgart. It was this multiplicity and variety of sources of information that enabled him to trace with accuracy German attempts at the peaceful penetration of Turkey, a country which the Berlin Cabinet had itself formally declared to belong to the Russian sphere of influence, and also German intrigues in Bulgaria directed against Russia.

Facts Impress Alexander III.

These facts and many others of a similar character were communicated by Wesselitsky to Katkoff, and passed on by him to the Emperor Alexander III, in whose mind they aroused the first doubts as to the sincerity of the German Government. These revelations also converted Katkoff himself to the necessity of replacing the German Alliance by another less congenial, indeed, to his strong monarchical and conservative opinions, but better adapted to the interests of Russia. The Franco-Russian Alliance was a result of

Works for a Franco-Russian Alliance.

the work of several independent Russian politicians, but the chief merit of it assuredly belongs to Katkoff. Wesselitsky had also a share in that work, of which more may be known later on.

One of the consequences of this great change in the grouping of the Powers was that Wesselitsky's position in Berlin became untenable. He was already preparing the transfer of his main work to another centre, when, in May, 1892, by the personal order of William II, he was expelled from the Kingdom of Prussia. The reason assigned in the decree of expulsion for this arbitrary proceeding was that Wesselitsky was an "Enemy of the Triple Alliance." Another motive which was said to have accelerated the measure was Wesselitsky's action in furnishing the Berlin correspondents of London papers with information about German policy, which was not approved by the Berlin Press Bureau.

Aims at an Anglo-Russian Understanding.

After seeing the fulfilment of one half of his programme of 1866, the Franco-Russian Alliance, Wesselitsky naturally turned his thoughts to the other half, the inclusion in that Alliance of Great Britain. The political situation at the beginning of the nineties looked highly unpropitious to this great aim. One lucky circumstance, however, gave him powerful encouragement in the undertaking. His exceptional good fortune in meeting great personages in private showed itself once more during a visit of the Prince of Wales (King Edward) to Vienna. Being afforded the happy chance of meeting H.R.H. in private company, he was honoured by a conversation which was later renewed at the hotel where both the Prince and himself were staying. On hearing of Wesselitsky's intention to work

Encouraged to Work for it in England.

for an Anglo-Russian *rapprochement*, the Prince said: "That is the best thing that a Russian could do for his country, and it would also be very good for ours." He added in French, "J'aurai l'œil sur vous."

Settles in London, 1892.

When, in December, 1892, Wesselitsky came to reside in London, he entirely changed his methods of activity, liquidating the widely-spread organization which collected information and conducted propaganda, and limiting himself to his correspondence with the *Novoe Vremya*. This simplification resulted in a deepening and a concentration of his work. He set himself to the systematic study of English institutions and English life, of the different currents of public opinion in Great Britain, and of all the complicated problems of the British Empire. In his long and frequent articles in the *Novoe Vremya* he stated the results of his studies and described his personal impressions, endeavouring to teach his Russian readers to understand England and to judge of English affairs with justice and sympathy. This, indeed, was the labour to which he gave himself up almost exclusively during the first ten years of his stay in this country (1892–1902), and he was later informed by observing Russian politicians that this non-political and descriptive work, dispelling, as it did, innumerable prejudices and contradicting innumerable falsities and misstatements (chiefly from German sources), had been of immense practical usefulness, and had admirably prepared the ground for a political understanding.

Letters to the *Novoe Vremya* on English Institutions and English Life.

President of the Foreign Press Association, 1896–1911.

In 1896 Wesselitsky was elected President of the Foreign Press Association in London, an honoured post to which he was re-elected no less than fourteen times. In 1911, however, his political work, grown deeply absorbing,

compelled him to give up the actual presidency of the Association, of which he now became Honorary President. While under his leadership the Foreign Press Association comprised all the London correspondents of foreign newspapers and displayed considerable activity, not only in defending professional interests, but also in preserving friendly relations among the many nationalities that were represented in it. Very soon, indeed, it acquired the name of "a model association" among its competitors, the ninety-seven federated international associations. Lectures and discussions on many subjects were frequently organized under its auspices, together with banquets to which British and foreign notabilities were invited, and at which opportunity was provided for the expression of the most diverse views. By means of private talks with his colleagues, Wesselitsky was enabled to follow the trend of thought in their respective countries and to disseminate his own ideas. Annual congresses of federated associations offered him a still wider field for information and propaganda. In brief, this new method proved to be not less fruitful than the earlier methods which he had so successfully used on the Continent in the eighties. There were moments, moreover, when the Association afforded invaluable openings for the dissemination of Wesselitsky's political ideals.

In December, 1899, deep indignation was excited in England by the unjust and unworthy attacks of the Continental Press on the British Government, and even on Queen Victoria. Feeling ran high on both sides and complications were feared. From the same exalted quarters, in which a kindly interest had already been manifested for

Wesselitsky, there came a hint that he should now do something to relieve a tension that was fast becoming dangerous. Wesselitsky forthwith convened and took the chair at a conference of Foreign and British journalists, who, with one accord, voted for the resolutions proposed by himself regulating the polemics of the Press and condemning the said attacks as incompatible with the honour of journalism. At the next Congress of the Federated International Press Associations of the World these resolutions were fully approved and rendered obligatory. The London Conference had, without doubt, exerted a pacifying influence. A private message from the Prince of Wales expressed his cordial satisfaction with Wesselitsky's prompt and successful stroke.

Convenes a Conference of Foreign and British Journalists, which Relieves the Tension between British and Continental Public Opinion.

This was not the only occasion during the South African War on which Wesselitsky found himself in an exceedingly difficult position. Public opinion in Russia and on the Continent in general was sympathetic to the Boers, and of that sympathy advantage was continually taken by agitators. The *Novoe Vremya* did not approve of the views of its correspondent, and members of the Foreign Press Association, particularly those of German nationality, protested loudly against the attitude of the President. Wesselitsky, however, although he had friendly feelings for the Boers, was convinced of the necessity of a powerful British Empire which should be able to defend the liberties of Europe against the German peril. Fortunately, his position was rendered much easier by his double discovery of German influences at work in Pretoria and of the efforts of Germany to induce Russia and France to join her in a coalition against England. His disclosures of German

His Disclosures of German Plots in South Africa and Europe Influence Russian Public Opinion during the Boer War.

intrigue reacted on the policy of his paper and furnished arguments to those Russian diplomatists who were opposed to the course recommended by Germany. The German and pro-German circles in Russia and elsewhere were extremely irritated by Wesselitsky's countering of their aims.

Fight against the German Bagdad Railway, 1897-1899.

At the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries, nothing caused more surprise to Wesselitsky than the discovery that, while the whole European continent knew that Germany was plotting against the British Empire, the fact was barely suspected in this country by anyone, Germany being universally supposed to be England's sincere friend. This became especially obvious in the case of the Bagdad railway. In 1897 Wesselitsky was informed simultaneously from Constantinople and from Berlin that a German company proposed to build a railway from the Bosporus to the Persian Gulf. He at once saw how dangerous would be the consequences of such an undertaking both for Russia and for England, and came to the conclusion that the best means of counteracting the peril lay in the building of the line by non-Germans. Acting on that idea, English, French and Belgian capitalists formed the " International Syndicate," and chose Count Kapnist, a great Russian landowner entirely unconnected with politics, to be the *demandeur de concession*. They hoped to secure the support both of England and of Russia. Unfortunately, however, the Company appeared to Russian eyes as a British political undertaking, and to English eyes as a Russian intrigue. Wesselitsky fought against this double prejudice for two years. But in both countries the view prevailed that it was better to have this railway built by a " neutral," and Germany

therefore secured it. The history of this concession deserves to be written; it is a truly Oriental tale, and, as an instance of *travailler pour le roi prusse*, unsurpassed.

Sole Opponent in Russia of War with Japan.

Yet another question over which Wesselitsky had the disadvantage of differing in opinion from the Government and the people of his country was the war with Japan, he being the only publicist in Russia who asserted that the conflict was by no means necessary. In the middle of that war he had an opportunity of informally discussing terms of peace with a member of the Japanese Legation in London. The conclusions arrived at had actually been approved in St. Petersburg as well as in Tokio, when the news of the entrance of Rozhdestvensky's fleet into the Pacific Ocean upset the agreement.

Mediation between Serbia and Bulgaria.

Again, during many years this indefatigable worker devoted much time and labour to bringing together Serbia and Bulgaria. He converted to his views both the Serbian Minister in London, Militchevitch, and the Bulgarian Minister, Stancioff. A committee of Serbian and Bulgarian ethnographical experts was to meet in London, and Wesselitsky was requested to be its chairman and mediator. Preliminary discussions produced evidence that the portion of Macedonia about which the parties could not agree, possessed only 15,000 inhabitants, and the desired end appeared to be practically secured. Once more, however, a series of events occurred which brought to naught all these difficult and laborious efforts.

Begins his Campaign for an Anglo-Russian Understanding, 1902.

In 1902 a confidential agent brought Wesselitsky a message from King Edward contained in the one word "*Maintenant.*" Wesselitsky understood that the moment had arrived to work openly for his long cherished scheme

of an Anglo-Russian *rapprochement*, and for this he now began to plead in the *Novoe Vremya* and by all available means. He at first encountered enormous difficulties, while his writings incensed the friends of Germany. He persevered, however, and in 1904 signs of progress appeared. King Edward gave public expression to his approval of Wesselitsky's activities by sending to him, as President of the Foreign Press Association, a message conveying his satisfaction with the action of the Association and its President in promoting harmony among the nations.

Relations with Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman.

On December 10, 1905, the very day on which Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman was invited to form a Cabinet, he wrote to Wesselitsky saying that he hoped to be able to work resolutely for an understanding with Russia, and that he was confident that Wesselitsky would redouble his efforts for the attainment of that aim. Privately, Sir Henry, who had been in friendly relations with Wesselitsky since the latter's arrival in London, informed him that this letter was written at the suggestion of King Edward, who had a high opinion of the value of Wesselitsky's co-operation. Campbell-Bannerman also made an offer of annual material assistance to Wesselitsky for the journeys and extra expenses necessary to his propaganda. This offer, a repetition of one made in 1902, was not accepted, but it provided a very encouraging testimony to the usefulness of Wesselitsky's work.

Co-operation with Count Benckendorff

A most fortunate event for Wesselitsky was the appointment as Ambassador in London of Count Benckendorff, a former junior colleague in the Foreign Office at St. Petersburg. From the moment of the Count's arrival at his post in 1903 until his death in 1917, they worked together

like two brothers. Benckendorff communicated to Wesselitsky the whole of his correspondence, and consulted him upon every important point. Just before his death he wrote to Wesselitsky, passing in review their joint labours towards an Anglo-Russian friendship and alliance, and expressing his conviction that they might both look with satisfaction on the outcome of their efforts.

Appointment to the Russian Council of the Empire.

One result of the part which Wesselitsky had played in the crisis of 1875–76 was that, with one exception, each Russian Foreign Minister in turn invited Wesselitsky to resume his diplomatic career, offering him at the same time some foreign post as Russia's representative. Acceptance, however, would have involved the loss of free initiative, and Wesselitsky naturally preferred to preserve his independence. A like motive impelled him, moreover, to decline all offers of pecuniary assistance. A tempting eventuality once presented itself to him. In 1906 M. Isvolsky, then Foreign Minister, represented to M. Stolypin, the Prime Minister, the advisability of appointing Wesselitsky a member of the Council of the Empire in his capacity of veteran expert in foreign politics. Stolypin eagerly grasped the proposal and desired Wesselitsky to undertake the formation, in both Houses of the Russian Parliament, of a national party to support Stolypin's policy. The appointment was actually decided upon, when Wesselitsky's prolonged illness (1907–08) unhappily necessitated its postponement. This the pro-Germans of St. Petersburg knew well how to extend indefinitely ; it remained, however, as an open question till the outbreak of the present war.

The work of co-operation in the formation of the Triple Entente and of enlightening the public opinion of the

Entente countries as to the danger threatening them from Germany, filled Wesselitsky's life between 1902 and 1914. In addition to the *Novoe Vremya*, he carried on his propaganda by letter to different London papers, by public lectures in London and in Petrograd, by speeches at dinners and meetings of all kinds, and by private conversation and correspondence with diplomatists and politicians of all countries.

Journeys from London to Petrograd, and Visits to Other Capitals.

Owing to the fact that his expulsion from Prussia prevented Wesselitsky from travelling to Petrograd and back via Berlin, he was obliged, on the occasion of each journey, to pass through Paris, Munich and Vienna, with now and again a detour for the purpose of visiting Rome and Belgrade. In each of those centres he was kindly received by the leading ministers as well as by the ambassadors of all the Great Powers. He also found opportunities for meeting the Parliamentary leaders and other prominent politicians. All these interviews were extremely useful in thoroughly acquainting Wesselitsky with the currents of opinion in the various countries visited, and with the standpoints of their respective Governments. Germans and their friends were always much perturbed by these visits, and complained that Wesselitsky's influence was being lavishly supported by English gold.

Secret Interview with Francis Ferdinand.

One of Wesselitsky's visits to Vienna afforded an opportunity which, if taken advantage of, might have prevented the present war. In the autumn of 1907 he sent to the *Novoe Vremya* from Vienna a character sketch of the late heir to the throne of Austria-Hungary, which was wired from Petrograd *in extenso* to the Viennese papers. The Archduke let Wesselitsky know that he was pleased to

read " the exact truth, that he was neither Germanophil nor Slavophil, but simply Austrian." An aide-de-camp took Wesselitsky with great secrecy to the Belvedere Palace, where Francis Ferdinand spoke to him as to " one who understood him," in a most confidential manner. He complained of many things, particularly of not being fairly treated by the diplomatic body in Vienna ; the Prussian Ambassador, Wedell, was " arrogant," while those of other Great Powers were "cold and retiring" ; "Why did they never want to see him? " Wesselitsky's impression was that the Heir, anxious above all for Austria's independence from Germany, was longing for the support of the Entente Powers. Unfortunately, their representatives in Vienna, informed of the general tenor of the Heir's utterances and of his desire to be in contact with them, thought that in requesting an audience with him they would sin against Court etiquette and forfeit the confidence of the Austrian Emperor and Government. Some time afterwards the German Government recalled Wedell and appointed Tschirschky, a supple and wily Saxon, who did not find any difficulty in becoming the Heir's frequent visitor and trusted adviser. Thus was Francis Ferdinand won for Germany.

Prevention of War in 1909.

Another visit of Wesselitsky to Vienna had a more positive result in being conducive to the preservation of peace. At the most acute moment of the Bosnian crisis in December, 1909, when Austro-Russian relations were most sorely strained, Count Aehren, the then Austro-Hungarian Foreign Minister, sent two diplomatists in succession to London with messages to Wesselitsky, adjuring him " in the name of their old friendship " (they had met in Rome

in 1878) to come to Vienna and "help to prevent war." This Wesselitsky did, calling promptly on Count Aehrenthal and advising him to make certain declarations that had been drawn up by himself in his study in London. The Minister having endorsed all these, Wesselitsky went to Petrograd and submitted them both to the Russian Government and to the Russian Press, whereupon the Austro-Russian relations, which had been strained almost to the breaking point, resumed a normal character. Peace was thus prolonged for five more years. Wesselitsky himself believed a conflict to be inevitable, but he knew that Russia was utterly unprepared, and that her partners in the Entente were reluctant to plunge into war.

Wesselitsky's Fortieth Anniversary Celebrated by the Foreign Press Association.

In 1907 the Foreign Press Association celebrated by a commemorative banquet the eleventh year of Wesselitsky's presidency and the fortieth anniversary of his journalistic career. The late Lord Burnham was President of the Organizing Committee, and Lord Reay was Chairman of the Banquet. The British Press, on the one hand, and the Continental Press—including even the German and the Austro-Hungarian representatives—on the other, manifested a warm and sympathetic interest in the event. The banquet was attended by members of the Diplomatic Body and of both Houses of Parliament, as well as by other prominent people. Its chief features, however, were a telegram from M. Stolypin declaring the approval of the Russian Government of Wesselitsky's efforts to bring about an Anglo-Russian understanding, and a letter from Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman expressing a like recognition of his services. Thus, although the celebration was professional and international in form, its true significance was Anglo-

Russian. Wesselitsky was, indeed, so definitely regarded in Russia as the champion of an Alliance with England that, at a dinner given in his honour in Petrograd in 1907, members of the Russian Government told him that, should that Alliance prove to be a failure, he would have to bear the displeasure of the Government and the wrath of the whole nation. The Germans went even farther in magnifying Wesselitsky's work, since almost all the German papers unceasingly accused him at the same time of serving British interests in Russia by undermining Russo-German friendship, and of stirring up in England animosity against Germany. Professor Schiemann, a great favourite of William II, wrote in the *Kreuz-Zeitung* every Saturday about Wesselitsky's agitation, attributing to this alone the gradual opening of the eyes of the British public to the German danger. All this absurd exaggeration proceeded from the anger aroused in Germany by the undeniable truth that Wesselitsky's revelations of German policy were based on a thorough acquaintance alike with the country and with the people.

Wesselitsky's Achievements Exaggerated in Russia, and Still More in Germany.

The German Government, which attaches so great an importance and devotes such large means to propaganda, naturally paid much attention to Wesselitsky's publicist and political activities. Bismarck sought to attract him to Berlin, and by kindness and persuasion to gain his friendliness, or, at least, to neutralize his hostility to Germany. As long as Wesselitsky resided in Berlin he was not, indeed, in a position openly to combat German policy. His expulsion restored his complete freedom of action, but so striking a proof of his disfavour with William II made Germans and pro-Germans his bitter enemies in all

German Efforts to Stop his Publicist Work.

countries. High personages at the Russian Court and in the Russian Government strove to represent him as an obstacle to Russo-German friendship and a danger to peace; to this was added, as a climax, the accusation that he was "acting in England's interest." The German Government made repeated complaints against Wesselitsky's "unjust and unfriendly attacks," and influences of all kinds were put in motion to impede the publication of his articles and to sever his connection with the *Novoe Vremya*. He was frequently in danger of being altogether forbidden to write and to take any part in politics, and it required all the vigilance of his friends in Petrograd to prevent his career of activity being brought to an abrupt end. Russian diplomatists, however, were strongly in his favour and highly valued the services their former colleague was rendering them. Nor did the *Novoe Vremya* ever consent to part with him. An anecdote will best serve to illustrate the intrigues which were then prevalent. A sub-editor of the *Novoe Vremya* was offered a permanent salary by a Petrograd banker to "water Wesselitsky's London telegrams." He made the banker write down his offer and sign it, and then sent the document to the Russian Foreign Minister, who, on the next occasion of the German Ambassador's complaining of the Russian Press, produced that proof of an attempt to corrupt it.

Call to Return to Germany; Attempts at Reconciliation.

As time went on and Wesselitsky's propaganda in favour of the Triple Entente continued to make progress, Germany's attitude towards him became milder. Members of the German Embassy in London sought his acquaintance, and Count Bernstorff, Councillor at that Embassy, 1902–05, displayed particular friendliness. He referred to Wesselit-

sky's departure from Berlin as a "regrettable misunderstanding," dwelt on the "unpleasantness of travelling circuitously, instead of straight, from London to Petrograd," and threw out hints that it would be "easy to settle that satisfactorily." Wesselitsky's friends in Germany appealed to him to come back to them, to German science and German culture. A German university offered him the chair of Philosophy of History. In 1912, a year after the German Government had resolved to wage war, a pacifist mission to the Entente countries was undertaken by Dr. Ludwig Stein, Professor of Philosophy at the University of Berlin, who claimed to have converted William II to pacifism. He proposed to Wesselitsky to associate himself with him in pleading for the settlement of all international questions on the basis of Kant's philosophy, to which they were both adherents. He brought from Baron Marschall von Bieberstein, then Ambassador in London, Wesselitsky's former friend in Berlin and chief instrument of his expulsion from thence, a proposal "to consider all past unpleasantness as mutually forgiven and forgotten." Soon afterwards, talking of Wesselitsky to a circle of people, Baron Marschall raised his arms high up and exclaimed: "He, saturated with German *Kultur* and yet Germany's enemy! That is monstrous and must not last!" Stein also asked Wesselitsky to meet Herr von Kuehlmann at dinner.

Latest German Attempts to Influence.

In the same year a Russian pacifist brought Wesselitsky, on behalf of his "constant readers and admirers" in Russia, the offer of an income double the salary he was receiving from the *Novoe Vremya*, in order that he might "rest for a few years from his strenuous work and then resume it with renewed vigour." In 1914, another proposal, in the

name of Wesselitsky's friends and of the partisans of his pro-Entente and anti-German propaganda, both English and Russian, was made to him. A large sum was to be placed at his disposal for the foundation in London of a weekly paper of which he was to be the editor, with perfect freedom to direct its policy. Wesselitsky consented to edit it under those conditions, organized its staff, secured first-rate contributors in England and on the Continent; and the paper, named *Security*, was to be registered on a fixed day. On looking, however, into a new copy of the contract, Wesselitsky perceived that a new clause at variance with the agreement already arrived at had been inserted, which provided for control of the policy of the paper by a board. In these circumstances he refused to sign the contract. A careful search brought to light the fact that some names among the contractors were fictitious and that the real capitalist was no other than Prince Henry of Prussia!

His Warning, in 1911, of a European War.

As a matter of fact, Wesselitsky, contrary to Schiemann's assertions, did not write about Germany in the English newspapers until August, 1911, when he learned from a sure German source that soon after the *coup d'Agadir* it had been decided in Berlin to yield in appearance before the firm attitude of England, but actually to prepare for a war within the next few years. In a long letter in *The Times*, signed "Cassandra," Wesselitsky stated the imminence of the peril threatening the Entente Powers and the whole of Europe, and insisted that "it was very urgent that the Triple Entente should adopt a unified and systematic policy, and act upon it without any further loss of time." This warning fell on deaf ears in the Entente countries, and

the only effect was an increase of anger on the part of the German Government, who recognized the ideas of the author behind his pseudonym and complained of him in Petrograd.

And in May, 1914.

In May, 1914, Wesselitsky learned, and again from a German source, that Germany had completed her war preparations, and that she proposed to take advantage of the civil war which every German was expecting to break out in Ireland to invade Belgium and challenge France. Wesselitsky wrote to *The Times*, appealing to the British public not to be too greatly absorbed by party strife, as this was encouraging certain Powers to acts which would inevitably lead to war. An editorial note called the readers' attention to this appeal.

Lectures and Pamphlets.

Wesselitsky's political views have been chiefly put forward in his lectures, which have also been published as pamphlets. In the lecture entitled "Problem of Asia" (Central Asian Society, London, 1904), he first adumbrated the desirability and possibility of an Anglo-Russian understanding. In another on the "New World Situation and New World Policy" (Geographical Society, St. Petersburg, 1905), the first public political speech ever permitted in Russia, he clearly pointed out the need for the formation of a new group of Powers, comprising England, France, and Russia, as a counterbalance to the Triple Alliance. In 1906, Wesselitsky lectured on "Russian Revolution" before the Sociological Society in London, and delivered a message from Nicholas II expressing his love of peace and friendship for England. In 1908, in his lecture on "Anglo-Russian Relations," Wesselitsky recounted the historical vicissitudes of the idea of a permanent under-

standing between Great Britain and Russia since its conception by Peter the Great. He lectured on the same subject in the Political Club in Petrograd in 1910, and in 1912 he delivered, in the same Institution, a lecture on Russo-German Relations, in which he anticipated as inevitable the present world struggle.

His First Book, "Russia and Democracy."

In 1915, on the suggestion and at the request of Mr. Henry Cust, Chairman of the Central Committee for National Patriotic Organizations, Wesselitsky wrote his first book, "Russia and Democracy; the German Canker in Russia," which was reviewed in one hundred and thirty British and Colonial papers. It met also with remarkable success in the United States, and, in a French translation (Lethielleux, Paris), was widely read in France, Italy, Spain and Scandinavia. The chief effect of this book had not been foreseen by the author; he intended to describe German methods in Russia, but readers of all nations found that these were also the methods pursued by the Germans in each of their respective countries.

"The German Peril." How to Crush Prussian Militarism.

In 1916, at a meeting in the Central Hall of over one thousand specially invited guests, presided over by the Speaker of the House of Commons, Wesselitsky spoke on "The German Peril and the Grand Alliance; How to Crush Prussian Militarism." In the opinion of many British as well as French historians, Wesselitsky most ably brought to light in that lecture the countless German falsifications of history, and demonstrated that Prussian Militarism rested on the practically still-existing enslavement of the largely non-German peoples of Prussia east of the Elbe by the Junkers who dominate Prussia and, through Prussia, Germany. This lecture, when published as a

pamphlet, met with fierce opposition from all those who deprecate the full achievement of the Allies' war aims. Wesselitsky was accused of wishing to disintegrate Germany, whereas, on the contrary, he was pleading for the liberation of Prussia and of Germany from the yoke of a military caste.

All Non-Prussian Germans and the Prussians West of the Elbe Against Prussian Junkers.

This lecture was translated into German and printed, though publication was not permitted. It instantly produced a strong sensation in all Germany. The Berlin Government endeavoured to organize a protest by University Professors against its historical portions. Seeing that the data of the lecture rested on authentic German sources, the Professors declined to sign any such protest. Still more remarkable is the proof afforded by letters which reached Wesselitsky from Germany through a variety of channels, that his leading ideas—the real emancipation of the peasants and the democratization of Prussia east of the Elbe—are the heart's desire of the most representative men of all non-Prussian German States, as well as of those of the Prussian provinces west of the Elbe.

Multiplicity and Variety of Sources of Information.

Over fifty years of public life, and an untarnished reputation for discretion, account for his large correspondence with men of so many different nationalities. These write to him, over their signature or anonymously, whenever they wish to spread certain facts or ideas. Such communications often arrive through ingeniously devised channels, and are never accepted by Wesselitsky at their face value, but are sifted and verified with the utmost care. Many of them, however, have withstood all criticism and proved themselves to be trustworthy. Such, for instance, were the letters received by Wesselitsky during 1913 and till July, 1914, from a correspondent who was wholly

unknown to him, but who must have been a member of the German Embassy in London, since the letters contained the names of all Prince Lichnowsky's visitors, together with the duration and sometimes even the subject of the conversations that took place—information that has never been contradicted. Since the outbreak of the war, the most interesting messages that have come to Wesselitsky are from the anti-Prussian elements in Germany, giving an entirely different idea of the situation there from that prevailing in the Press of the Allied countries.

Russian Revolution.

The Russian Revolution, which led to the spoliation of the propertied and moneyed classes and to a suppression of their organs in the Press, has cut off Wesselitsky's income from his land property as well as his salary from the *Novoe Vremya*. What he most deplores is not the loss of personal comforts, but that of the possibility of continuing his work for the great cause to which he has been wholly devoted from the time when, in his memorandum of 1866, he pointed out the necessity of "putting a limit to the ambitions of Prussia." Not only has he lost his own resources and means of action; he has also lost his Government, if not his country. If there were in Russia any National Government, loyal to the great Alliance, Wesselitsky would be serving it to the utmost of his power. He finds it, however, impossible to support what he holds to be an arbitrary dictatorship of usurpers, bent on destroying State and Society, prosperity and civilization, not only in Russia but in the whole world.

Wesselitsky's Present and Future.

Wesselitsky might rely for his support upon literary work, but there is no doubt that he would be more happily employed in devoting his knowledge and experience of

world politics, together with his special sources of information and means of propaganda, to the service of the country whose hospitality he has enjoyed for the last twenty-five years, whose interests he has, more or less directly, promoted throughout that time, and to whom, moreover, he is bound by many ties of affectionate friendship.

The book on which he is now engaged, "The Issues at Stake in the Present War," will give the views of this veteran diplomatist in regard to the problem which is dominating the minds of the world's thinkers, as it is employing the physical energies of so large a portion of its manhood—the problem of securing that out of the blood-stained welter of warring nations and unbridled ambitions there shall emerge a durable peace and the realization of the better hopes of mankind. It is to these great aims that he is longing to devote the closing years of his life.

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