

**THE INTIMATE PAPERS OF
COLONEL HOUSE
VOLUME III**



COLONEL HOUSE AND PRESIDENT WILSON IN SEPTEMBER 1917

THE INTIMATE PAPERS OF COLONEL HOUSE

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VOLUME III
INTO THE WORLD WAR

APRIL 1917—JUNE 1918

*"The most urgent problem we have to solve is how . . . Govern-
ments set at opposite ends of the world can effect the close
co-operation which is undoubtedly necessary if the war is to
be quickly and successfully ended."*

SIR WILLIAM WISEMAN to COLONEL HOUSE, Sept. 26, 1917

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PREFACE

THE two concluding volumes of *The Intimate Papers of Colonel House* begin with the entrance of the United States into the World War and end with Colonel House's attempt to secure some compromise on the basis of which the Senate might ratify the Versailles Treaty, including the Covenant of the League of Nations. Their central theme is American participation in the war and the Peace Conference, in so far as the papers of Colonel House shed light on the American effort and Wilsonian policies. Readers of the two preceding volumes will remember that Colonel House, although not an office-holder, occupied a special position in relation to Wilson's administration at the time the United States became a belligerent. He had been chosen by the President as his personal representative and sent on three separate missions to the European Governments in 1914 and the two following years. As Wilson's representative, he had come in close contact with European leaders during the period of American neutrality.

It was natural that, during the war, President Wilson should look to House for advice on every matter that touched American relations with the Allies and especially on all problems of war aims. He selected him as chief of the organization for preparing the American case at the Peace Conference, appointed him head of the American War Mission to Europe for the co-ordination of military and industrial efforts, asked him to draft a constitution

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for a league of nations, and again sent him to Europe as American representative on the Supreme War Council when it arranged the armistice with Germany. At the Peace Conference House was Commissioner Plenipotentiary and, because of his intimate personal relations with European statesmen, was constantly used by the President to conduct the most delicate negotiations. During Wilson's absence from Paris and his illness, the President selected him to take his place on the Supreme Council.

In view of the position held by House and the care with which he and his secretary, Miss Denton, preserved all letters and memoranda, it is obvious that his papers, including the diary which he never failed to keep, provide historical material of the utmost value. The reader of these volumes, however, should be especially on his guard against two misconceptions. The papers here published represent a very small proportion of the large collection which Colonel House deposited in the Library of Yale University. If any attempt had been made to reproduce the substance of the numerous and complicated problems which were brought to House's attention—diplomatic, naval, military, economic—and upon which lengthy memoranda were written, the book would have been extended into a whole library of volumes. Exigencies of space have compelled omission of reference to all but the most significant problems. Even in the case of the most vital subjects the extracts from letters, cables, and diary deal largely in generalities. This is partly due to the fact that neither House nor any single individual could himself have gone deeply into the purely technical matters involved in the complex problems of the war; the function of Colonel House was essentially that of a diplomat, seeing that the right people got

together to work out these problems. On the other hand, it has been necessary to omit numerous technical memoranda which, if published, would effectually disprove the assumption that his work was in any sense superficial.

It is equally important for the reader to remember that, despite the range of House's activities, these volumes are not intended to constitute a history of the American effort in the war. They are not, in fact, published as history, but as the raw material for history. Their purpose is not to convey any definite historical conclusion nor to enforce any historical judgment, but rather to show what Colonel House did and how he came to do it. It is for the historian of the future to determine where he and others were right and where wrong. The papers are presented for what they are worth, unchanged, as they were written. They are presented with emphasis upon House's own point of view, for otherwise they would not be intelligible, but always with the realization that the historian may take another point of view. Furthermore, the reader should bear in mind that these volumes concern Colonel House and are not intended to describe the activities of others except where they happened to touch his own. Colonel House is the central figure in the book, not because of any desire to over-emphasize the importance of the political rôle he played, but simply because the book is based upon his papers. If all those closely connected with the administration of President Wilson would tell the story of their own activities, following the example of Secretary Lansing and Secretary Houston, the scholars who ultimately write the definitive history of the time would find their task greatly facilitated.

C. S.

NOTE OF ACKNOWLEDGMENT

EVERY effort has been made to check the accuracy of Colonel House's papers by comparison with those of the statesmen with whom he was in correspondence. Each account of an important conversation recorded in the diary has been laid before those with whom he was in conference wherever they survive, and full opportunity has been given for comment in case of misunderstanding. It has also seemed wise to publish at length the letters and cables of British and French statesmen, whenever they are necessary to an explanation of the nature of House's activities. In these volumes, as in the two preceding, care has been taken to secure complete authority for the publication of every letter and memorandum.

I am deeply indebted to those who, by granting permission for the publication of documents and, in some cases, by adding their own comments, have increased the historical value of the volumes and made possible a complete picture of the work of Colonel House. I take this opportunity of expressing my gratitude to Sir William Tyrrell, the Marquess of Reading, the Earl of Balfour, Viscount Grey of Fallodon, Viscount Cecil of Chelwood, Mr. Lloyd George, Sir Eric Drummond, Sir Horace Plunkett, the literary executors of Lord Northcliffe, Sir George Sutton, Mr. Montague Ellis, Sir Campbell Stuart, M. Georges Clemenceau, Ambassador Jusserand, Marshal Pétain, M. André Tardieu, M. André Chéradame, M. Ignace Paderewski, Ambassador Aimaro Sato, Ambassa-

dor Boris Bakhmetieff, Mr. Carl W. Ackerman, President E. A. Alderman, Admiral W. S. Benson, General Tasker H. Bliss, Mr. Stephen Bonsal, Dr. Isaiah Bowman, Mr. Arthur Bullard, Mrs. Frank I. Cobb, Mr. Paul Cravath, Mr. A. H. Frazier, Attorney-General Thomas W. Gregory, Professor Douglas Johnson, Secretary Robert Lansing, Mr. Walter Lippmann, Mr. Henry Cabot Lodge, President A. Lawrence Lowell, Mr. Thomas Nelson Perkins, Senator Elihu Root, Mr. Lincoln Steffens, Mr. Karl von Weigand. In this respect I am most of all indebted to Sir William Wiseman who, as chief of the British Intelligence Service in Washington, acted as liaison officer between Colonel House and the British during the war; he has not only put his valuable collection of papers at my service, but has taken infinite pains to clarify doubtful points by himself writing memoranda based upon his war-time records. Without such assistance the story of the work of Colonel House would have been incomplete and confused.

I am particularly grateful to those who have read and criticized all or parts of the manuscript. Responsibility for the final form of the volumes rests upon my shoulders entirely; but the number of errors and infelicities would have been vastly increased except for the suggestions of the following: Mr. Gordon Auchincloss, Mr. Ackerman, Mr. Bonsal, Dr. Bowman, Mr. Frazier, Mr. Gregory, Mr. Breckinridge Long, Mr. J. J. Lyons, Professor Douglas Johnson, President S. E. Mezes, Mr. David Hunter Miller, Mr. Albert Bigelow Paine, Sir Horace Plunkett, Mr. A. D. Howden Smith, Sir Campbell Stuart, Mr. Henry Wickham Steed, Ambassador Brand Whitlock, Mr. Robert W. Woolley.

To Mr. Andrew Keogh and the authorities of the Yale University Library I am indebted for the care of the

NOTE OF ACKNOWLEDGMENT xi

House Collection, and to Miss Frances B. Denton for invaluable assistance in the arrangement and elucidation of documents. The completion of these volumes would have been impossible except for the untiring labour of Miss Helen M. Reynolds, assistant to the curator of the House Collection, upon whose close familiarity with the documents and judgment in their use I have been constantly dependent both in the construction and the revision of the manuscript. Finally, if there is any merit in the literary form of the book, credit must be assigned to the suggestions and criticism of my wife, who has read and reread every page of the manuscript and proof.

C. S.

YALE UNIVERSITY,
August 1928.

CONTENTS

VOLUME III

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. INTO THE WORLD WAR	I
Wilson and the Declaration of War on Germany— The Military Crisis of the Spring of 1917, as Reflected in Colonel House's Papers—Discouraging Symptoms in France—Conditions in Germany—Wilson and the American War Organization—The Activities and Contacts of Colonel House—Food and Shipbuilding Problems—House's Relations with Allied Envoys.	
II. THE BALFOUR MISSION	31
The Problem of American Co-operation in the War—American Attitude toward the Allies—First Suggestion of the Balfour Mission—Arrival of Balfour and Conference with House; Problem of War Aims—Conferences in Washington—Discussion of Secret Treaties by Balfour and House—House's Account of Wilson-Balfour Conference—Wilson's Knowledge of the Treaty of London—House's Conference with Joffre—Further Discussions of War Aims with Balfour and Drummond.	
III. TARDIEU AND NORTHCLIFFE	67
Means of Communication between House and British Diplomats—His Correspondence with Balfour regarding Naval Agreement—Wilson's Attitude on Postponement of American Capital Ship Programme—Disagreement between House and Wilson over Naval Policy—House's Relations with Sir Horace Plunkett—Sir Horace on the Irish Convention—The Tardieu Mission—Problems of Co-ordination—The Northcliffe Mission—Relations of Northcliffe and House—Activities and Accomplishments of Northcliffe in the United States—Northcliffe's Cables Dealing with War Problems in America.	

CHAPTER	PAGE
IV. FINANCE AND SUPPLIES	100
<p>House's Relation to Financial Problems—Financial Situation of the Allies in the Summer of 1917—Appeals for American Credits—British Anxiety over Loans carried by J. P. Morgan and Co. and other Banks—Northcliffe's Presentation of Allied Needs—Confusion in Demands of the Allies—Mr. McAdoo's Plan for an Inter-allied Council of Co-ordination—Northcliffe and House Suggest that Lord Reading be sent to America as Financial Commissioner—Request of British Foreign Office for House's Advice—Reading Accepts Mission—Purchasing Agreement of August—Results of Reading Appointment.</p>	
V. WAR AIMS AND PROPAGANDA	129
<p>Attempts to Drive a Wedge between German Government and People—Colonel House on Situation in Germany—Urges Encouragement to German Liberals—Letters to Wilson Regarding Speech on War Aims—Wilson's Flag Day Speech—House's Interest in Propaganda—Northcliffe's Report—Plans for Open Debate on War Aims between New York <i>World</i> and <i>Berliner Tageblatt</i>—Correspondence with Frank Cobb—Objections of President Wilson.</p>	
VI. THE POPE'S PEACE PROPOSAL	153
<p>Movement for Peace of Compromise in Austria and Germany—Czernin and the Reichstag Resolution—Balfour Reports Receipt of the Pope's Peace Proposal and Asks for Wilson's Views—Colonel House on the Proposal—Wilson's Reply to Balfour—House's Letters to Wilson, urging Firm but Liberal Response—Views of Russian Ambassador—Views of Ambassador Jusserand—Wilson-House Correspondence regarding Response to the Pope's Proposal—Wilson Plans Definite Formulation of American Peace Programme—Asks House to Gather and Organize Data for the Peace Conference—"The Inquiry."</p>	
VII. AN AMERICAN WAR MISSION	178
<p>Wilson's Visit to House at Magnolia in September—Arrival of Reading—His Efforts in Behalf of Co-</p>	

CONTENTS

XV

CHAPTER	PAGE
ordination—Reading Memorandum on Supplies—His Suggestion of an American War Mission in Europe—Lloyd George and Problems of Military Strategy; His Desire for an American Representative in Europe—Problems of Tonnage—Balfour's Cable to House regarding Shipping Losses—Colonel House Chosen to Head American Mission—Wiseman Memorandum on Decision to Send War Mission—Purposes of the Mission—Conferences in Washington—Departure of the Mission—Arrival in London.	
VIII. CONFERENCES IN LONDON	214
Crisis in Allied Fortunes: Caporetto and the Bolshevik Revolution—Lloyd George's Plan for a Supreme War Council—The Rapallo Agreement—Advent of Clemenceau Ministry—Parliamentary Crisis in Great Britain—Lloyd George and House—House Urges Wilson to Act in Concert with Allies—Wilson's Approval of Supreme War Council—House's Report to Wilson on British Crisis—Conferences with Balfour, Drummond, Cecil, Bonar Law, Robertson, Grey, Smuts, Cambon, French, Lansdowne, Geddes, Venizelos, Jellicoe—Discussion Regarding Peace Terms with Lloyd George and Balfour—Efforts to Achieve Co-ordination in Technical Problems—Northcliffe's Assistance—Conferences between American Mission and British War Cabinet—Lloyd George's Statement of Allied Needs.	
IX. THE SUPREME WAR COUNCIL	252
Nature of the Conferences at Paris—Arrival of the American Mission—Drawbacks of Rapallo Agreement—House's Reports to Wilson—Bliss-House Memorandum on Military Unity—Conference with Clemenceau and Pétain—Arrival of British—Lloyd George, after Conference with House, Refuses to alter Rapallo Agreement—The Inter-allied Conference—Meeting of Supreme War Council—Resolutions Passed—Discussions of Peace Negotiations—Lloyd George Anxious to Probe Austrian Possibilities—House's Efforts to Persuade Allies to Meet German and Russian Situations with Joint Statement of War Aims—Wilson's Approval of His Resolution—Opposition of Sonnino.	

CHAPTER	PAGE
X. THE ADJUSTMENT OF EFFORT	299
<p>Final Session of Inter-allied Conference at Paris—House's Opinion of its Accomplishments—Cravath upon the Need of Co-ordinated Effort—New Inter-allied Machinery—Reports of American Technical Representatives—Secret Reports of Colonel House—Admiral Benson, General Bliss—Return of American Mission to the United States—House's First Conference with Wilson—Anxiety of Allies Regarding American Aid—Messages from Clemenceau, Lloyd George, Tardieu—Crisis in American War Organization—Tardieu upon the Final Result.</p>	
XI. THE FOURTEEN POINTS	324
<p>Failure of Paris Conference to Achieve Joint Programme of War Aims—House Urges Wilson to formulate War Aims in a Public Address—Report of the Inquiry upon War Aims—House Visits Wilson to Discuss Proposed Address—Its Essential Purpose—House's Diary Record of Wilson's Drafting of the Fourteen Points, January 5, 1918—Particular Difficulties: Freedom of the Seas; Alsace-Lorraine; Russia; the Balkans—Lloyd George's Speech of January 15—Interchange of Cables between Balfour and House—Delivery of the Fourteen Points Speech—Reactions in the United States, Great Britain, France—Failure of the Immediate Purpose of the Speech—Ultimate Importance.</p>	
XII. RUMOURS OF PEACE	360
<p>Withdrawal of Russia from the War—Brest-Litovsk Negotiations—Industrial Unrest in Austria and Germany—Replies of Czernin and Hertling to Wilson's Fourteen Points—Ackerman Report on Political Situation in Central Powers—Gilbert Murray on Ideal Peace—Difficulties Involved in Uniting Allies in Common Programme—Supreme War Council Statement—Wilson's Irritation—He Prepares an Answer to Hertling and Czernin—Conferences with House—Wilson's Speech of February 4—Austrian Peace Overtures—Peace Offer of the Emperor Karl—Balfour's Cable to House regarding Peace Proposals—Smuts-Mensdorff Conversation—Czernin's Memorandum—Failure of Peace Propositions.</p>	

CONTENTS

xvii

CHAPTER	PAGE
XIII. THE RUSSIAN ENIGMA	398

Effects of Russian Revolution—Proposed Japanese Intervention in Siberia—Balfour's Cable to House—Wilson and House Opposed to Intervention—House's Explanation to Balfour—The Allies Press for Inter-allied Intervention in Russia—Bolshevik Policy—Reading's Estimate of Situation—House's Plan of Economic Relief Mission to Russia—Wilson Unwillingly Agrees to Inter-allied Intervention—State Department's Declaration of Purpose of Expedition.

XIV. FORCE WITHOUT STINT OR LIMIT	435
---	-----

Effects of Brest-Litovsk Peace—Austro-German Military Treaty—Wilson's Change of Tactics: Discusses with House an Address Emphasizing Will to Victory—The Speech of April 6—Allied Plea for Incorporation of American Troops in Allied Armies—Wilson's Attitude—Balfour's Cable to House on Allied Needs—The March Crisis—Renewed Demand for American Troops—House-Balfour Interchange of Cables—Request from Lloyd George that House Attend Supreme War Council—Arrangement with Allies Negotiated by Pershing—Optimism of Colonel House.

INDEX *At end of Volume IV*