

# THE PEACE CONGRESS

## Opening Session of the Greatest World Tribunal in History, With Text of the First Addresses

**T**HE Peace Congress held its first session at Paris on Jan. 18, 1919. The formal assembling had been preceded by daily conferences of the Inter-allied Supreme War Council and by two formal meetings of the President of the United States with the Prime Ministers and Foreign Ministers of Great Britain, the United States, France, and Italy, assisted by the Japanese Ambassadors in Paris and London. At these conferences the preliminaries of the organization of the Peace Congress were arranged.

The following joint communique was issued with reference to the organization of the Congress:

It was decided that the United States, the British Empire, France, Italy, and Japan should be represented by five delegates apiece. The British Dominions and India, besides, shall be represented as follows: Two delegates respectively for Australia, Canada, South Africa, and India, including the native States, and one delegate for New Zealand.

Brazil will have three delegates. Belgium, China, Greece, Poland, Portugal, the Czechoslovak Republic, Rumania, and Serbia will have two delegates apiece, Siam one delegate, and Cuba, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Liberia, Nicaragua, and Panama one delegate apiece.

Montenegro will have one delegate,

but the rules concerning the designation of this delegate shall not be fixed until the moment when the political situation in that country shall have been cleared up.

The meeting adopted the following two general principles:

One—Each delegation being a unit, the number of delegates forming it shall have no influence upon its status at the conference.

Two—In the selection of its delegation each nation may avail itself of the panel system. This will enable each State at discretion to intrust its interests to such persons as it may designate.

The adoption of the panel system will in particular enable the British Empire to admit among its five delegates representatives of the dominions, including Newfoundland, which has no separate representation, and of India.

In consequence of protests by Serbia and Belgium the representation of each of these countries was later increased from two to three delegates. The Kingdom of the Hedjaz at the same time was allowed two delegates.

A day or two before the Peace Congress held its first session, deep dissatisfaction was created among the press representatives in Paris by the announcement that published information regarding the proceedings would be limited to a daily official communique, and that the delegates in

attendance had agreed not to discuss with correspondents anything that occurred at the meetings. A formal protest lodged with the delegates produced a concession admitting the correspondents to the full conference, though it was announced that deliberations would at times be secret.

#### LIST OF DELEGATES

The following list of delegates was announced:

**France**—**Georges Clemenceau**, Prime Minister; **Stephen Pichon**, Foreign Minister; **Louis Klotz**, Finance Minister; **André Tardieu**, French High Commissioner to the United States, and **Jules Cambon**.

**Great Britain**—**David Lloyd George**, Prime Minister; **Arthur J. Balfour**, Foreign Secretary; **Andrew Bonar Law**; **George Nicoll Barnes**, the Labor leader, and another alternate delegate.

**United States**—**Woodrow Wilson**, President of the United States; **Robert Lansing**, Secretary of State; **Henry White**, Colonel **Edward M. House**, and General **Tasker H. Bliss**.

**Italy**—**Vittorio Orlando**, Prime Minister; **Baron Sonnino**, Foreign Minister; **Antonio Salandra**, former Premier; **Marquis Salvago Raggi**, and the Italian Minister of Finance, **Signor Stringher**.

**Japan**—The **Marquis Saionji**, former Prime Minister; **Baron Makino**, **Baron Chinda**, **Baron Matsui**, and **Count Hayashi**.

**Brazil**—**Senator Epitacio Pessoa**, **Dr. Pandia Caloreras**, and **Deputy Raoul Fernandez**.

**Belgium**—**Paul Hymans**, Minister of Foreign Affairs; **Emile Vandervelde**, and **M. Vandenheuvel**.

**Serbia**—**Nikola Pashitch**, former Prime Minister, and **M. Trumbitch**, former President of the Dalmatian Diet, who will alternate with **Dr. M. R. Vesnitch**, Serbian Minister to France, and **M. Reber**.

**Greece**—**Eleutherios Venizelos**, Premier, and **M. Politis**, Foreign Minister.

**Rumania**—**M. Bratiano**, Prime Minister, and **M. Mishr**.

**Czechoslovakia**—**Dr. Karl Kramarcz**, Premier, and **M. Benès**, Foreign Minister.

**Poland**—**M. Dmowski**, Polish representative to the allied Governments, and a second delegate representing **General Pilsudski**.

**China**—**Lu Cheng-Hsiang**, Foreign Minister, and one other.

**Kingdom of the Hedjaz**—Two delegates.

**Canada**—**Sir Robert Borden**, Premier; **Sir George Foster**, Minister of Trade and Commerce, with others of the delegation alternating.

**Australia**—**William Morris Hughes**, Premier, and one other.

**Union of South Africa**—**General Louis Botha** and **General Jan C. Smuts**.

**India**—**The Maharajah of Bikaner** and **Sir S. P. Sinha**.

**Siam**—**M. Charoon**, Minister to France, and one other.

**New Zealand**—**William F. Massey**, Premier.

**Portugal**—**Ejas Moniz**.

#### PLACE OF MEETINGS

The Congress held its sessions in the *Salle de la Paix* of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, just across the *Seine* from the *Place de la Concorde*. The hall was originally known as the *Salle d'Horloge*, and is one of the most splendid reception rooms in Europe.

Directly behind the President's seat stood a heroic statue of Peace holding aloft the torch of civilization. In front of the statue was spread the council table, covered with the traditional green baize of diplomacy. This table was in the form of a huge horseshoe. Across the upper end were nine seats of honor, for the presiding

officer, the Vice Presidents, and the Premiers. On each side of the two arms of the horseshoe there were fifteen seats, making sixty seats besides the nine at the head of the table.

Each delegate's chair was upholstered in bright red leather, and before each place was a complete equipment of writing materials. The fittings of the room were in white and gold, with a frescoed ceiling bordered by dancing Cupids. Four great lustre chandeliers hung from the ceiling, while five large windows, looking out over the Seine River, cast a flood of light over the sumptuous apartment.

Leading from the council room was another large chamber overlooking the gardens. To this room the delegates retired for consultations. Further on was a gorgeous state dining room, where luncheon and dinner were served to the delegates when protracted sessions were held. The whole suite of rooms was suggestive of elegance and beauty and the artistic taste of the French.

#### THE OPENING SESSION

The opening session of the Congress began at 3 o'clock Saturday afternoon, Jan. 18, 1919. As the delegations arrived they were greeted by fanfares of trumpets, and military honors were accorded by the troops. The Japanese were among the earlier arrivals, and were followed by the Siamese and East Indians in picturesque turbans.

Among the very first were Henry White, the American Commissioner, and Andre Tardieu, the

delegate of France, who is Minister of Franco-American Affairs in the French Cabinet. Immediately after came General Bliss, the military member of the American delegation, whose khaki uniform, simple as it was, stood out strikingly among the frockcoated statesmen. This absence of military uniform and all military suggestion was, for such an occasion of great ceremony, one of the striking features of the whole affair. Admiral Benson, wearing the blue uniform of the United States Navy, led a group of American spectators, including Edward N. Hurley and Herbert C. Hoover.

Then President Wilson came, was joined by Secretary Lansing, and began a hand-shaking progress along one side of the room to his place at the top of the table. The greetings exchanged between Wilson and Clemenceau were particularly cordial.

Just at 3 o'clock a ruffle of drums and blare of trumpets announced the approach of President Poincaré. He was escorted by the group of Premiers to the head of the table. Next to him on the right was President Wilson, with three members of the American Commission, Colonel House being absent on account of illness. To the left of M. Poincaré were the British delegates, with one notable exception, for Premier Lloyd George did not arrive until fifteen minutes after M. Poincaré had begun his speech.

The French delegation, with the grizzled Clemenceau at its head, was next to the American along the right side of the table, and then came the Italians, with the Belgians and Brazilians. Along the side below the British were the representatives of Canada, Australia, South Africa, and New Zealand, and then those of Japan and Bolivia. All these had places on the outer sides of the table. The interior was occupied by the representatives of the smaller nationalities, an impressive array of

many races from many parts of the world.

It was exactly three minutes after 3 when M. Poincaré began his address, and the Peace Congress came into being. The entire assemblage stood as the French President spoke. He spoke in French, and, when he had concluded, an interpreter read the Presidential discourse in English. As M. Poincaré closed he turned to receive the congratulations of President Wilson and Premier Lloyd George, and then withdrew, saluting each delegation as he retired.

As M. Poincaré made his exit President Wilson rose to propose M. Clemenceau as Permanent Chairman of the Congress. His nomination was seconded by Lloyd George and Baron Sonnino, and was ratified unanimously. At the conclusion of M. Clemenceau's address of acceptance the first session of the Congress came to a close.

#### PRESIDENT POINCARE'S ADDRESS

President Poincaré's speech was as follows:

"Gentlemen: France greets and thanks you for having chosen as the seat of your labors the city which for more than four years the enemy has made his principal military objective and which the valor of the allied armies has victoriously defended against unceasingly renewed offensives.

"Permit me to see in your decision the homage of all the nations that you represent toward a country which more than any other has endured the sufferings of war, of which entire provinces have been transformed into a vast battlefield and have been systematically laid waste by the invader, and which has paid the human tribute in death.

"France has borne these enormous sacrifices, although she had not the slightest responsibility for the frightful catastrophe which has overwhelmed the universe. And at the moment when the cycle of horror is ending, all the powers whose delegates are assembled here may acquit themselves of any share in the crime which has resulted in so unprecedented a disaster. What gives you the authority to establish a peace of justice is the fact that none of the peoples of whom you are the delegates has had any part in the injustice. Humanity can place confidence in you because you are not among

those who have outraged the rights of humanity.

"There is no need of further information or for special inquiries into the origin of the drama which has just shaken the world. The truth, bathed in blood, has already escaped from the imperial archives. The premeditated character of the trap is today clearly proved.

"In the hope of conquering first the hegemony of Europe and next the mastery of the world, the Central Empires, bound together by a secret plot, found the most abominable of pretexts for trying to crush Serbia and force their way to the east. At the same time they disowned the most solemn undertakings in order to crush Belgium and force their way into the heart of France.

"These are the two unforgettable outrages which opened the way to aggression. The combined efforts of Great Britain, France, and Russia were exerted against that man-made arrogance.

"If, after long vicissitudes, those who wished to reign by the sword have perished by the sword, they have but themselves to blame. They have been destroyed by their own blindness. What could be more significant than the shameful bargains they attempted to offer to Great Britain and France at the end of July, 1914, when to Great Britain they suggested: 'Allow us to attack France on land and we will not enter the Channel,' and when they instructed their Ambassador to say to France: 'We will only accept a declaration of neutrality on your part if you surrender to us Briey, Toul, and Verdun.' It is in the light of these things, gentlemen, that all the conclusions you will have to draw from the war will take shape.

"Your nations entered the war successively, but came one and all to the help of threatened right. Like Germany, Great Britain had guaranteed the independence of Belgium. Germany sought to crush Belgium. Great Britain and France both swore to save her. Thus from the very beginning of hostilities there came into conflict the two ideas which for fifty months were to struggle for the dominion of the world—the idea of sovereign force, which accepts neither control nor check, and the idea of justice, which depends on the sword only to prevent or repress the abuse of strength.

"Faithfully supported by her dominions

and her colonies, Great Britain decided that she could not remain aloof from a struggle in which the fate of every country was involved. She has made, and her dominions and colonies have made with her, prodigious efforts to prevent the war from ending in the triumph of the spirit of conquest and the destruction of right.

"Japan, in her turn, only decided to take up arms out of loyalty to Great Britain, her great ally, and from the consciousness of the danger in which both Asia and Europe would have stood of the hegemony of which the Germanic empires dreamed.

"Italy, who from the first had refused to lend a helping hand to German ambition, rose against an agelong foe only to answer the call of oppressed populations and to destroy at the cost of her blood the artificial political combination which took no account of human liberty.

"Rumania resolved to fight only to realize that national unity which was opposed by the same powers of arbitrary force. Abandoned, betrayed, and strangled, she had to submit to an abominable treaty, the revision of which you will exact.

"Greece, whom the enemy for many months tried to turn from her traditions and destinies, raised an army only to escape attempts at domination of which she felt the growing threat.

"Portugal, China, and Siam abandoned neutrality only to escape the strangling pressure of the Central Powers.

## TRIBUTE TO AMERICAN REPUBLICS

"Thus, it was the extent of German ambitions that brought so many peoples, great and small, to align themselves against the same adversary. And what shall I say of the solemn resolutions taken by the United States in the Spring of 1917, under the auspices of its illustrious President, Mr. Wilson, whom I am happy to greet here in the name of grateful France and, if you will allow me to say so, gentlemen, in the name of all the nations represented in this room?

"What shall I say of the many other American powers which either declared themselves against Germany—Brazil, Cuba, Panama, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Haiti, Honduras—or at least broke off diplomatic relations—Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador, Uruguay? From the north to the south the New World rose with indignation when it saw the em-

pires of Central Europe, after having let loose the war without provocation and without excuse, carry it on with fire, pillage, and the massacre of inoffensive beings.

"The intervention of the United States was something more, something greater than a great political and military event. It was a supreme judgment passed at the bar of history by the lofty conscience of a free people and their Chief Magistrate on the enormous responsibilities incurred in the frightful conflict which was lacerating humanity.

## AMERICA'S DEFENSE OF FREE IDEALS

"It was not only to protect itself from the audacious aims of German megalomania that the United States equipped fleets and created immense armies, but also, and above all, to defend an ideal of liberty over which it saw the huge shadow of the Imperial Eagle encroaching further every day. America, the daughter of Europe, crossed the ocean to rescue her mother from the humiliation of thralldom and to save civilization.

"The American people wished to put an end to the greatest scandal that has ever sullied the annals of mankind. Autocratic Governments, having prepared in the secrecy of the Chancelleries and the General Staffs a mad program of universal dominion, let loose their packs at the time fixed by their genius for intrigue and sounded the horns for the chase, ordering science (at the very time it was beginning to abolish distances, to bring men closer together and make life sweeter) to leave the bright sky toward which it was soaring and to place itself submissively at the service of violence, debasing the religious idea to the extent of making God the complacent auxiliary of their passions and the accomplice of their crimes—in short, counting as nought the traditions and wills of peoples, the lives of citizens, the honor of women, and all those principles of public and private morality which we for our part have endeavored to keep unaltered throughout the war, and which neither nations nor individuals can repudiate or disregard with impunity.

## RISING OF OPPRESSED NATIONS

"While the conflict was gradually extending over the entire surface of the earth the clanking of chains was heard here and there, and captive nationalities from the depths of their agelong jails cried out to us for help. Yes, more, they escaped to come to our aid. Poland came to life again and sent us troops. The Czechoslovaks won their right to independence, in Siberia, in France, and in Italy. The Jugoslavs, the Armenians, the Syrians, and Levantines, the Arabs, all the victims, long helpless or resigned, of the historic deeds of injustice—all the martyrs of the past, all the outraged in conscience, all the strangled in liberty—viewed the clash of arms and turned to us as their natural defenders.

"The war gradually attained the fullness of its first significance and became in the full sense of the term a crusade of humanity for right, and if anything can console us, in part at least, for the losses we have suffered it is assuredly the thought that our victory is also the victory of right. This victory is complete, for the enemy only asked for the armistice to escape from an irretrievable military disaster.

"In the interest of justice and peace it now rests with you to reap from this victory its full fruits. In order to carry out this immense work you have decided to admit at first only the allied or associated powers, and, in so far as their interests are involved in the debates, the nations which remained neutral. You have thought that the terms of peace ought to be settled among ourselves before they are communicated to those against whom we have fought the good fight.

"The solidarity which has united us during the war and has enabled us to win military success ought to remain unimpaired during the negotiations for and after the signing of the treaty.

### A CONGRESS OF FREE PEOPLES

"It is not only the Governments, but the free peoples, who are represented here. To the test of danger they have learned to know and help one another. They want their intimacy of yesterday to assure the peace of tomorrow. Vainly would our enemies seek to divide us. If they have not yet renounced their customary manoeuvres they will soon find that they are meeting today, as during the hostilities, a homogeneous block which nothing will be able to disintegrate. Even before the armistice you reached that necessary unity under the aid of the lofty moral and political truths of which President Wilson has nobly made himself the interpreter, and in the light of these truths you intend to accomplish your mission.

"You will, therefore, seek nothing but justice—justice that has no favorites, justice in territorial problems, justice in financial problems, justice in economic problems. But justice is not inert, it does not submit to injustice.

"What it demands first, when it has been violated, is restitution and reparation for the peoples and individuals who have been despoiled or maltreated. In formulating this lawful claim it obeys neither hatred nor an instinctive or thoughtless desire for reprisals. It pursues a twofold object—to render to each his due and not to encourage crime through leaving it unpunished.

"What justice also demands, inspired by the same feeling, is the punishment of the guilty and effective guarantees against an active return of the spirit by which they were prompted, and it is logical to demand that these guarantees should be given, above all,

to the nations that have been and might again be most exposed to aggression or threat, to those who have many times stood in danger of being submerged by the periodic tide of the same invasion,

### DREAM OF CONQUEST BANISHED

"What justice banishes is the dream of conquest and imperialism, contempt for national will, the arbitrary exchange of provinces between States, as though peoples were but articles of furniture or pawns in a game. The time is no more when diplomatists could meet to redraw with authority the map of the empires on the corner of a table. If you are to remake the map of the world it is in the name of the peoples, and one condition is that you shall faithfully interpret their thoughts and respect the right of nations, small and great, to dispose of themselves and to reconcile with this the equally sacred right of ethnical and religious minorities—a formidable task which science and history, your two advisers, will contribute to assist and facilitate.

"You will naturally strive to secure the material and moral means of subsistence for all those people who are constituted or reconstituted into States, for those who wish to unite themselves to their neighbors, for those who divide themselves into separate units, for those who reorganize themselves, for those who divide themselves according to their regained traditions, and, lastly, for all those whose freedom you have already sanctioned or are about to sanction. You will not call them into existence only to sentence them to death immediately, because you would like your work in this, as in all other matters, to be fruitful and lasting.

### CALL FOR A LEAGUE OF NATIONS

"While introducing into the world as much harmony as possible, you will, in conformity with the fourteenth of the propositions unanimously adopted by the great allied powers, establish a general League of Nations which will be the supreme guarantee against any fresh assault upon the rights of peoples. You do not intend this international association to be directed against anybody in the future. It will not, of a set purpose, shut out anybody, but, having been organized by the nations that have sacrificed themselves in the defense of right, it will receive from them its statutes and fundamental rules.

"It will lay down conditions concerning present or future adherence, and, as it is to have for its essential aim the prevention as far as possible of the renewal of wars, it will, above all, seek to gain respect for the peace which you will have established and will find it the less difficult to maintain in proportion as this peace will in itself imply the greater realities of justice and safer guarantees of stability.

"By establishing this new order of things

you will meet the aspirations of humanity, which, after the frightful convulsions of the blood-stained years, ardently wishes to feel itself protected by a union of free people against the ever possible revival of primitive savagery. An immortal glory will attach to the names of the nations and the men who have desired to co-operate in this grand work in faith and brotherhood and who have taken the pains to eliminate from the future peace causes of disturbance and instability.

"This very day forty-eight years ago—on the 18th of January, 1871—the German Empire was proclaimed by an army of invasion in the Château at Versailles. It was consecrated by the theft of two French provinces. It was thus a violation from its origin and, by the fault of its founders, it was born in injustice. It has ended in oblivion.

"You are assembled in order to repair the evil that has been done and to prevent a recurrence of it. You hold in your hands the future of the world. I leave you gentlemen, to your grave deliberations and declare the Conference of Paris open."

#### CLEMENCEAU'S ACCEPTANCE

Premier Clemenceau, in accepting the Chairmanship, said:

President Wilson has special authority to say that this is the first time in fact that the world has ever seen assembled together a delegation of all the civilized nations of the earth.

The greater the bloody catastrophe which has devastated and ruined one of the richest parts of France, the greater and more splendid must be the reparation—not only the material reparation, the vulgar reparation, if I dare speak so, which is due all of us, but the higher and nobler reparation of the new institution which we will try to establish, in order that nations may at length escape from the fatal embrace of ruinous wars, which destroy everything, heap up ruins, terrorize the populace and prevent them from going freely about their work for fear of enemies which may rise up from one day to the next.

It is a great, splendid, and noble ambition which has come to all of us. It is desirable that success should crown our efforts. This cannot take place unless

we have all firmly fixed and clearly determined ideas on what we wish to do.

I said in the Chamber a few days ago, and I wish to repeat here, that success is not possibly unless we remain firmly united. We have come together as friends, we must leave this hall as friends.

That, gentlemen, is the first thought that comes to me. All else must be subordinated to the necessity of a closer and closer union among the nations who have taken part in this great war and to the necessity of remaining friends. For the League of Nations is here. It is yourself. It is for you to make it live, and to make it live we must have it really in our hearts.

As I told President Wilson a few days ago, there is no sacrifice that I am not willing to make in order to accomplish this, and I do not doubt that you all have the same sentiment. We will make these sacrifices, but on the condition that we endeavor impartially to conciliate interests apparently contradictory, on the higher plane of a greater, happier, and better humanity.

That, gentlemen, is what I had to say to you. I am touched beyond words, at the evidence of good-will and friendship which you show me.

The program of this conference has been laid down by President Wilson. It is no longer the peace of a more or less vast territory, no longer the peace of continents; it is the peace of nations that is to be made. This program is sufficient in itself. There is no superfluous word. Let us try to act swiftly and well.

Rising after the close of his formal speech, M. Clemenceau called on the delegates to present papers dealing with the special interests of their respective nations, and announced that at the suggestion of Premier Lloyd George one of the early duties of the conference would be to determine the responsibility for the war and the special responsibility which attached to the ex-Kaiser. In adjourning the day's session he then announced that the League of Nations would be set at the head of the order of business at the next plenary sitting.