ALBANIANS SEEK CONFERENCE SEAT

Rights to Recognition as Distinct Nationality Are Being Urged.

By Harry Hansen

Special Cable to The Journal and the Chicago Daily News.
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Paris, Jan. 18.—Petitions to the various peace commissions from the pan-Albanian Federation named Vatra, which has a branch in Chicago, are expected to be forthcoming immediately asking the conference to recognize the Albanians as a distinct nationality entitled to sit in the congress on a parity with the small nations to which one seat each has been allotted. Nicolas Lako, the principal representative of the Vatra, is in Paris making a fight for representation on the ground that Sir Edward Grey, then British minister of foreign affairs, recognized Albania as an independent principality in 1913 when the Prince of Wied was appointed ruler.

"Our Chicago section has given much help and so has the Milwaukee section," said M. Lako. "We are fighting to obtain independence on the ground that our nationality is distinct from that of the Serbs and Greeks. We have difficulty in resisting the aspirations for our territory by the Greeks, Serbs and Italians. We will ask President Wilson to consider our case in the light of self-determination. We have 2,500,000 Albanians out of a total population of 3,000,000. The remainder are Mohammedans and Greeks. The Albanians are principally Roman Catholics."

From another source I learn that the Albanian interests discount the organization of the government under a Turkish pasha, declaring that this is probably inspired by the Italians in an effort to offset both the Jugo-Slav and the Albanian plans. The Albanians also declare that they are entitled to a seat at the conference, rather than Siam, which, it is believed, will have one delegate.

The fact that the so-called Nationalist party of the former South African republic, now British, is trying to put in its claims before the commission, illustrates the difficulties caused by raising the issue of nationalism. Although meetings have been held by the Nationalist parties in South Africa and a memorial has been sent to the English king, the Nationalist representatives here are unable to get in touch with the British authorities. Effective action, therefore, is unlikely, especially since General Botha and General Smuts are supporting the British program.

LEAGUE OF NATIONS URGED BY POINCARE

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sacrifices without having incurred the slighest 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.

Trap of Central Powers Proved

What gives you authority to establish a peace of justice is the fact that none of the people of whom you are the delegates has had any part in injustice. Humanity can place confidence in you because you are not among those who 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 pretext for trying to crush Serbia and force their way into 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 broke themselves against that man-made arrogance.

Shameful Offers Are Cited

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 suggester "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 glories, 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 and France 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 came into conflict the two ideas which for 50 months were to struggle for the domination of the world—the idea of sovereign forces, 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.

Stand of Britain Is Praised

Faithfully supported by her dominions and 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 from 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 age-long 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.

Roumania 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.

German Ambitions Brought End

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.

Thus it was the extent of the German ambitions that brought so many peoples, great and small, to align themselves against the same adversary.

And what shall we say of the solemn resolutions taken by the United States in the spring of 1917, under the auspices of the 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 we say of the many American powers which either declared themselves against Germany—of Brazil, Cuba, Panama, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Haiti, Honduras; or at least broke off diplomatic relations—Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador, Uruguay? From north to south the New World rose with indignation when it saw the empires of Central Europe, after having let loose the war without provocation and without excuse, carry it on with fire and pillage and the massacre of inoffensive beings.

U. S. Act Supreme Judgment

The intervention of the United States was something more, something greater than a great political and military event. It was the supreme judgment passed at the bar of history by the enormous (words missing) of lofty conscience of a free people and their chief magistrate, on the enormous responsibilities incurred in the frightful conduct which was lacerating humanity.

It was not only to protect themselves from the audacious aims of German meglomania that the United States equipped fleets and created immense armies, but also and above all, to defend the ideal of liberty over which they saw the huge shadow of the imperial eagle encroaching further every day.

America, the daughter of Europe, crossed the ocean to wrest 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 staff a mad program of universal dominion and at the time fixed by their genius for intrigue, let loose their packs and sounded the horns for the chase, ordering science, when it was beginning to abolish distances, to bring men closer and make life sweeter, to leave the bright sky which it was solving and to place itself submissively at the service of violence, lowering the religious ideas to the extent of making God the complacent auxiliary of their passions and the accomplice of their crimes.

Captive Nations Extend Help

In short, counting as naught 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 through the war and which neither nations nor individuals can repudiate or disregard with impunity.

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 depth of their age-long goals, cried out to us for help. Yet, more—they expected to come to our aid.

Poland came to life again and sent us troops. The Czecho-Slovaks won their rights to independence in Siberia, in France and in Italy. The Jugo-Slavs, the Armenians, the Syrians and Lebanese, and the Arabs, all the oppressed peoples, all the victims, long helpless or resigned of great historic deeds, all the martyrs of the past, all the outraged consciences, all the strangled liberties, reviewed the clash of arms and turned toward us as their defenders.

Full Fruits Are in Sight

War gradually attained the fullness of its first significance and became, in the fullest 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 task you have considered to admit at first only the allied or associated powers and, insofar as their interests are involved in the debates, the nations which were 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 together 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 against the signing of the treaty.

The first demands of a country when it has been violated are 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 two-fold 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 aggressions or threats, to those who have many times stood in danger of being submerged by the periodic tide of the same invasion.

What justice banishes is the dream of conquest and imperialism's contempt for national will, the arbitrary exchange of provinces between states as though peoples were but articles of furniture, or pawns in a game.

Work Is to Be Lasting

The time is no more when diplomatists could meet to redraw with authority the map of empires on the center of a table. You are here to remake the map of the world in the name of peoples and on condition that you shall faithfully interpret their thoughts and respect the rights of nations smaller and greater to dispose of themselves and to reconcile with the right equally sacred of ethnal and religious minorities, a formidable task which science and history, your two advisors, will contribute to aid 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 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. You will do your work in this, as in all other matters, to be fruitful and lasting.

Scope of League Pointed Out

While thus introducing into the world as much harmony as possible, you will, in conformity with the fourteenth of propositions, unanimously adopted by the great allied powers, establish a general league of nations, which will be a supreme guarantee against any fresh assault upon the right of peoples.

You do not intend that this international association shall be directed against anybody in the future. It will not of set purpose shut out anybody but, having been organized by the nations that have sacrificed themselves in defense of right, it will receive from them its statutes and fundamental rules. It will lay down conditions to which its present or future adherence will admit, and, as it is to have for its essential aim to prevent as far as possible the renewal of war, it will, above all, have established, and will find it the less difficult to maintain, in proportion as this peace will in itself imply, 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.

Significance of Day Recalled

An immortal glory will attach to the name of the nations and the men who have desired to cooperate in this grand work, in faith and brotherhood, and who have taken pains to eliminate from the future peace causes of disturbance and instability.

This very day 48 years ago, on the eighteenth day of January, 1871, the German empire was proclaimed by an army of invasion in the chateau at Versailles. It was consummated by the theft of two French provinces. It was thus violated from its origin and by the fault of its founders, born in injustice. It has ended in oblivion.

You are assembled in order to repair the evil that it has been doing 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.

Paris, Jan. 18.—(U. P.)—The peace conference convened for its official peace session at 3 p. m. today. Delegates representing 26 nations met in the famous "Clock Hall" of the Quai d'Orsay. President Poincare made the opening address.

The peace delegates sat at a huge horseshoe shaped table, their secretaries at small tables nearby. This being the first session, it was open. None of the tremendous issues of the peace settlement were to be taken up. The sitting was to be devoted to the formalities attendant to the convening of the most important gathering, at which President Wilson, leading the peace delegation of the United States, intended to put through his league of nations plan and other measures which he believes will end wars.

The delegates present represented all the nations associated in the war on Germany, and in addition Peru, Equador, Uruguay and Bolivia, which severed diplomatic relations with Germany. The central powers were not represented. When the peace treaty has been drawn up the delegates representing the German government and its former allies will be asked in.

The delegates included the following:

United States—President Wilson, Secretary Lansing, Colonel E. M. House, Henry White, General Bliss.

Great Britain—Premier Lloyd George, Foreign Secretary Balfour, Chancellor Bonar Law, George N. Barnes.

France—Premier Clemenceau, Foreign Minister Pichon, Marshal Foch (generalissimo of the allies).

Italy—Premier Orlando, Foreign Minister Sonnino, General Diaz.

Japan—Viscount Chinda, ambassador to Great Britain; Baron Matsui, ambassador to France.

Belgium—Foreign Minister Hyman, Emile Vandervelde (minister of justice).

Greece—Premier Venizelos, Foreign Minister Politis.

Serbia—Premier Pachitch.

Press Gains Big Victory

Paris, Jan. 18.—"Representatives of the press shall be admitted to the meetings of the full peace conference, but upon necessary occasions the deliberations of the conference may be held in camera."

This ruling was adopted by the conference of the powers at the Quai D'Orsay Friday and was officially announced in Friday night's communique.

The ruling means an important victory for publicity and open diplomacy, but the surrender of secrecy is not unconditional.

Important reservations are attached to it, the principal one being contained in the ruling itself, which means that whenever the peace conference deems it necessary they can exclude the press. The reasons for this are set forth in a long statement contained in the official communique. These reasons constitute, in effect, an argument that to grant all that the newspapermen are demanding, namely, free and open sessions and free and open communication between the plenipotentiaries and correspondents—would mean premature publicity, which might result in controversies between whole nations, and therefore hinder, rather than help, the conclusion of a just and speedy peace. Emphasis is laid upon the assertion that the sort of publicity demanded by the newspapermen would result in dangerous delays.

The decision as communicated to the press, on the face of it, virtually divides the peace conference into two sections: full conferences, at which the press will be represented, and "camera sessions," from which the press will be barred. In these latter sessions subjects will be threshed out upon which the powers "may at present hold many diverse views," the statement says.

An important statement in the communique is this:

"No nation can be committed, except by the free vote of its own delegates. The deliberations cannot proceed by the method of a majority vote."

Munich, Jan. 18.—(U. P.)—German delegates to the peace conference will be the following, newspapers here stated today:

Prince Lichnowski, former ambassador to Great Britain.

Count von Brockdorff-Rantzau, foreign minister.

Karl Kautzsky, recently under-secretary for foreign affairs and head of the commission which investigated and recommended punishment for the kaiser as a warmaker.

Count Arco.

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"THIS IS THE LIFE"

Maybe Toby Watkins had been reading about Bobbie Burns—anyway, he wanted to be a poet a durned sight more than he wanted to trail a plow—so he made tracks to the nearest town and tried to get on a newspaper, which he did; but he soon found he was in the circulation department, where poets are about as popular as hog cholera. But Toby made good.