

Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1919. The Paris Peace Conference. Vols. I and II. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1942. Vol. I, pp. lxiii + 575, list of treaties, list of principal persons, index; \$1.25. Vol. II, pp. lxxxii + 812, index; \$1.50.)

The Paris Peace Conference of 1919, with its complexity of national and international problems, will continue for many generations to challenge the technical and the imaginative capacity of the statesman and the historian. Much has already been written on the subject. There is a large unofficial literature in both the English and the French languages. Some official documents have been published, but no government represented at Paris in 1919 has made public anything approaching a complete record of its activities at the Conference.

This lack of a published official record is removed in part by the appearance of the two volumes covered by this review. They constitute group one in a monumental series which will cover from the preliminaries of the Conference late in 1918 to the departure from Paris on December 9, 1919, of the American Commission to Negotiate Peace.

Some idea of the scope of the series may be gathered from the following outline.

Group 1. Includes Volumes I and II (here under review) containing documents on the preliminary period dealing with preparations for the Conference and the period between the signing of the Armistice on November 11, 1918, and the first meeting of the Council of Ten on January 12, 1919.

Group 2. Will comprise Volumes III through X, containing minutes of the Plenary Sessions of the Conference, the meetings of the representatives of the Powers with Special Interests, and minutes of the meetings of the governing bodies of the Conference, i.e., the Supreme Council in its various aspects: the Council of Ten, Council of Four, Council of Foreign Ministers, Council of Heads of Delegations, International Council of Premiers (through its meeting of January 20, 1920), and Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs; and (in Volume X) minutes of meetings of the American Commissioners Plenipotentiary and documents relating to the composition, organization, and activities of the American Commission to Negotiate Peace.

Group 3. Volume XI and following volumes will contain (1) minutes and reports of the Commissions of the Conference, with other documents relating to the same subjects, arranged in general in the order followed in the Treaty of Versailles and the other peace treaties; (2) documents on the negotiations with the enemy powers and the signature and ratification of the treaties of peace; (3) documents concerning the negotiation of other treaties produced by the Paris Conference; and (4) documents bearing on economic aspects of the work of the Conference, including regulation of trade, the blockade, food relief, and the Supreme Economic Council and its subordinate bodies.

The two volumes now published and here under review contain 1,387 pages of documents and diplomatic correspondence, yet they cover merely preparations for the Conference and the few weeks between November 11, 1918 and January 12, 1919 when the first meeting of the Council of Ten was held.

Volume I is arranged in the following divisions: termination of hostilities, American plans and preparations for the Conference, representation at the Conference of other countries and nationalities, policies and proposals of the United States and the Allies, proposals for a league of nations, and miscellaneous proposals.

Volume II contains (again for the period ending January 12, 1919): correspondence with Germany covering the armistice, German peace proposals, status of the former German Emperor, political and economic conditions, and the Dresel Mission; correspondence with Austria and Hungary, including the Coolidge Mission; correspondence with Bulgaria and Turkey. A large section is devoted to territorial questions and relations with new European states. Other sections cover: Russian affairs, the Far East, financial questions, reparations, food relief, and the blockade and regulation of trade.

Limitations of space preclude any extended comment on the content of these historically rich volumes. Certainly of prime interest to all students of World War II is the documentary story of specific American planning during World War I for the settlement which was to follow in 1919.

The question of representation at the Peace Conference is given extended treatment. Difficulties inherent in this problem were not lessened by the desire of Latin-American neutrals to be represented at the Conference. Acting Secretary of State Polk instructed the American Commission, December 30, 1918:

The Argentine maintained a strictly neutral position during the War, and did nothing which entitled it, in the opinion of this Department to a place at the Conference, which will discuss the solution of the problems arising from the present war (this objection would not apply of course, to the request of the Argentine to be present at a Conference which should discuss a league of nations.) [I, 229.]

How disastrous, in approaching the problems of peace, a spirit of overconfidence may become is foreshadowed as we read in a note from Woodrod Wilson to Colonel House, undated but written presumably about October 29, 1918:

Can be no real difficulty about peace terms and interpretation of fourteen points if the Entente statesmen will be perfectly frank with us. . . . England cannot dispense with our friendship in the future and the other Allies cannot without our assistance get their rights as against England. [I, 285.]

Only a few weeks later Ambassador Morris in Tokyo was wiring the State Department that Japan's aims would center on "recognition of Japan's paramount position in Eastern Asia." He reminded the Department that:

Even Baron Shibusawa advises the nation to be ready for America, the Champion of Democracy, lest she make it a part of her policy to check Japan's military expansion in the future. [I, 489, 491.]

Were the hands of the United States, contrary to Wilson's optimism, tied both in Europe and in the Pacific? The Third Assistant Secretary of State, Breckinridge Long, believed they were tied at least in the Pacific.

. . . While the United States has an interest, and while it would be greatly to the advantage of the United States to own Samoa and the Carolines and the Marianas, the United States cannot make a direct claim to them or to any of them. Immediately that a claim is made, we admit the right of both England and Japan to claim.

It is conceivable that if the United States took the position that some or all of the Pacific Islands should be returned to Germany, the United States could, after the Peace Conference adjourns, come to some arrangement with Germany which would transfer the Marianas, the Carolines, and the Samoan Group to the sovereignty of the United States. [II, 514.]

Mr. Long recognized, however, that "the insistence of the United States upon the return of the islands to Germany would be unpopular and would not be understood in this country."

In early December, 1918, a member of the Russian section of the American Commission to Negotiate Peace, reporting on American economic intervention in Russia, observed: "International cooperation in this program has been, and is now being sought with rather barren results." [II, 473.]

So might examples be multiplied to illustrate the gulf between American overconfidence and the realities of the problems of peace in 1918-19.

Dr. E. Wilder Spaulding and the Staff of the Division of Research and Publication of the Department of State deserve high praise for the excellence of these first volumes. They merit the closest study by students of foreign policy and especially by all those whose task it will be to represent the United States in the peace settlement to come.

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