

# Constitution of League of Nations

The full text and covenant of the league of nations was officially announced at Paris on February 14 as follows:

## "COVENANT PREAMBLE

"In order to promote international co-operation and to secure international peace and security by the acceptance of obligations not to resort to war, by the prescription of open, just and honorable relations between nations, by the firm establishment of the understandings of international law as the actual rule of conduct among governments, and by the maintenance of justice and a scrupulous respect for all treaty obligations in the dealings of organized peoples with one another, the powers signatory to this covenant adopt this constitution of the League of Nations.

## "ARTICLE ONE

"The action of the high contracting parties under the terms of this covenant shall be effected through the instrumentality of meetings of a body of delegates representing the high contracting parties, of meetings at more frequent intervals of an executive council, and of a permanent international secretariat to be established at the seat of the league.

## "ARTICLE TWO

"Meetings of the body of delegates shall be held at stated intervals from time to time, as occasion may require, for the purpose of dealing with matters within the sphere of action of the league. Meetings of the body of delegates shall be held at the seat of the league or at other places as may be found convenient, and shall consist of representatives of the high contracting parties. Each of the high contracting parties shall have one vote, but may have not more than three representatives.

## "ARTICLE THREE

"The executive council shall consist of representatives of the United States of America, the British empire, France, Italy and Japan, together with representatives of four other states, members of the league. The selection of these four states shall be made by the body of delegates on such principles and in such manner as they think fit. Pending the appointment of these representatives of the other states, representatives of (blank space left) shall be members of the executive council.

"Meetings of the council shall be held from time to time as occasion may require and at least once a year, at whatever place may be decided on, or failing any such decision, at the seat of the league, and any matter within the sphere of action of the league or affecting the peace of the world may be dealt with at such meetings.

"Invitations shall be sent to any power to attend a meeting of the council at which matters directly affecting its interests are to be discussed, and no decision taken at any meeting will be binding on such power unless so invited.

## "ARTICLE FOUR

"All matters of procedure at meetings of the body of delegates or the executive council, including the appointment of committees to investigate particular matters, shall be regulated by the body of delegates or the executive council, and may be decided by a majority of the states represented at the meeting.

"The first meeting of the body of delegates and of the executive council shall be summoned by the President of the United States of America.

## "ARTICLE FIVE

"The permanent secretariat of the league shall be established at (blank), which shall constitute the seat of the league. The secretariat shall comprise such secretaries and staff as may be required, under the general direction and control of a secretary-general of the league, who shall be chosen by the executive council. The secretariat shall be appointed by the secretary-general subject to confirmation by the executive council.

"The secretary-general shall act in the capacity at all meetings of the body of delegates or the executive council.

"The expenses of the secretariat shall be borne by the states members of the league in accordance with the apportionment of the expenses of the international bureau of the universal postal union.

## "ARTICLE SIX

"Representatives of the high contracting parties and officials of the league when engaged on the business of the league shall enjoy diplomatic privileges and immunities, and the buildings occupied by the league or its officials or by representatives attending the meetings shall enjoy the benefits of extra territoriality.

## "ARTICLE SEVEN

"Admission to the league of states not signatories to the covenant and not named in the protocol hereto as states to be invited to adhere to the covenant, requires the assent of not less than two-thirds of the states represented in the body of delegates, and shall be limited to fully self-governing countries, including dominions and colonies.

"No state shall be admitted to the league unless it is able to give effective guarantees of its sincere intention to observe its international obligations, and unless it shall conform to such principles as may be prescribed by the league in regard to its naval and military forces and armaments.

## "ARTICLE EIGHT

"The high contracting parties recognize the principle that the maintenance of peace will require the reduction of national armament to the lowest point consistent with national safety and the enforcement by common action of international obligations, having special regard to the geographical situation and circumstances of each state; and the executive council shall formulate plans for effecting such reduction. The executive council shall also determine for the consideration and action of the several governments, what military equipment and armament is fair and reasonable in proportion to the scale of forces laid down in the program of disarmament; and these limits, when adopted, shall not be exceeded without the permission of the executive council.

"The high contracting parties agree that the manufacture by private enterprise of munitions and implements of war lends itself to grave objections, and direct the executive council to advise how the evil effects attendant upon such manufacture can be prevented, due regard being had to the necessities of these countries which are not able to manufacture for themselves the munitions and implements of war necessary for their safety.

"The high contracting parties undertake in no way to conceal from each other the condition of such of their industries as are capable of being adapted to war-like purposes or the scale of their armaments and agree that there shall be full and frank interchange of information as to their military and naval programs.

## "ARTICLE NINE

"A permanent commission shall be constituted to advise the league on the execution of the provisions of Article Eight and on military and naval questions generally.

## "ARTICLE TEN

"The high contracting parties undertake to respect and preserve as against external aggression the territorial integrity and existing political independence of all states' members of the league. In case of any such aggression or in case of any threat or danger of such aggression the executive council shall advise upon the means by which the obligation shall be fulfilled.

## "ARTICLE ELEVEN

"Any war or threat of war, whether immediately affecting any of the high contracting parties or not, is hereby declared a matter of concern to the league, and the high contracting parties reserve the right to take any action that may be deemed wise and effectual to safeguard the peace of nations.

"It is hereby also declared and agreed to be the friendly right of each of the high contracting parties to draw the attention of the body of delegates or of the executives council to any circumstances affecting international intercourse which threaten to disturb international peace or the good understanding between nations upon which peace depends.

## "ARTICLE TWELVE

"The high contracting parties agree that should disputes arise between them which cannot be adjusted by the ordinary processes of

diplomacy, they will in no case resort to war without previously submitting the questions and matters involved either to arbitration or to inquiry by the executive council, and until three months after the award by the arbitrators or a recommendation by the executive council, and that they will not even then resort to war against a member of the league which complies with the award of the arbitrators or the recommendations of the executive council.

"In any case, under this article, the award of the arbitrators shall be made within a reasonable time, and the recommendation of the executive council shall be made within six months after the submission of the dispute.

## "ARTICLE THIRTEEN

"The high contracting parties agree that whenever any dispute or difficulty shall arise between them which they recognize to be suitable for submission to arbitration, and which cannot be satisfactorily settled by diplomacy, they will submit the whole matter to arbitration. For this purpose the court of arbitration to which the case is referred, shall be the court agreed on by the parties or stipulated in any convention existing between them. The high contracting parties agree that they will carry out in full good faith any award that may be rendered. In the event of any failure to carry out the award the executive council shall propose what steps can best be given to give effect thereto.

## "ARTICLE FOURTEEN

"The executive council shall formulate plans for the establishment of a permanent court of international justice, and this court shall, when established, be competent to hear and determine any matter which the parties recognize as suitable for submission to it, for arbitration under the foregoing article.

## "ARTICLE FIFTEEN

"If there should arise between states' members of the league any dispute likely to lead to rupture, which is not submitted to arbitration as above, the high contracting parties agree that they will refer the matter to the executive council. Either party to the dispute may give notice of the existence of the dispute to the secretary-general, who will make all necessary arrangements for a full investigation and consideration thereof. For this purpose the parties agree to communicate to the secretary-general as promptly as possible, statements of their case, with all the relevant facts and papers, and the executive council may forthwith direct the publication thereof.

"Where the efforts of the council lead to the settlement of the dispute, a statement shall be published indicating the nature of the dispute and the terms of settlement, together with such explanations as may be appropriate. If the dispute has not been settled, a report by the council shall be published, setting forth with all necessary facts and explanations the recommendation which the council thinks just and proper for the settlement of the dispute.

"If the report is unanimously agreed to by the members of the council other than the parties to the dispute, the high contracting parties agree that they will not go to war with any party which complies with the recommendations and that, if any party shall refuse so to comply, the council shall propose measures necessary to give effect to the recommendation. If no such unanimous report can be made, it shall be the duty of the majority and the privilege of the minority to issue statements indicating what they believe to be facts and containing the reasons which they consider to be just and proper.

"The executive council may in any case under this article refer the dispute to the body of delegates. The dispute shall be so referred at the request of either party to the dispute, provided that such request must be made within fourteen days after the submission of the dispute. In any case referred to the body of delegates, all provisions of this article and of Article Twelve, relating to the action and powers of the executive council shall apply to the action and powers of the body of delegates.

## "ARTICLE SIXTEEN

"Should any of the high contracting parties break or disregard its covenants under Article Twelve, it shall thereby factually be deemed to have committed an act of war against all the other members of the league, which hereby undertake immediately to subject it to the severance of all trade or financial relations, the prohibition of all intercourse between their nationals and the nationals of the covenant breaking state, and